

## I. PRELIMINARY

Cook called the March 17, 2009, meeting to order at 6:35 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  
Tony 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***

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

### ***Approval of Agenda***

The March 17, 2009, agenda was approved as written.

### ***Approval of Minutes***

The minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Education held March 3, 2009, and the amended minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Education held February 17, 2009, were approved as written.

### ***Student Performance***

Nedra Rudolph, family liaison and dean of students at Montview, shared that the "Positive Me" step team focuses on being positive role models to students at Montview and in the community. We practice and discuss self-esteem, teamwork and friendship on a regular basis.

Cook thanked Rudolph and the "Positive Me" step team for the wonderful performance.

### ***Opportunity for Audience***

Rosana Trujillo, 3573 S. Gibraltar St., 80013, 303-699-0448, is an ELA teacher at Virginia Court as well as the AEA/ELA Caucus chairperson.

The AEA/ELA Caucus was formed because of our passion to support the academic success of ELL students at all grade levels in APS. We are driven by three basic goals:

- advocate and provide professional development for teachers to help them meet the needs of ELL students,
- strengthen communication regarding ELA policy and practice, and collaborate with the ELA department and the Division of Instruction to support the academic progress of ELL students,
- advocate for and help communicate needs of ELL students and their parents.

Through our partnership with AEA and NEA, we have received two grants totaling \$10,000 and have sponsored professional development for APS staff with respected experts and practitioners. Dr. Nancy Commins, Dr. Barbara Medina, Dr. Kathy Escamilla, Dr. Robin Waterman and many others have addressed a variety of topics such as effective classroom strategies for ELL students, increasing ELL parent involvement, and understanding the immigrant experience. These sessions have been well attended and have included teachers, building and district administrators, and APS Board members. We have recently facilitated our own professional development based on curriculum developed by NEA that addresses culture, equity and needs of English language learners in order to close the achievement gap.

Since our inception, we have met with Superintendent Barry, William Stuart, former ELA Directors Laura Munro and Karla Groth, current ELA director Jean Burke, Ivan Duran and Lisa Escárcega. Our meetings have included ideas, suggestions, questions and concerns that have been brought to the table with the intent of helping APS ensure the academic success of ELL students.

We applaud the recent announcement that requires LDE certificates as a condition of employment for new teachers. We are pleased that APS is taking steps to require that all LEP students receive the English language development time they deserve and is required by law next year. We have a few questions and concerns that we feel are necessary to be brought before an audience that includes all APS stakeholders, and for whom the success of our ELL students is a priority. My colleagues will speak to those areas.

Linda Bay, 1268 Madison St., Denver, 80206, 303-756-2948, has taught English language acquisition for 24 years and has taught English language acquisition in APS for five years.

The ELA Caucus has focused on communication since our first meeting with the APS leadership team. We are excited about the opportunities opening within APS to design an improved program of English language acquisition. We know that our present program has not been meeting the needs of English language learners. We welcome changes in the program, but cannot be real partners and offer our experience and expertise unless there are well-designed lines of communication between all stakeholders including building-level educators, families and district leadership.

The ELA Caucus and many teachers have shared concerns and have two communication requests:

- Clear and consistent communication with district leadership
  - We realize that this is a time of many changes and we appreciate that uniform PowerPoint presentations have been made to large groups of ELA teachers and principals. Teachers are asking for this information in written form and would like the opportunity for questions and discussion during these meetings. How are classroom teachers, district coaches, teacher leaders and special educators being kept in the loop? Could we use our instructional technology to further communication? Maybe an interactive ELA department Web site with frequently asked questions and opportunities to post questions and answers could be developed.
- Opportunity for building-level educators, ELA specialists, and classroom teachers to have authentic input into the design process
  - Teachers are vested in designing a successful ELA program. We want the opportunity to contribute to the process as decisions are being made and believe it is absolutely essential. As in a classroom, commitment and collaborative effort result from being part of the process.
  - Teachers would like to know about groups such as the English Language Development Task Force. Was information about this group given to teachers as it was formed? Was there opportunity for input? How were members chosen?

We took a risk coming here tonight, but are certain that the Board and district leadership have the same desire that we do, which is doing what is best for students. We are here to offer our best efforts as partners and to ask for your help in nurturing a climate of communication where the voices of teachers and parents are valued as we move forward with designing a truly excellent program of English language acquisition in APS.

Manley Daniels, 2234 Hudson St., Denver, 80207, 303-839-0120, is an ELA teacher at East.

The ELD block has immersed as an integral part of the changes envisioned for ELA learners next year. The ELD block means a focused amount of time for ELA learners to be provided with specific English Language Development. There are specific needs for the ELD block that must be addressed at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Some of these needs include student maturity, scheduling time, instructional differences and college preparation. To meet the goals of VISTA 2010 for students to attend college without remediation, it is crucial for the ELD blocks to be designed to integrate English language development with the standards implemented across all three grade levels. We propose that personnel trained and experienced in ELD instruction at their respective grade levels work within those levels.

