

I. **PRELIMINARY**

Cook called the September 2, 2008, meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call

The following members were present:

Matt Cook, president
Jeanette Carmany, vice president
Jane Barber, secretary
Peter Cukale, treasurer
Judith Edberg, director
Mary W. Lewis, director
Amy Prince, director

Also meeting with the Board of Education were:

John L. Barry, superintendent of schools
Anthony Van Gytenbeek, deputy superintendent
Lisa Escárcega, chief accountability and research officer
Rod Weeks, chief financial officer
Kari Allen, chief personnel officer
William Stuart, chief academic officer
Anthony Sturges, chief operating officer
Tonia Norman, assistant to Board of Education

Pledge of Allegiance

Cook led the Board and audience in the pledge to the flag. He then welcomed visitors to the meeting.

Approval of Agenda

The September 2, 2008, agenda was amended to include a resolution from the APS Board in support of the Colorado State Association of School Boards.

Barber shared that CASB supports voluntary coordination of schools, human and social services including the Colorado Preschool Program, Head Start Program, child care centers, and Early Childhood Council to ensure that children and families receive the necessary assistance so children enter school ready to learn and avoid duplication of services.

This coordination with early childcare providers will help districts retain control over public education by guiding and informing their programs. Districts with early childhood networks and agencies including the Colorado Preschool Program, Head Start, and childcare centers would benefit from coordinating on curriculum planning assessment and transition issues. In order to enhance early childhood partnerships with the community, districts should look for opportunities to partner with the Colorado Preschool Program, Head Start, and childcare directors on early childhood education programs. Federal law requires Head Start to work with school districts on curricula.

Barber commented that APS supports early childhood programs. The APS Board feels that other districts need to be concerned with this coordination.

Cook moved to amend the agenda to include the CASB resolution, information item II-A-1, and move it to action for a vote. All Board members were in favor.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Education held August 19, 2008, were approved as written.

Opportunity for Audience

II. INFORMATION ITEMS

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Reports from the Board of Education

Cukale toured the new Aurora Quest K-8, Boston K-8, Rangeview, and the Crossroads Transition and Intercept building with fellow Board members and district leadership on Saturday, August 23. It was an eye opening experience to see the new buildings and additions.

Cukale attended the middle school girls' track meet at APS stadium this afternoon. After watching the summer Olympics, it was amazing to see the number of talented middle school girls and rising track stars in APS. Track meets will be held at APS stadium on Tuesday afternoon for the next few weeks. The all city championship will be held the first week in October. Cukale encouraged everyone to stop by to witness true teamwork and support the young athletes.

Carmany was impressed with the grand opening celebration at the Jamaica Child Development Center. She thanked Aurora voters for approving funds from the last bond for building improvements in APS.

Carmany shared that the District Accountability Advisory Committee recommended that wording be revised to include fine arts in the description of Fund 23, the pupil activities fund that was approved by the Board three years ago. The APS Board approved revise wording to include fine arts in the budget description of Fund 23. Building principals will determine how funds are allocated. Principals will be notified of the change via e-mail tomorrow morning.

Edberg also attended the grand opening celebration for the Jamaica Child Development Center. It is so exciting to see all of the offerings in support of the 250 preschool students.

Edberg shared that the grand opening celebration for the new Aurora Quest K-8 building will be held on Thursday, September 4. She encouraged everyone to stop by to see the new building.

Lewis recognized Laurie Foster, art teacher at Kenton, for spending part of her summer vacation doing artwork that graces the entrance of the Jamaica Child Development Center. Foster attended Jamaica Elementary as a child.

Lewis was privileged to attend the quarterly awards ceremony honoring maintenance and operation employees. She thanked maintenance and operation employees for their work and efforts to ensure every building makes a good first impression with parents, community patrons and

visitors to APS.

Barber commented that while she appreciates the value of the work of the district and AEA in regard to contract negotiations, she voted erroneously for the contract. She should have represented the teachers that voted against the contract and the classified employees who were not represented in the contract.

Barber had an opportunity to visit teachers and classrooms during back-to-school night at Pickens. Kate Tauer and Kathy Zinter were present to represent ACES and former Board member Willie Jones was registering potential voters.

