



DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Monday, November 16, 2009

900 Grant Street

4:30 PM-6:30 PM

WORK SESSION AGENDA

1st Floor Board Room

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 4:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Update on Teacher Effectiveness |
| 5:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. | 2009 Denver Plan Update |
| 5:30 p.m. – 5:50 p.m. | District School Improvement and Accountability
Council Charter School Renewal and New Application
Recommendations |
| 5:50 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. | Turnaround Recommendations Discussion |
| 6:15 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. | Proposed Preschool and Kindergarten Tuition Changes |
| 6:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. | Proposed Change to World Language Requirement |
| 6:45 p.m. – 6:55 p.m. | Review Board Meeting Agenda for November 19, 2009 |
| 6:55 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. | Open Discussion/New Business |

PUBLIC COMMENT – 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Aligning DPS Teacher Performance Systems to Drive Increased Student Achievement

November 19, 2009



Focus on Teacher Effectiveness: Background

- Upon invitation from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), DPS and DCTA collaborated to submit a proposal to become an Intensive Partnership Site
 - Strategy was centered around the vision of closing the achievement gap through having a highly effective teacher in every classroom
 - DPS was not selected as an Intensive Partnership Site, but received an invitation to submit an Accelerator Grant Proposal for \$10MM
- The \$10MM Accelerator grant proposal is focused on three core strategies within the broader DPS teacher effectiveness strategy
 - Development of a teacher evaluation system that incorporates multiple measures of effectiveness and effectively articulates a teacher's performance
 - Targeted Professional Development tied to information captured within the teacher's evaluation
 - Teacher compensation more directly tied to student outcomes
- DPS was recently approached by BMGF to participate a national study, *Supporting Research to Develop Better Measures of Teacher Effectiveness (MET)*
 - Findings will help DPS develop its own definition of teacher effectiveness, and a set of multiple measures that are fair, reliable and based on data.
 - \$880,000 grant to provide teachers and schools with participation stipends and to support the administration of the project



The Collaborative Strategy Design Process

May 2009 - Present

- Extensive involvement of DPS staff, principals and teachers
 - Engagement of DPS Leadership Team
 - Teacher & Principal focus groups
 - School visits
- Extensive collaboration between DPS and DCTA through joint Professional Practices Work Group (PPWG)
 - Over 100 hours spent collaborating with the PPWG to design strategy
 - Group comprised of DPS administrators, teachers and outside experts
 - Charged with making recommendations aimed at improving teacher effectiveness through more effective induction, mentoring, evaluation, remediation and dismissal processes
- External stakeholders brought into creation of strategic plan through roundtables and one-on-one interviews
 - Local community based organizations, including MOP and Padres Unidos
 - Political partners (CDE, state and local)
 - Others: local foundations, university partners
- Joint DPS/DCTA submission of Teacher Effectiveness Strategy to BMGF