The ELA department has started to address these needs as shown at a recent morning in-service for secondary ELD staff. The fact remains that staff in the ELA department is heavily weighted with former elementary personnel. We would like to see as a promotion of teamwork, trust and fair representation, a distribution of elementary, middle and high school expertise in the ELA department as well as on the ELD taskforce that is currently in place. With an even distribution of experienced ELA practitioners across all grade levels in the

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ELA department and the ELD taskforce, teachers can be ensured that they will be provided with the resources, consultation and preparation needed for the future. The department and taskforce would also be able to assist for the proper alignment of curriculum with pacing guides for all three grade level ELD block instruction. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share in this exciting time of change for our ELA learners.

Denise Alcala, 1461 S. Danube Way, #101, Aurora, 80017, 303-745-4828, addressed the changing role of ELA teachers in APS.

Many ELA teachers are concerned that our positions are evolving into several major responsibilities including:

- ELA demonstration classroom teacher
- teacher leader
- monitoring and assessing English language learners
- attending special education staffing meetings, Child Study Team and leadership meetings
- helping teachers understand their role in planning and implementing the ELD block

We have not received clear communication on how we will manage these responsibilities competently. We have asked if educational assistants would help and if classified ELA staff would retain their positions to support us, but have not received any answers.

ELA teachers also serve in a community liaison capacity or work as a team with a community liaison in our schools. If we are stretched to the point that we no longer have time to act as a bridge between families and schools, we will lose vital parental involvement that affects English language learners' academic growth. The speakers at the diversity forum at Aurora Central affirmed these beliefs. We have to maintain relationships with students and their families, and they need to know that we care in order to promote student achievement.

We are still waiting for communication on these issues and for the opportunity for ELA teachers to be included as team members that offer input in decisions that impact all APS teachers.

LeeAnn Gott, 16695 E. Tennessee Ave., Aurora, 80017, 720-427-2613, is an ELA teacher at Kenton.

Next year will bring profound changes in the way ELA students receive instruction in APS. The AEA/ELA Caucus has been advocating for change since we first met as committed teachers dedicated to improving instruction for second language learners in our district through three areas of focus: communication, professional development and family involvement.

I would like to speak to the family involvement focus. Just as the teachers who work directly with students day to day have valuable insights into how to best meet the needs of those students, parents have a very important perspective on their student's needs, and it is critical that their voice be included in the decision making process.

While the ELA Caucus has been encouraging change and improvement in the way that we educate second language learners, parents have also been

advocating for changes and improvements. Parents and teachers welcome the opportunity for ELA students to have language instruction that is more focused on their linguistic and academic needs. Both parents and teachers have concerns about how these changes are being implemented.

Gott read two statements from the book "Restructuring Schools for Linguistic Diversity," coauthored by Dr. Nancy Commins, ELA consultant for APS.

- "Incorporating parents and community members into the decision-making process increases the possibility that the specific needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students will be taken into account in reform efforts."
- "Change will not necessarily come easily, but the best decisions will be made when parents and community members work side-by-side with teachers, non-certificated staff, and administrators to truly meet the needs of all students."

The best decisions come from true collaboration, real input by parents and teachers in the planning stages of reform efforts, and breaking down barriers of a hierarchical system that blocks the voice of those who know the student best. Parents have not been informed in the current change effort and have not been asked to be partners in the effort. Members of the ELA Caucus as well as other teachers and parents want to be part of the planning and decision-making process.

We cannot list all of the questions and concerns that we have from parents and teachers in the limited time that we have tonight. What we offer tonight is energy, commitment and a willingness to go from here in a positive, collaborative manner, and be partners in change in this new direction for linguistically diverse students in APS.

Jean Burke, 2425 S. Oakland St., Aurora, 303-750-3244, is the student achievement director for ELA in APS.

It is clear that the demographics in Aurora have changed drastically, and the needs of our English language learners are some of the greatest challenges that we face. One of every two elementary students, one of every three middle school students and one of every four high school students are English language learners. The way that we are currently providing support for ELL students has not been enough. We need to look at how we are supporting kids and shift our thinking as to how to create capacity in all our schools, and have a shared accountability and responsibility for all staff members that work with English language learners. The ELA department is looking at three primary goals to build capacity including:

- develop strong leadership with an ELA teacher leader who is knowledgeable and teachers can work both for and alongside with
- have a demonstration classroom in every school where teachers can learn effectively
- increase the skill level of all APS teachers to support English language learners

We have been providing linguistically diverse learner academic certificates to teacher cohorts. These cohorts have been provided free of charge through UCD and Regis for the last three years and will continue through next year. We will require that all new teachers receive training the following year. We know that

we are shifting our thinking and there are a lot of changes, but we are excited about what we are offering for our English language learners.

## **II. INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

#### **Reports from the Board of Education**

Edberg had an opportunity to read to students at Arkansas. It is always a real treat to read and interact with students, and see the enthusiasm on their faces.

Edberg read part of a letter that Board members received from Karen Hawkins, parent of a student at Aurora Hills.

“My name is Karen Hawkins and my daughter Jessica has been an APS student since kindergarten. She is now in seventh grade and attends the IB program at Aurora Hills.