Barber thanked Aurora voters for approving funding from the previous bond for building improvements and construction of new buildings. She hopes that we have another successful bond passage to help district schools in critical need of repairs.

Barber recognized the Nunez Foundation for providing all of the wonderful scholarships to APS students. She will also have an opportunity to visit William Smith, the district's first pilot school, tomorrow afternoon.

Prince shared highlights of the tour of new buildings and additions on Saturday, August 23, with fellow Board members and district leadership.

Items of Current Interest

Barry shared that the new Aurora Quest K-8 grand opening celebration will be held on Thursday, September 4, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. The celebration will include a light dinner, building tours and student entertainment. Aurora Quest K-8 is one of the top-performing schools in Colorado and has been rated "excellent" by the Colorado Department of Education since it opened in 1999.

The Democratic National Convention was a great learning experience for many APS students.

- A group of North Middle School students toured the Pepsi Center prior to the start of the convention.
- Approximately 400 APS students took part in the 2008 Symposium on Health and joined U.S. senators, governors, health care professionals, academicians and many others in this roundtable discussion.
- Gateway students from Jill Cullis' law and government classes participated in three daily live Web casts with 9News.

Thanks to all the staff that worked so hard to make this opportunity possible for our students.

APS is developing school calendars for the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years. A committee comprised of parents, teachers and other APS staff members have drafted calendar proposals. We will share these proposals with school staff, parents and community members through a number of communication methods including open houses at four schools. Parents and staff members may provide feedback on the proposed calendars online or at any of the following open houses:

- September 9, Aurora Central High School commons, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- September 10, East Middle School auditorium, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

- September 15, Aurora Quest K-8 auditorium, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- September 17, Aurora Hills Middle School commons, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Please join us at the football game between Rangeview and Gateway. The traditional rivalry will take place at APS stadium on Thursday, September 4, at 6:30 p.m.

VISTA 2010 Update

People

Allen shared that the people's slide selected from the VISTA 2010 Strategic Plan is managed out of the Division of Instruction. Stuart reviewed Goal Two: ensure all employees are highly qualified and skilled for their positions. The crossover between the Division of Human Resources and the Division of Instruction is centered around teachers having individual learning plans on an annual basis. The recommendation for the ILP is a result of the work of the Coaching Task Force. In addition, we worked with Brenda Isaacs and AEA to develop a consistent, simple, one-page plan for teachers as a result of feedback received from sites that indicated inconsistencies in the number of pages. A plan was developed that teachers could support, review and revise regularly, and it was implemented throughout buildings this year. We hope it will strengthen the process and teachers become more aware of what they want to work on in regard to individual learning throughout the school year.

Lewis asked if there was data to support tasks in the slide. Stuart replied that tasks are ongoing and reviewed quarterly. Allen added that we had hoped to have data collected earlier but the development of the plan had to come first.

Achievement

Stuart shared that the district's goal was to increase the number of AYP targets met by APS by two percent annually with the ultimate goal of meeting 100 percent of targets by 2014 as required by NCLB. Last year, we reduced the number of targets we met as a district from 80 percent to 77 percent. We saw significant growth in a number of areas; however, growth did not keep pace with what we had to meet in regard to proficiency targets for AYP. Last year, we saw a significant jump in our proficiency targets ranging from six percent to 13 percent. This will be the first of three years that we will be at this threshold. Another increase in proficiency targets will occur in three years. We will continue to work to increase proficiency for all of our students.

Community

Escárcega invited Christine Hoppe, director of security, risk management and incident response, to the staff table to present information on the Readers Who are Leaders Program. Hoppe shared that we have seen an amazing increase in participation numbers for our Readers Who are Leaders Program. Three dates have been selected for the upcoming year: October 16, February 4 and April 16. We will work with communication services to get a current list of key communicators and personnel. A program will be developed and information will be sent to all key communicators.

Environment

Sturges invited Barbara Copper, director of school services, equity and family engagement, to the staff table to present information on the Positive Behavioral Support implementation at school sites. Cooper shared that eight additional PBS sites have been added in APS. Staff at all 16 sites have either been trained for the first time or re-trained on PBS strategies this summer. The goal of PBS is to support a high performing learning culture based on trust, compassion, and mutual respect. The ultimate goal is to have all 47 sites utilizing the PBS model by August 2012.

Cooper shared that PBS is undergoing numerous changes through the Colorado Department of Education. We have begun conversations with CDE to accelerate the implementation of PBS at all district sites prior to 2012. Structures are in place with PBS facilitators to support the work occurring in APS. Barry shared that CDE approves eight PBS sites each year, per district. Schools have been given permission to make available some of the PBS initiatives such as distributing coupons and posting names of students who demonstrate positive behavior. CDE will not provide funding unless the school is part of the PBS cohort.

Cooper shared that site evaluation tools are available through PBS to review early intervention strategies for bullying, suspensions and expulsions. We also are stressing the parent component in PBS and have met with Diane Bieber to discuss training for all family liaisons.

Lewis asked if other school districts were experiencing as much success as APS. Cooper replied yes. Our facilitators have been on board for one year and are doing some work and training with staff members in other districts. Lewis asked how many districts have implemented PBS. Cooper shared that most of the major districts including Denver, Douglas County, and Jefferson County have the PBS program. She will provide the exact number to the Board at a later date.

Prince asked what kinds of changes were being reviewed by CDE. Cooper replied that CDE is currently restructuring and has begun to push the trainer of trainer model to decrease district dependence and eliminate large scale trainings. Prince asked if there was a cost involved for each additional PBS site. Cooper replied that as more sites are added, we would need additional support from our PBS facilitators. This year, all of the facilitators were moved to a .5 so they could take an additional eight sites. First year sites would need more support than second and third year sites. We will make sure that all of our sites have the support they need.

DIVISION OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESEARCH

AYP

Stuart and Escárcega presented an update on Adequate Yearly Progress for the 2007-08 school year. Escárcega shared that the goal of AYP is for all children to be proficient in reading and math by 2014. The targets are under three areas including:

- participation – 95 percent of students must be tested
- proficiency – percentage of students meeting partially proficient, proficient, or advanced targets
- other advance indicator – percentage of advanced scores (only one percent of students have to meet the advance target) and graduation scores

A school as a whole has to make AYP. The school is then disaggregated to include all five ethnic groups, English language learners, economically disadvantaged, and special education. This year, all of the targets increased as expected. As an example, the proficiency target in high school math increased by 13 percent. It started at 47 percent and has increased to 73.5 percent.

The Federal Department of Education completed an audit of each state's AYP proposal plan this year. As a result of federal findings, the Colorado Department of Education had to change some of the rules for the calculation of AYP.

- It is no longer permissible to exclude homebound students, parental refusals or students who did not take the CSAP test due to extreme frustrations.
- The ELL reading appeal for students in the United States less than three years is no longer permissible. Schools with a 40 percent ELL student population now have one year to move students from any country to the partially proficient level. Escárcega commented that it usually takes from three to seven years to move ELL students to the partially proficient level; the district's goal is five years.
- Graduation rates increased as well as the proficiency target for AYP. The state reconfigured how graduation rates were calculated and APS missed three graduation targets for the first time.

Escárcega reviewed a slide of AYP requirements and targets that each school receives. We have two more years at the current rate and should see increases next year. Stuart shared that in 2011, the proficiency targets would range from 86 percent in math to 94 percent in elementary reading. Many districts will not make targets in 2011.

In the 2007-08 school year, APS needed to make 150 targets. APS met 120 of the 150 targets.

- 77 percent of targets were met at the district level, three percent less than the previous year.
- 82 percent of targets were met at the elementary school level, a six percent increase from the previous year
- 74 percent of targets were met at the middle school level, a decrease from the previous year
- 76 percent of targets were met at the high school level, the same as the previous year

Escárcega shared that if proficiency targets had not increased, 10 additional schools would have made AYP. Even with increased targets, improvement was seen in 16 of 18 proficiency targets at the elementary level, eight of nine reading proficiency targets at the middle school level and eight of eight math proficiency targets at the high school level.

If a school does not make AYP in the third year, schools are moved into year one program improvement choice and students are offered the option to attend school at another site. In the fourth year, schools are moved into year two, program improvement choice and supplemental services. Supplemental services are currently offered at some APS sites. In the fifth year, schools are moved into corrective action/restructuring year one. North and West are both in corrective action year one for reading and math. Lansing is in correction action year one for reading.