I have always been a huge advocate for excellent teachers. Aurora Hills contains what I believe to be the best of the best. These high standards have proven to be successful beyond anything that I have seen and these teachers deserve recognition. The gifts these teachers give are permanent and positive, and there really is no greater gift. Mr. Darland, Ms. Brandon, Ms. Grieco, and Mr. DiLenardi are the seventh grade team and are all excellent teachers. We are so grateful to have a public school system that is so supportive and dedicated to success. I’m not sure that we actually do enough for teachers, but it is so important to know that they are excellent.”

Edberg shared that the APS Board knows that we have some really wonderful teachers. We recognize our excellent staff and the amount of time, dedication and passion that you put into your work. We do not say thank you often enough, but the entire Board feels the gratitude of having such an excellent staff. Thanks to all the teachers in the audience tonight. We appreciate everything you do.

Edberg requested that the entire letter be included in the minutes as follows:

“My name is Karen Hawkins and my daughter Jessica has been an APS student since kindergarten. She is now in seventh grade and attends the IB program at Aurora Hills.

I have always been a huge advocate for excellent teachers. We have experienced both good and bad teachers. They both hold an incredible amount of powerful influences that can be carried through the life of a student. It would be great to see the excellent teachers honored and awarded.

Aurora Hills contains what I believe to be the best of the best. These high standards have proven to be successful beyond anything that I have seen and these teachers deserve recognition. The gifts these teachers give are permanent and positive, and there really is no greater gift. Mr. Darland, Ms. Brandon, Ms. Grieco, and Mr. DiLenardi are the seventh grade team and are all excellent teachers.

Is there some way we can give back and honor these wonderful people that dedicate their lives to the success of our children? It would be well worth the investment and would allow us to give back a fraction of what they have given us.

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We are so grateful to have a public school system that is so supportive and dedicated to success. I'm not sure that we actually do enough for teachers, but it is so important to know that they are excellent.

Anyway, I just wanted to share my feelings and for you to see the incredible talent at Aurora Hills. Thank you for taking the time to read this and thank you for the opportunities you have given my child! Please let me know what I can do to give back and honor the great teachers at Aurora Hills."

Lewis attended the Educating a Rainbow of Children Conference at Aurora Central on March 7, and spoke with many wonderful APS teachers. If we can make sure that we all have authentic input, we have staff in place that can make a difference for APS kids.

Lewis thanked Barber Cooper and school services staff for organizing the wonderful conference.

Lewis attended the Hispanic/Latino Student Success Conference sponsored by CASB. I am learning a lot and still have more to learn. Together we can make this work.

Lewis attended the first annual "Celebrating our Roots" event for students, parents and staff at Laredo. They had an overwhelming turnout that was not expected. The kids were excited to perform for their parents and staff, and it was a fabulous evening.

Lewis attended Governor Ritter's news conference that was held last Friday at the Lowry campus. Governor Ritter and Linda Bowman, president of CCA, spoke about dual enrollment. Two APS students from Rangeview and Aurora Central were highlighted at the news conference and shared how excited they were to have the opportunity to attend CCA and earn college credit while attending high school. I was so proud of both students.

Barber thanked Barbara Cooper and school services staff for organizing the Educating a Rainbow of Children conference. One concept that was emphasized repeatedly at the conference was the integral need for music and arts in schools.

Barber acknowledged the beautiful artwork displayed on the wall in the boardroom from students at Century. She also thanked the "Positive Me" step team for the wonderful performance earlier in the evening.

Barber thanked the teachers in the audience for all they do and concurred with comments from Edberg in regard to the excellent teaching staff in APS.

Prince attended the news conference with Governor Ritter and Linda Bowman in regard to dual enrollment. I believe we had three students that attended CCA last year and earned an associate's degree and a high school diploma. This year, eight students will earn an associate's degree along with their high school diplomas. I am extremely excited about the future. We have come a long way and there is still much more to do.

Cukale acknowledged comments from fellow Board members in regard to the Educating a Rainbow of Children conference. I have been a part of this for six years and to see how far it has evolved is phenomenal. The speakers who spoke on diversity and how to bring leadership out of both children and families

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were just wonderful. It is there and it will happen. We need to continue to work with parents, community, and especially our teachers to help and support them in any way in efforts to bring out student leadership. Our children are our future leaders and we need to support and be with them every step of the way.

Barbara Cooper did an outstanding job putting together a team of people who had the best interest of everyone at heart to ensure that this was a successful event. Cukale asked Cooper to stand up and be recognized.

Thanks to all the APS teachers. They are not only phenomenal, they are passionate as well. Teachers that have passion always have successful students.

### **Items of Current Interest**

Barry commended Rangeview High School staff members Lillie Dean, Sandra Scott and Tammy Strouse for the exemplary support they provided to Rangeview student Nicole Goeke, who had undergone surgery and was no longer able to participate in cheerleading.

Patty Goeke wrote a letter expressing her appreciation for the staff enhancing Nicole's interest in the theatre program during that difficult time. Due to your combined efforts, this student experienced a positive school year and a new found love for another art form. Your professionalism and dedication to our students do not go unseen. You've made a lasting impression on the family and we thank you for all that you do.

Congratulations to the Gateway and Rangeview high school students who recently participated in a drill meet competition in Kansas. They won a total of nine trophies in armed and unarmed events. The Eaglettes, an all-female drill team, scored a stunning first place in the "unarmed exhibition" for the fourth consecutive year.

Other wins include:

- first place
  - color guard
- second place
  - unarmed regular drill
  - armed (unannounced)
  - unarmed (freshmen)
  - unarmed (overall)
- third place
  - armed exhibition
  - armed overall
- fourth place
  - armed regulation

The cadets represented themselves and the district extremely well and we are very proud of their efforts.

Be sure to check out the APS Traveling Art Show as it showcases great works of art created by APS students. Show artwork will be on display at West Middle School from Tuesday, March 31 to Wednesday, April 15.

Please join us for an open house to learn about the unique learning opportunities

at the district's newest pilot schools, Fletcher Primary and Fletcher Intermediate Science and Technology schools. The event will take place tomorrow, March 18 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at Fletcher Elementary.

Aurora Central staff and students that participated in the mock trial state completion will be recognized at a future Board meeting. APS students participate in many competitions throughout the state, but the mock trial demonstrates an articulation to make an argument in front of a judge and demonstrates a capacity to defend and prosecute someone. The Aurora Central mock trial team placed second and third out of 80 teams that participated. We are very proud of our kids.

### **DIVISION OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESEARCH**

*No Items*

### **DIVISION OF FINANCE**

*No Items*

### **DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

*No Items*

### **DIVISION OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES**

#### **Achieve3000**

Stuart invited Achieve3000 representatives Thessa Monaco, account manager, and Margaret Pearson, project coordinator, to the staff table.

Monaco shared that Achieve3000 is an online, research-based differentiated literacy solution. The three program goals include:

- students reach or exceed reading levels regardless of their grade ability level
- help schools and districts make Adequate Yearly Progress
  - Colorado standards are integrated into the program and can determine which benchmarks the student has and has not mastered
- parents can view how their students are doing from home and help them via a parent log in
  - information is available in English and Spanish

Monaco invited Heidi Trevithick, teacher at North Middle School, and Sam McNitt, teacher at Aurora Central, to the staff table to share information and provide a demonstration of Achieve3000.

McNitt is a second-year literacy teacher at Aurora Central and has been using the Achieve3000 program in reading intervention and sheltered English classes for two years. The online program has helped differentiate non-fiction articles for students on a weekly basis. Students are able to read articles about current events at their grade level ability, and are provided e-mail accounts to keep in contact with teachers and Achieve3000 representatives. Teachers review data and determine how students are performing on different standards.

McNitt reviewed an example of how a student was performing on a specific

standard over a period of time. Students are grouped in specific categories with recommended intervention strategies and plans. Teachers review recommendations and use them as a guide to group students in guided reading, plan instruction and pull kids that need additional help with one or more standards. Achieve3000 is another tool and form for teachers to assess student learning. It is also engaging for students that like technology and like to read about current events.

McNitt shared that articles are differentiated according to a student's grade level ability, and reviewed examples of a ninth-grade level reading article and a second-grade level reading article. The content is the same for both articles, but the vocabulary and sentence structure is differentiated to the student's grade level ability. Students reading at a ninth or tenth grade level work with students reading at a fourth grade level in groups. This provides all students with an opportunity to participate in discussions of current events.

Achieve3000 is currently being piloted in Honors 10 classes to determine how it can support more advanced readers. Data from last year indicated that students who used the online program in intervention reading classes showed increased gains on the CSAP assessment. Intervention teachers reviewed data at the start of the year and saw increases in student growth. We believe that Achieve3000 was one of the factors in growth increases. The program has been a very big support for students and teachers.

Lewis asked how classrooms were structured and if every student had computer access to Achieve3000. McNitt shared that the class structure was dependent on the teacher. Computers are not in every classroom. We book lab time in 100-minute blocks and visit the lab two to three times a week. Students work on laptops in small groups on specific needs in the program. Most students are working in Achieve3000 during lab time.

Lewis asked if students accessed Achieve3000 during the evening. McNitt shared that about six of his 25 students access Achieve3000 after school hours. Data received indicated that about 30 percent of students enrolled at Aurora Central access Achieve3000 after school hours.

Lewis asked if more students would utilize Achieve3000 after school hours if they had access to computers. McNitt replied yes. Many students use computers in the media center to access Achieve3000 after school hours. Kids e-mail teachers about articles or request information on how they are doing. They are aware of their growth and often request to move up a level. Lewis asked if kids are able to move up a level if desired. McNitt replied yes. Teachers have the control switch and would need to set it up.

Barber asked how involved parents were. McNitt has been in contact with parents of students that access Achieve3000 at home. Many parents do not have enough information about the program. Pearson shared that we just introduced the program to parents and will officially kick it off in the fall. Parents who attended the recent town hall meeting were provided information and received an "800" number to call for additional information.

Carmany asked how many students were utilizing Achieve3000 at Aurora Central. Fair shared that about 500 students at Aurora Central were utilizing Achieve 3000. We encourage students to utilize it once or twice a week.

Carmany commented that the basis of Achieve3000 is built on lexile levels. Is

research available that shows how lexile levels correlate with CSAP or levels that we use in the district? Pearson replied that we will be able to show correlations in the future. This program has only been piloted for two years. We will do a correlation when CSAP scores from North are returned this year.