Escárcega shared that the state gives districts a lot of lead way in regard to the development of school restructuring plans. Stuart shared that we are building on initiatives that have begun at both North and West. North has launched the Academy of Health Sciences and Technology and we will include it in our restructuring plan to the state as an example of how we are transforming the building and how it will eventually address the learning needs of all students. We are meeting with staff at West to discuss how to restructure and transform the building so it looks different from secondary sites in north Aurora. We are confident our plans will satisfy state restructuring requirements.

Prince asked whether schools in corrective action year one receive additional funding. Escárcega shared that funding and supports for schools in corrective action year one would be available. Stuart commented that all three schools were celebrated for growth seen on the CSAP test. Administrators and teachers know they are doing the right things to increase student achievement.

Prince asked if MONDO would remain a part of the curriculum at Lansing and if students would receive tutoring services. Stuart replied that the MONDO program would remain at Lansing. Supplemental services will be offered to parents through private tutoring agencies.

Barber asked if the state ever took responsibility for restructuring a school. Escárcega replied that the state has only tried it under SAR. The state would rather work with districts to develop restructuring plans and ensure districts remain in compliance with rules. We are one of the first districts to release AYP data. More districts will unveil plans in the next couple of weeks. Stuart shared that most districts have taken proactive steps prior to restructuring notification from the state. We know that something significant has to be demonstrated to the state to ensure students are learning.

Lewis asked whether more funding would be directed to schools in corrective action year one. Escárcega replied that funding would most likely be redirected. When schools are placed in corrective action year one, we set aside funds but it is taken out of the entire fund. We are also working on plans to ensure we have adequate funds for schools that are required to provide supplemental services to students. Cook commented that the state determines when schools are required to provide supplemental services and tutors for students. Districts cannot select the services or tutors. Escárcega shared that there is a list of providers and a nonnegotiable cost is charged for tutoring services. Cook asked if services were aligned with district curriculum. Stuart shared that Barry met with various groups that offered services to APS kids to better aligned services with district curriculum.

Prince asked if all students qualified for supplemental services. Escárcega believes that only students receiving free and reduced lunch qualify to receive supplemental services. Weeks will check with Paul Coleman, director of grants management, in regard to the specifics of the question. The school receives the Title I funding portion that goes toward supplemental services. Barry added that all students are eligible to receive supplemental services at Title I schools.

Lewis asked how many Colorado districts made AYP. Escárcega replied that none of the districts in the metropolitan area made AYP and believes that with the increased targets and rule changes none of the Colorado school districts will make AYP. Districts have until September 12 to make appeals to the state. The state will release AYP data for all districts shortly thereafter.

Barry believes things will not change in Washington until a year after the new president and administration is established. With the adoption of the growth model that is prevalent in Colorado and many other states, we will see changes to NCLB. The fact that none of the Colorado districts have made AYP and targets continue to jump tells the story. We should not be discouraged due to the tremendous progress we have made in our efforts to increase student achievement. I commend our teachers and staff at schools sites. They should take great pride and credit for all their hard work and efforts on growth made. As we move to higher expectations for AYP, we open ourselves up to more vulnerability in that we will need more student mentors and tutors. It will be a compelling concern to APS financially as well as to many other school districts.

Lewis asked whether any states have made AYP. Escárcega replied yes. It depends where each state has set the bar. A national debate is occurring regarding whether to implement a national assessment so there is equity throughout the nation. Barry shared that the CSAP assessment fits into the middle rigor of the bar in the nation. Stuart added that it is hard to compare states due to all of the variables.

Carmany commended district staff for all their hard work and efforts under this flawed system. Barber shared frustrations in regard to schools continually getting beat up even though it is evident that staff members are working hard and doing a great job working with students to increase achievement. Escárcega agreed that sites have worked hard and have a lot to celebrate. Stuart added that administrators and teachers have never dismissed goals and are committed to working and progressing kids to ensure 100 percent proficiency by 2014.

DIVISION OF FINANCE

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) – Technology Park at Fitzsimons

Weeks shared that the Board was presented with information on tax increment financing under separate cover and a report from the joint task force that met in May of this year was included in the agenda.

Weeks shared that a tax increment financing program proposal is currently moving through the city of Aurora that specifically deals with the northern portion of the Fitzsimons urban renewal area.

Tax increment financing is very specific and prescriptive. Only two entities establish a TIF: 1) urban renewal authority and 2) downtown development authority. The Aurora Urban Renewal Authority has partnered with a developer and the city of Aurora regarding the northern portion of the Fitzsimons campus to do a required study and determine that the area is blighted for TIF. TIF is a tool that allows for sales and property tax revenues that normally flow to entities such as a school district be deferred for a period of time, usually 25 years, to the urban renewal authority. The urban renewal authority uses the funds over a 25-year period to pay down debt that has been used for eligible public improvements on the urban renewal area site. In 2001, this occurred at Fitzsimons. The proposal moving through the city of Aurora is to change and amend the initial TIF financial district area and plan.

Revenues will flow to the urban renewal authority for a 25-year period for each financing district that is established. Eligible redevelopment costs include code requirements for public safety, public parking, site utilities, improvements in

public plazas and public rightaways, and the prorated share of soft costs related to redevelopment.

Since 1983, the district has entered into two TIFs. In 1983, litigation occurred between the district and the city of Aurora that resulted in a joint resolution requiring several steps be taken each time a TIF goes through the city's process. The resolution requires that a seven-member task force be formed: three members from the city, three members from the district, and a neutral party. The group is required to meet to cover and discuss the plan, impact, build out, terms, and usage. The district does not have voting or veto power but has some influence as a partnering entity within the city. In addition, the law requires that the district be notified and given the opportunity to provide input to the council on the process and plan.

We participated in the first TIF in 1983 that includes the four-quadrant area at Sable and Alameda, encompassing the Town Center of Aurora, city center, and municipal building. Two months ago, the 25-year period expired and the TIF was resolved. All of the values of taxable properties are currently on the tax rolls and APS will begin receiving property taxes. We did not receive property taxes during the 25-year period.

In 2001, the Fitzsimons redevelopment area was established. The district participated and a seven-member task force was convened. A 25-year TIF was put into place in which we would not collect any taxes for the section of the Fitzsimons campus that had not been developed. The city developer and the Aurora Urban Renewal Development Authority agreed that the second portion of the redevelopment area should be amended and excluded from the original TIF. The northern portion of the Fitzsimons urban renewal area has been established as the Colorado Science and Technology Park Urban Renewal Area.

Terms within the TIF are similar and different. The city developer requested seven separate districts and seven separate TIFs within the area. Each would start at a different date due to the construction schedule in the undeveloped portion of the area. All seven TIFs would come to a sunset and cap at 50 years. Barry commented that this is an example of our influence on the joint task force.

Lewis asked if the city was agreeable to this. Weeks replied yes. The city will not receive any sale taxes generated during the 50-year period. It will go to the urban renewal authority.

Barry commented that our ability to get a bond is predicated on the total valuation of the amount of land owned by the district in Aurora. The total amount equates to about \$1.8 billion. This increases our valuation and has enabled the district to request a \$250 million bond. It is also a good economic incentive to attract people and businesses to Aurora as seen in the tremendous benefit of the Anschutz medical campus. Cook commented that Fitzsimons was a federal installation and the district has never received any property taxes from it. Weeks added that the university buildings are also exempt. This is an incentive to bring in growth and minimize blighted areas from further deterioration.

Lewis asked how much the district would receive in property taxes from the four corners at Alameda and Sable. Weeks will present information to the Board in the fall.

Weeks shared that the first TIF districts would include nine research buildings, a 150-room hotel, a 200-room hotel, two parking structures, light rail station, police

station, office building, credit union, daycare, two mixed use residential buildings and a university physician building. The golf course would be on the western portion of the development.