Carmany asked how we would determine what program made a difference when research is conducted. McNitt believes growth increases are a combination of fifth block, reader/writers workshop and Achieve3000 and the way each supports teachers and students. Escárcega shared that we are currently doing analysis on fifth block. Achieve3000 will be added as a variable to determine growth for some students. We will differentiate the effects of growth to determine how much is attributed to each program. Monaco shared that Achieve3000 is willing to partner with APS to determine growth correlations.

Barry asked McNitt about levels of student progression and engagement. McNitt shared that the online technology piece as well as other classroom innovations have excited students. The combination is hitting a variety of student learners.

Prince asked if McNitt had seen any difficulties in accessing and utilizing Achieve3000. McNitt shared that the program is very user friendly for both teachers and students.

Trevithick has been teaching reading intervention for two years and began using Achieve3000 in October 2007. Achieve3000 is really unique because it gives students two choices on multiple choice questions. Students can take a poll and compare results to students in different parts of the country. They can do eight multiple choice questions based on recent articles. They can do thought questions and are asked to write a long paragraph in response to something in the article. Both the multiple choice and long answers are very CSAP friendly. Teachers can walk around to review student work, ask probing questions and teach strategies.

If students get the answer correct on the multiple choice question the first time, they can move to the next questions. If they get it wrong, they get a second chance. This puts students in the forefront, makes them responsible and builds self-confidence. First try student scores were between the 50 to 60 percent range; second try scores were considerably higher.

Trevithick shared that the average reading ability level for sixth grade students in her class was second grade. Some students were at a kindergarten or first grade reading ability level. About 90 percent of students in her class have some level of English language acquisition and 50 percent are receiving special education services. Achieve3000 allows them to learn at their own rate. Sixty students are utilizing the program and each is doing something different due to the ability to customize the program to the learning rate of the individual.

Data showed that student growth is slow until they become more familiar with the program and they gain more self-confidence. Individual student growth showed that 14 students, or 25 percent, have increased by at least one and a half grade levels. Seventy-five percent of students have achieved more than what was expected in Achieve3000 compared to a regular literacy class. About six students have experienced growth increases by four grade levels. Achieve3000 works as well as a regular literacy program for many students.

Carmany asked who was responsible for grading constructive responses. Trevithick shared that teachers are responsible for grading constructive

responses, thought questions. Teachers have some flexibility to use bits and pieces that are suited for their class. Thought questions are graded based on the program rubric due to specific instructions that are provided for students, which is similar to the CSAP rubric. Students are provided with immediate feedback and responses to thought questions. Carmany asked if the program rubric was the CSAP rubric. Heidi replied no. The Achieve3000 rubric is good and is similar to a number of literacy rubrics.

Barber asked if interaction between student to teacher and student to student would decrease as a result of the online program. Trevithick shared that it has facilitated communication between teacher to student and student to student. Teachers walk around, ask probing questions and discuss strategies with students. Kids also work together and discuss articles and help each other with vocabulary.

Fair shared that Achieve3000 supports teachers in readers/writers workshop by finding non-fiction articles for students to read daily. Articles are archived and social studies and science teachers have begun to retrieve and review current issue topics with students. Many teachers are retrieving archived articles to use in small group guided reading. Achieve3000 has also helped many Aurora Central students become familiar with geography throughout the country and world. The online program is not a replacement for readers/writers workshop, but is a wonderful tool and a valuable resource.

Lewis asked how often student e-mails are checked. McNitt shared that e-mails are checked daily and can be flagged for content. Teachers have control on whether to provide access to e-mail from student to student. Control is mainly isolated to teacher to student.

Cook thanked everyone for the presentation.

### **Instructional Material Adoption**

Stuart shared that the list of proposed instructional materials is presented to the Board as information.

Cook asked if the list of proposed text and materials for the International Baccalaureate Program is set by the IB program. Stuart replied yes. The IB community establishes the list of proposed text and materials.

## **DIVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES**

*No Items*

## **III. CONSENT AGENDA - ACTION ITEMS**

### **SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

**Application for Committee Appointment (DAAC)**

### **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**

**Proposed Membership for Long-Range Facilities Advisory Committee**

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

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook, Cukale, Edberg, Lewis, Prince #8065

Approved on a vote of 7-0

**IV. ACTION ITEMS**

**SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

*No Items*

**DIVISION OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESEARCH**

*No Items*

**DIVISION OF FINANCE**

**Expenditures Summary and Financial Report as of February 28, 2009**

Weeks shared that the Board received the Expenditure Summary and Financial Report as of February 28, 2009, under separate cover. The recommendation is that the Board approve the Expenditure Summary and Financial Report as of February 28, 2009, as presented.

Prince moved and Edberg seconded to approve the Expenditure Summary and Financial Report as of February 28, 2009, as presented.

Week shared that the general fund spending rate is at 92.5 percent, which is very good for the February time period. We are targeting a 94 percent or better percentage for the year to establish our expenditure baseline as we move toward the 2009-10 school year. The inter-fund borrowing amount of \$1.6 million is a combination of the general fund loaning to the following funds:

- Nutrition Services Fund - \$708,631
- Copier Services Internal Service Fund - \$36,715
- Grants Fund - \$863,976

Weeks pointed out that three charter schools, including the Lotus Charter School of Excellence, are spending over 100 percent. All three schools are being monitored and we are working with them. The other 13 district funds are spending between 58.7 to 100 percent.