Joint task force members included John Barry, superintendent of schools; Rod Weeks, chief financial officer; Josh Hensley, planning coordinator; Ron Miller, city manager of Aurora; Nancy Freed, deputy city manager of Aurora; Dianne Truwe, director of development services in Aurora; and Dr. Jay Gershen, vice chancellor of the University of Colorado. Dr. Jay Gershen represented the neutral party on the task force. Weeks noted that if school financing changes and we are not held harmless and it hits us directly in reduced revenues, we would not be in favor of continuing with agreements as is. The recommendations from the joint task force are:

- the joint task force would not meet during the second TIF
- information and updates would be provided to the joint task force as needed
- limit the number of TIF districts in the Technology Park to seven
- the sunset date on the TIF districts would expire in 50 years or sooner
- tax-exempt entities owning or leasing property in the Technology Park would make payments in lieu of taxes to the Aurora Urban Renewal Authority .

Cukale moved and Barber seconded to move the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) – Technology Park at Fitzsimons to action.

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook, Cukale, Edberg, Lewis, Prince #8022

Approved on a vote of 7-0

DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

No Items

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

MONDO Workshop

Stuart invited Jean Dawn, instructional coordinator; Lisa Toner, instructional coordinator; Clara Hernandez, fifth grade teacher at Crawford Elementary; and Emmy Yoshikawa, third grade teacher at Crawford Elementary to the staff table to present a workshop on the MONDO elementary literacy program.

Dawn shared that MONDO is the core reading program for elementary literacy in APS. We began our partnership with MONDO in November 2006 and piloted it at 12 APS schools. It was expanded to include all schools in the 2007-08 school year and has been well received by elementary teachers.

Toner shared that MONDO is a systematic and explicit reading program that is aligned with state standards. It is structured and centered on the learning needs of individual students, and provides supports such as pacing and teaching guides to teachers. Student materials offer a range of texts to meet the needs of elementary students. It is a reform model that provides support for teachers to learn from each other. Core assessments are provided through determined strengths and learning needs of readers. Assessments are critical for monitoring progress by establishing starting points for teaching and learning and determining reading stages of students through profiling. It is a practical support

for teachers and assessment data can be used immediately. Approaches for reading are offered through MONDO based on the reading stage of each student.

Dawn shared that once starting points have been established through assessments, the small group organizer is used to determine student groups for differentiation of instruction. Students with like needs in stages are placed in groups and a weekly plan of instruction is developed. As students progress, groups change. Rotation guides provide support for teachers to determine how often and how long to meet with student groups. Dawn reviewed an example of a focus sheet in the MONDO workshop program. Teachers are able to monitor student learning directly on the focus sheet.

Dawn reviewed a diagram of the 60-minute elementary reading block. The first 10 to 15 minutes of the block is designed for whole class focus of instruction. Students then do individual work while the classroom teacher pulls small groups together. During the last five minutes of the class, students returned as a group for whole class sharing. Carmany asked if the focus sheet replaced the daily lesson plan. Dawn replied yes.

Yoshikawa reviewed portions of the MONDO approaches. Kindergarten through second grade teachers read from big books, songs, poems or charts. Third through fifth grade teachers use the same resources as kindergarten through second grade teachers. They also read from chapters, nonfiction articles, and transparencies. Shared reading is shared through whole group experience that begins with a teaching point or focus that is grade-level appropriate. The teaching point is pulled from the pacing guide, trends seen in small groups, probing or monitoring notes. Teachers open with the teaching point or focus of the day. They read text while students focus on the teaching point, which could be fluency or comprehension. Teachers review the text and ask probing questions. The teaching point is revisited to ensure students understand the focus of the day. Shared books and resources are reviewed over a period of time ranging from three to five days. During this time, teachers delve deeper into understanding and discuss varying focuses within the same text. Students are in a safe environment and feel welcome to chime in or read phases. Teachers may pull ELL students into small groups to do a preview or review in order to provide more support and give them confidence to participate in whole group reading.

Tasks boards have been implemented in classrooms as part of the MONDO approach. Yoshikawa uses a small task board to kickoff the reading block after whole group sharing to eliminate questions or curiosity as to whom the teacher will be meeting with. A big task board is used that contains rotations so students know what to do and when to do it.

When students are not meeting with Yoshikawa in small groups, they are expected to go to centers throughout the classroom including computer, independent or buddy reading, word fishing, MONDO listening, or the library. Every task has expectations that are discussed in advance with students and posted at the centers. MONDO links with CDs are available at computer stations, so students can read along with books, and MONDO tapes are available in the listening center so they can practice reading, fluency and comprehension skills.

While students are reading independently or working on reading skills, Yoshikawa works with small groups including an oral language group. Oral

language is the foundation of literacy. MONDO research shows that in order to achieve literacy success, students must possess a strong oral language foundation. Through MONDO oral language, students are driven to know that “what we think, we can say – what we say, we can write – what we write, we can read.” An oral language group consists of four to six students. The teacher states the focus for the day and students begin the discussion. The teacher monitors for the day’s teaching point noting observations on the focus sheet and checking to see what language students have control of; what they are approximating in the language and syntax rules; are they taking on previous teaching points or feedback; authentic dialog; how they are organizing their thinking; and are they listening and responding to each other within the group. The purpose of oral language groups is to provide a safe learning environment where students can begin speaking, expanding, approximating, building and putting thoughts together, providing opportunities for language development, building personal relationships with classmates, building vocabulary, demonstrating print concepts and increasing oral language and reading fluency.

Hernandez shared that the independent reading block at the intermediate level is somewhat different but many of the tasks are similar to the primary levels. Expectations, responsibility and dialog for individual tasks are taken to a deeper level. As an example, the performance reading center is for the two higher reading groups. Students are expected to take on the responsibility of rehearsing literature for an authentic purpose of a performance or recording. Later in the year, Hernandez may write specific project directions for some reading groups while meeting with other groups.

The interactive task board used in Hernandez’s class is on the promethean board. Students click on directions to get an audio reminder of directions and tasks. The automatic timer is also used on the promethean board to remind students to switch to the next activity. Students are able to manage time and focus their energies on the whole group teaching point for the day.

Guided reading groups are a staple of the reading block at every grade level. The groups run from 10 to 20 minutes depending on reading levels of students. Hernandez works with three to six students in each group.

The MONDO curriculum provides excellent authentic text for teachers to use. The lesson plans support the explicit teaching comprehension strategies while reinforcing the reading processes that all fluent readers need. The lessons are focused on text-based discussions where students continue to build upon oral fluency learned during oral language groups. At the fifth grade level, most students have built oral language fluency and are starting to transition out of oral language groups.

Every MONDO lesson plan begins with a preview of the text followed by some predicting between the student and teacher. It transitions to an independent reading phase where students read independently while the teacher monitors for reading behaviors. The lesson ends with a discussion that refocuses the comprehension strategy of the day and is usually completed in a five minute block. Texts used in MONDO are real books that link to content areas in science, social studies and other student interests. A text is usually completed at the lower level within one reading group. The entire text is often not completed within a reading group but inspires independent project work in higher groups.

MONDO guided lesson reading plans provide more than enough support for focusing the lesson on specific needs of students. There are three days of

lessons within a specific text. Teachers can choose from two to three different teaching focuses within a lesson plan. During the final component of the reading block, the focus is returned to the entire group. At Crawford, students use reading journals to write responses to the teaching focus of the day. Students who are identified to share report out to the whole group during the final five minutes of the block.

Toner shared that MONDO provides facilitators that lead principals and teachers leaders through learning opportunities. They in turn share information learned with teachers at elementary sites. This year, we have an additional opportunity for learning in that site visits have been setup and scheduled with learning teams comprised of small groups of teachers. In three weeks, teams from three to four sites will visit schools. Each school will set their focus for the day. A facilitator will be with the team for the entire day. Visits will be scheduled at sites four times a year on a rotation basis.

Edberg was intrigued with the music component of MONDO. She asked how often teachers use it. Yoshikawa replied that the music component is part of the rotation. It is mostly used around holidays or toward the end of the year. The pacing guide helps us focus and determine when to use it. We try to get through most of the songs because it helps with the development of oral language. Hernandez does not use the music component at the fifth grade level. After the guided reading block, students can go to listening centers to experience songbooks and poems independently.

Cukale asked what grade levels were students reading at. Hernandez replied that reading levels varied among students. We teach the entire spectrum and MONDO provides resources for all grade levels. Cukale asked if students reading at a seventh grade level connected to seventh grade content in other core areas such as science. Olezene replied that science curriculum is based on standards and is not a grade level correlation as in the reading program. Hernandez added that it helps higher-level readers connect to the social studies content curriculum due to the emphasis on literacy and independent research.