Adrienne Bradshaw, director of accounting; Kelly Blume, accountant; and Louise Tipton, accountant, have taken the initiative to invest \$2.6 million of bond proceeds in 22 different CDs ranging in interest rates of 1.29 percent to 3.34 percent at 13 local banks within the APS boundaries.

Carmany noted concern with spending rates of charter schools. She questioned if the district had leverage to correct overspending. Weeks replied that we are monitoring spending. The charters, like district schools, had one-time expenditures at the beginning or middle of the year that are showing as part of their spending rate. That is the case with two of the charters, but we are monitoring Lotus more carefully. If charter schools continue to overspend budgets approved by the Board of Education, they will receive a communication from the Colorado Department of Education and would have to develop a corrective action plan. We are trying to work with the charters to help them make good decisions.

Carmany asked who is responsible if charters continue to overspend. Weeks shared that it would be the district's responsibility, but none of the charters are overspending on a continuing basis. Each charter that has a negative balance is moving in a reduction pattern.

Lewis loves to see the number of grants APS is receiving and the number of programs that grants funds are supporting. Weeks recognized and commended Superintendent Barry and Paul Coleman for their passion and efforts to secure grant funds for APS.

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook, Cukale, Edberg, Lewis, Prince #8066

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*

### **V. BOARD WORKSHOP**

#### **Graduation Requirements**

Stuart invited Rich Patterson, northeast student achievement director; Susan Olezene, director of student achievement for curriculum and professional development; Lynn Fair, principal of Aurora Central; Carol McBride, development director for Aurora LIGHTS; and Joan Ott, development director for the Galaxy Program to move to the front row to participate in a Board workshop.

The Board engages in a workshop periodically as a learning opportunity to learn more about a specific topic. Tonight's topic is graduation requirements in APS and the state of Colorado. Much is occurring in APS, the state and nation in regard to high school reform. The Board will be asked to think about some of the changes that APS is contemplating and is embedded in the VISTA 2010 Strategic Plan that will drive some of the reforms.

The Board was provided with an article in regard to the history of Carnegie Units. The Carnegie Unit, a method to measure student learning as defined by subject time, goes back 100 years and is a cornerstone of public education. We are looking at seat time in terms of high school reform and moving toward how we assess student learning.

Cook asked how standards-based grading fits in. If students can achieve learning within 15 days, why do they need to remain for the entire quarter? Cook noted that part of what is driving this is higher education versus K-12. Stuart shared that there is a disconnect of what higher education expects all kids to have to be prepared for college and what most districts require in terms of graduation requirements centered around Carnegie Units. Local school boards and districts are empowered to determine what is required on high school transcripts based on determination of sufficient evidence of learning. The state is starting to support and explore moving away from seat time and it will be interesting to see how higher education supports it.

Olezone shared that standards-based grading ensures that students have the learning, not just seat time as part of the Carnegie Unit. Olezone has been working with teacher groups to determine quarter benchmark standards in order for students to have the foundation needed to reach the standard. We are trying to answer core questions in standard groups such as what do students need to know and be able to do in content areas according to standards and benchmarks. What are effective teaching practices in order to help students reach standards and how do we know they have reached it. We are trying to define proficiency through analyzing student work and annotating work to determine content. We are also looking at what to do if students do not reach proficiency targets or if they reach it sooner, which is part of the Rtl model. Standards-based grading is a whole standards-based education system and is what we are trying to build in APS.

Patterson shared that the Board received a document in regard to Governor Ritter's, CAP4K, Senate Bill 212, which aligns P-20 education and referenced one of the bullets in the bill:

- expands and refines instructional standards, preschool through the first year of college; permits and encourages local school boards to create multiple curricular pathways to accommodate student varying interest. In doing so, school boards are not required to base decisions on traditional conventions such as seat time, Carnegie Units or course titles. All curricular pathways must ultimately lead to postsecondary and workforce readiness.

Patterson asked the Board to reference the final document from CDE called "Reimagining the High School," from Governor Ritter's Graduation Guidelines on Development Council. The document provides a brief overview of four areas that all school districts in the state will address, moving away from the Carnegie Units approach of seat time and shifting toward content mastery. APS has a standards-based educational system and we have made great strides in the last

few years to move toward an embedded standards-based system.

Core curriculum needs to be introduced around 21st century skills. The state is working to define the meaning of 21st century skills and postsecondary and workforce readiness. We should have well-defined definitions by the end of the year.

We are working on developing assessments for students who want to opt out of a course, and have demonstrated proficiency or have mastered a particular content. We will be developing assessments and the state will be making changes on assessment models that they will be requiring from districts. The state wants districts to have career pathways in place for kids to earn college credit while in high school. We have a great start in APS, but the Carnegie Units are impeding progress.

Lewis asked if the state would allow us to adjust that. Stuart shared that local school boards can determine graduation requirements with very few exceptions. Every student in Colorado has to take US history, health and civics instruction. Barry was surprised to see the varying graduation requirement differences throughout districts in the state.

Stuart shared that the Colorado Commission of Higher Education sets admission requirements for Colorado's four-year institutions in that students had to have two years of foreign language and four years of English. Districts debated on whether or not to align graduation requirements to match state college admission requirements. Every student in APS has the means to take course work necessary to be eligible for CCHE requirements. Across the state there are mismatches in that some districts have aligned requirements and some have not.

Olezene shared that we were granted about \$500,000 to hire dropout intervention counselors to work with freshmen in order to help them establish college pathways and develop individual career and academic plans. We have done some very powerful work on dropout intervention as a result of the grant and the six additional counselors. Olezene encouraged the Board to advocate for keeping this from being written out of legislation.

Barry shared that the six counselors focus specifically on freshmen, who are our most vulnerable group especially in the first nine weeks of school. As soon as a student has one F, it impedes their ability to graduate. APS has a dropout rate of 10 percent, which is about 3,500 kids per year. The primary reason that students dropout of school is because they cannot read.

Prince commented that Douglas County decreased their graduation requirement from 25.5 to 24 credits due to funding. The graduation requirement at Littleton Public Schools decreased to 24 credits. Stuart pointed out that the APS is a half credit short in science of meeting college admission requirements of CCHE.

Stuart shared that Ott, in her former role in the district, was working on high school reform about 15 years ago. Ott shared that when we looked at tying graduation to standards, we could not include all of the science standards in two credits. The science staff recommended that we needed at least 2.5 credits to encompass all of the standards. Stuart added that 2.5 credits was a lot of science education at that time. Students who met standards still had to work around the Carnegie Units to graduate. With stronger support from the state, we will be able to move away from a defined unit of time that defines student credits, graduation and college eligibility. Ott added that we implemented a dual system

of high school standards and credits because we could not move away from the Carnegie Units.

Carmany asked why world language is not a graduation requirement in APS. In order to for students to become 21st century citizens we need to teach multiple languages. Stuart concurred and shared that having foreign language as a graduation requirement has been debated for 10 years. Some districts have implemented world language as a requirement. It is a local decision often based on staffing. Local school boards can require world language as a graduation requirement and it is a decision that the Board would need to make. Lewis also struggles to understand why world history is not a requirement. It is important to understand world history as well as US history.

Lewis asked Stuart what the Board should be looking at. Stuart referenced the CAP4K document that Patterson mentioned earlier. The term "pathway" is a recurring term in public education and structuring curriculum to be more connected and seamless from year to year. We need to look at what we are providing for kids in terms of opportunities and credits. The Board will need to make decisions in the future to address high school reform in APS.

Ott shared that we have been working on the Galaxy Initiative Academy, and have met with representatives from CCHE in regard to Carnegie Units students will need to be admitted to the Colorado School of Mines, DU and UCD. Students who wish to enroll in the Galaxy Initiative Academy will need a minimum of 25 credits including four credits in science, math, and English and five credits of pre-engineering curriculum from Project Lead the Way. Freshmen will take Introduction to Engineering Design, sophomores will take Principles of Engineering, juniors will have course choices, and seniors will take a capstone course in which students work in teams to solve problems with input from a community mentor. Project Lead the Way will also offer pre-engineering curriculum for middle school students interested in the Galaxy Initiative. We will be requesting that students enrolled in the Galaxy Initiative have one engineering class count as a practical arts credit and one pre-engineering class count as a computer credit because they will be addressing many of the same fields.

Stuart shared that the Galaxy Initiative is a great example of high school reform and how we will need to be flexible in how kids demonstrate understanding and learning in various program areas.

Lewis noted a comment from Patterson in which the average kid will have 14 careers in their lifetime. She struggles with middle school students who enroll in the pathway and questioned how do they get on it and how to they get off it if they change their mind? How do you educate well-rounded kids and provide exposure to all kinds of things. Olezene shared that one part is to let students see how their education is applicable to a career. The pathways provide a reason for school and connect to something. Research from Texas showed that it provides kids with a solid foundation in any career path and prepares them for college or a postsecondary pathway.

Van Gytenbeek shared that we visited a high school campus in San Antonio and talked to 10 or so students enrolled in the medical pathway. The students came from a number of areas throughout the city to attend the school and were enrolled in a rigorous four-year plan consisting of internships as well as weekend and summer programs. Many were going into careers in the medical field and planned to enroll in colleges throughout the country. One kid shared that he planned to study theology, and we asked if he was sorry that he chose to attend

this type of school. The student shared it was because of the school and what he learned that helped him make the decision to study theology. He added that he would be successful in whatever he does as a result of the strong foundation received.

The course pathway for students in both the Galaxy Initiative and Aurora LIGHTS Program will ensure career success and provide skill sets needed to be successful in any chosen career field. Lewis would like every APS student to have these skill sets, not just kids enrolled in the pathways. Van Gytenbeek replied that we are providing all kids and parents with a legitimate choice of how they want their school structured in terms of credit alignment.

Cook noted the importance of continuing to focus on choice in APS. The Denver Post featured an article on five different charter schools in DPS. Either APS will provide choice or someone else will and they will hand pick the kids to attend. There are a number of kids who know where they want to go and want to utilize career choices. We have to be able to provide these choices. APS is serious about education and we can lead the way.