Prince asked if students who scored well on assessments could move to more advanced groups. Hernandez replied that students are moved to higher level groups all of the time. Some students are in two groups based on their individual needs.

Prince asked if MONDO books were available in the media center. Yoshikawa replied that some MONDO books are in the media center. We try to keep the books fresh for our students so most are in the classroom. Students can take advantage of MONDO books within the classroom library.

Lewis asked how MONDO had been embraced with veteran teachers. Toner shared that assessments and groupings have helped teachers form a routine. Most teachers appreciate the quality of the materials and the flexibility of using different guides.

Lewis asked how prescribed were the assessments and materials. Toner replied that we have assessment windows at the beginning of the year. This year, we only tested new students. We requested that an oral language assessment be given to all students. In the middle of the year, we test students who are below grade level. At the end of the year, we have a lot more assessments because the state requires us to give the DRA-2. Teachers continually assess students to gauge knowledge and understanding in MONDO. Assessments are part of the

kindergarten curriculum. MONDO has specific assessments so we can see gaps that need to be closed. Hernandez added that teachers pull from different MONDO books and materials to teach students at various grade levels.

Barry thanked Yoshikawa and Hernandez for their amazing insights. He asked if either teacher had seen evidence of the high mobility rate among students transferring between schools within APS. Yoshikawa replied that students often transfer in and out of Crawford. When new students transition from an Aurora school, it is easy to transfer learning in the MONDO program.

Barry spends time in classrooms teaching or observing one day a week. It is amazing to watch students become engaged and energized. They cannot wait to get to a computer station or discuss something they learned yesterday. Teachers use strategies to move students from oral language, shared reading and guided reading. The powerful element of MONDO has proven itself in results seen. MONDO is more like the reader/writer's workshop at the secondary level and it flows effortlessly into middle and high school curriculum. APS teachers wanted more structure in reading with a clear English language learning component and MONDO had an excellent one.

Barry asked what the growth rate at Crawford was last year. Hernandez believes it was about three percent. Escárcega shared that Crawford saw a seven percent growth rate. Barry commended the teachers and staff at Crawford for all their hard work and efforts to increase student achievement. He saluted Hernandez and Yoshikawa for the pictures, task boards, organization, classroom management, and comprehension strategies used to increase student achievement.

Carmany asked Hernandez how often she met with the guided student reading group. Hernandez meets with ELL students four times a week for about 10 minutes per session. She meets with transitional students three times per week and high-level students twice a week. Barry commented that there is plenty of time to adapt to the needs of individual students throughout the week. Hernandez will meet with student groups more often if needed.

Barry presented Hernandez and Yoshikawa with a Superintendent recognition coin for all their work and efforts to increase student achievement.

DIVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES

No Items

III. CONSENT AGENDA - ACTION ITEMS

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

No Items

DIVISION OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESEARCH

No Items

DIVISION OF FINANCE

No Items

DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Classified Personnel

Licensed Personnel

Non-Licensed Administrative and Professional/Technical Personnel

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

No Items

DIVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES

No Items

Edberg moved and Cukale seconded to adopt the consent agenda as presented.

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook, Cukale, Edberg, Lewis, Prince #8023

Approved on a vote of 7-0

IV. ACTION ITEMS

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

CASB Resolution

Barber moved and Carmany seconded to approve the CASB resolution as presented.

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook, Cukale, Edberg, Lewis, Prince #8024

Approved on a vote of 7-0

DIVISION OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESEARCH

No Items

DIVISION OF FINANCE

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) – Technology Park at Fitzsimons

Cukale moved and Edberg seconded to approve the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) – Technology Park at Fitzsimons report as presented.

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook, Cukale, Edberg, Lewis, Prince #8025

Approved on a vote of 7-0

DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

No Items

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

No Items

DIVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES

No Items

IV. CONCLUDING ITEMS

Opportunity for Audience

Correspondence

Next meeting date

The next business meeting of the Board of Education will be held September 16, 2008, at 6:30 p.m. in the Dr. Edward and Mrs. Patricia Lord Boardroom.

Adjournment

The regular meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

President

ATTEST _____
Secretary