Lewis shared how one student at Rangeview announced that she wanted out of school in her junior year and had the 22 required credits. The principal talked her into staying and asked her to look into taking classes at CCA. The student is graduating this year with an Associate of Science degree. Stuart shared that it is a good example of the limitations of a credit bound high school student. We have some kids that will take core math classes in eighth, ninth and tenth grade and announce they have completed math credits. The pathways are helping kids remove the mind-set that they are done by helping them retain relevance and connectedness to school and preparing them for college and a career.

McBride shared that freshmen in the Aurora LIGHTS Program are currently attending Saturday Academy at the medical campus. Last Saturday, a professor at UCD did a wonderful job motivating students and providing a list of things that kids should be thinking about. He also stressed to them that they cannot rest on their laurels after their sophomore year and senior year was not a vacation.

We have been struggling to determine how to fit in all of the science that is needed in the pathway. One ongoing conversation is what to do with physical science requirements because we would like freshmen enrolled in the pathway to start with biology. We are looking at a prescriptive assessment to determine proficiency or areas a student is proficient in. We will be bringing this to the Board for consideration.

Fair shared that most high school juniors do not know what they want to be when they grow up. The pathway helps kids focus on careers. At her former school in Texas, we developed pathways for every student. Students had a focus and a body of work that had to be completed. They had a senior presentation that had to be shared with community leaders and board members. We never had the issue of kids losing focus and were able to provide a certificate of expertise in some area at the end of their high school career. Students were employable or college bound. APS students often wander after receiving their 22 credits and do not understand what it takes in the world to be successful.

Barry commented on the ownership of making sure kids are engaged early and discussing what is needed to be successful. We will hook kids to stay in school through engagement and ownership

Carmany commented that part of where we are missing the boat is before high school. We need to be having conversations with elementary students. When I visit schools, I ask elementary students to raise their hands if they believe that they will not have to read once they finish school. You will be surprised how many hands go up.

Carmany also noted concerns in regard to whether established programs were being evaluated and if glitches had been worked out before implementing new programs. She also commented that not every kid is interested in a career in one of the pathways.

Olezene shared that kids chose to enroll in the Galaxy Initiative or Aurora LIGHTS Program. We have two Aurora LIGHTS elementary schools, Park Lane and Montview and multiple elementary schools are involved in the Galaxy Initiative. Both pathways are in comprehensive high schools where all kind of courses and choices are available to students.

Stuart reviewed a chart of graduation requirements throughout districts. The elective column ranges from 4.0 to 10 credits. Districts that have a large number of elective choices have built in choices for kids. This gives kids that like arts, music and physical education more options. We would need to look at existing learning opportunities for students and determine if we want prescribed programs or more elective choices. These are tough decisions that need to be made. Fair added that we need to re-define electives. Most kids will only take electives classes that they are interested in pursuing.

Prince commented on the amount of expertise in APS. It is really hard to see how any of the programs would fail. We have education, engineering and many choice options available to students. If we are not looking toward the future, we are sitting on our laurels and hindering our kids. We must have options for kids.

Cook concurred with comments from Carmany in regard to program monitoring and reviewing data to ensure programs are working, but we must step out and lead the way to provide opportunities for APS kids. We have a reputation for being innovative. We can lead the way and set the course.

Cukale concurred that kids in the 21st century will have 14 different careers because they will have the skill set to be able to change career fields. Companies will not be around in 25-year blocks and kids will need to adjust. Today's workers are finding that out and are filling community and technical colleges to obtain another degree. They are returning to school to do what they want to do, not what they had to do for 25 years. Future workers will have more opportunities and career choices, and it will be easier because they have been involved in different areas. They will be able to take courses in different areas and venues including online learning. If you want to stop dropout rates gives students options to learn outside of a school environment.

Barber shared that one of the worst things ever heard is to ask a child to share a dream and they respond what is a dream. We must make sure our kids obtain their goals and dreams.

Escárcega shared that we work with the university in regard to the Aurora LIGHTS Program and have a tight evaluation process. We need to do more program evaluation and are trying to carve that out. We have to have programs in place a certain amount of time to develop them. We will provide more reports on program evaluation as they become available.

Patterson shared that all pathways will be in place by December 2009, 2010 and 2011 and benchmarks will need to be met. Stuart noted that graduation requirements are policies and are the APS Board's domain. We will be coming to the Board in the future to request support on pathway initiatives, models or fundamental changes in electives.

Cook shared that the Board will direct questions or concerns to Barry. Lewis commented on the need to focus on providing every child in APS a pathway. Barry shared that the next two pathways will be based on the arts, music and humanities. It is important to keep kids excited and engaged.

McBride commented that yesterday at a meeting a long-standing partner spoke to a new partner and shared, "I want you to know, when Aurora Public Schools staff say they are going to do something, they do it and they do it well."

Cook thanked Stuart, Patterson, Olezene, Fair, Ott and McBride for participating in the graduation requirement workshop with the APS Board and leadership team.

## **VI. CONCLUDING ITEMS**

### ***Opportunity for Audience***

### ***Correspondence***

### ***Next meeting date***

The next business meeting of the Board of Education will be held April 7, 2009, 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 9:30 p.m.

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**President**

**ATTEST**

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**Secretary**