January 2010 - Ongoing

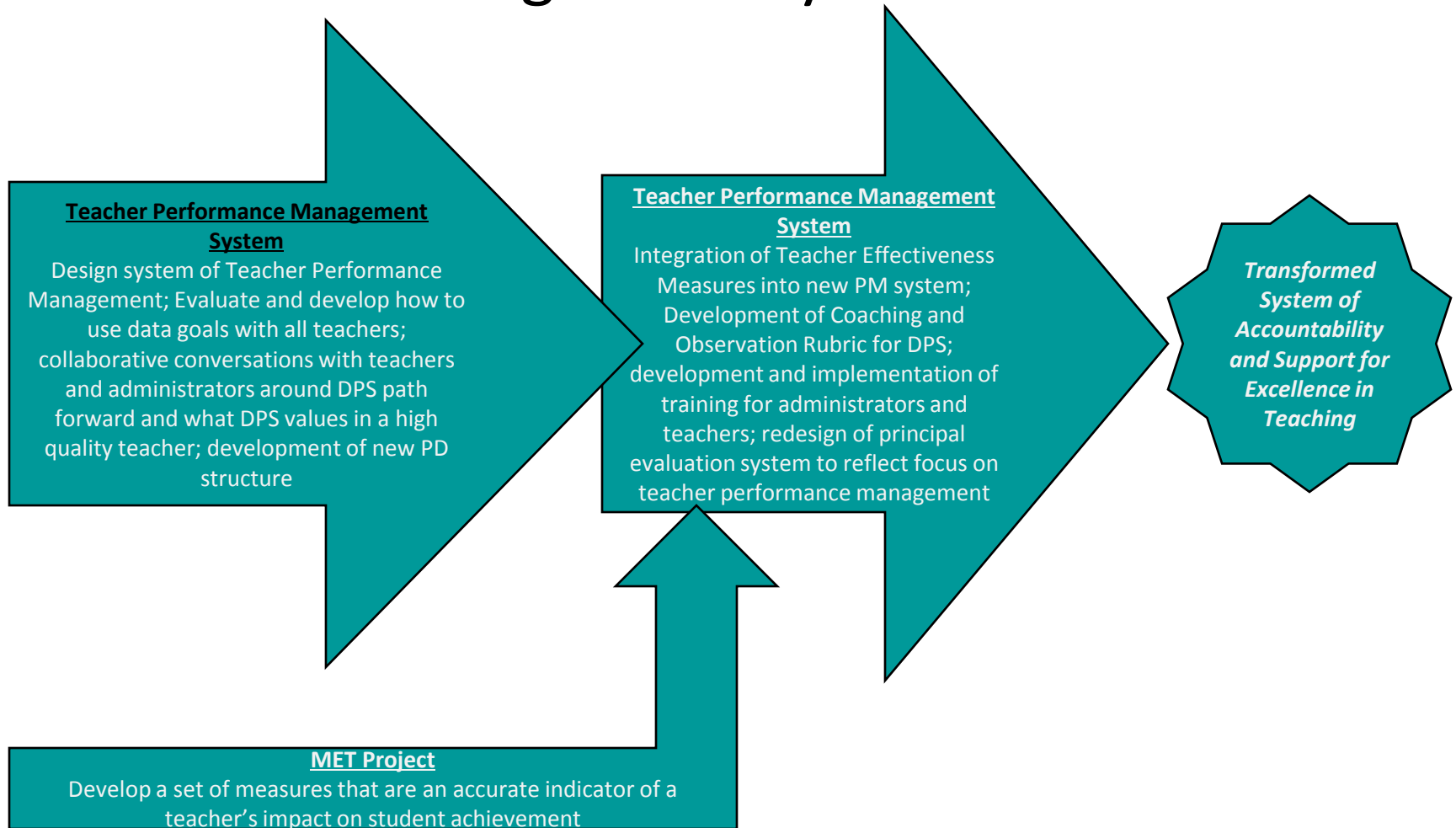
- Monthly Steering Committee - Superintendent, CAO, CHRO, ED DCTA, President DCTA
- MET project in 200-250 DPS classrooms, collecting data



- Focus groups with teachers and principal to begin collaborative conversations around Teacher performance management system

- Design Teams with DPS staff, teachers and administrators to study best practice, inform system design, recommend how to incorporate MET findings

Intersection between MET and Teacher Performance Management System



Measures of Effective Teaching (MET): Project Details

- Goal of project is to identify measures most directly linked to effective teaching
- 3700 teachers across 5-6 participating districts
 - 200-250 DPS teachers
 - Voluntary at the school and teacher level
 - \$1500 stipend per participating teacher; \$1500 stipend per participating school
 - Teachers in grades 4-8 who teach literacy/English language art, and/or math
 - High school focus on 9th grade literacy/English language arts, Algebra I and Biology I
- Independent researchers will collect six types of data over the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years
 - Four videotaped classroom sessions per content area, each year
 - Teacher reflections on their videotaped lessons
 - Student feedback
 - 60-90 minute supplemental student assessment in mathematics and/or literacy/English language arts, and/or Biology
 - Assessment of teachers' recognition and diagnosis of student misperceptions
 - Teacher surveys focused on working conditions.
 - Year two lottery assignment of teachers
- Data collected will not be used for evaluative purposes.



Measures of Effective Teaching (MET): Value to DPS

- Preliminary report of the observable teacher behaviors that tie most directly to student achievement to be received in Fall, 2010 – will be incorporated into the pilot and full rollout of the observation component of the evaluation tool.
- Technology platform and self-reflection protocols being used to capture video and provide ratings and commentary against videotaped lessons to be integrated into our evaluation and feedback process and utilized as a key component of our technology platform
- Final report in 2011-12 – will provide basis for refinements of evaluation system
- Teacher will have access to their videos and can share them with their principal and others for professional development
- Ability to develop inventory of classroom videos to support online professional development and demonstration of best practices
 - With explicit teacher consent around video usage
- The Student Perception Tool will be piloted as a part of the MET research
 - Findings will be integrated into the DPS rollout of this component of the evaluation
- Collaborative learning projects with the other districts participating in the MET project



Accelerator Grant: Project Design

- \$10MM, 3 year grant request
- Teacher evaluation system that accurately reflects a teacher's effectiveness with his or her students
 - Clear articulation of and expectations around effective teaching
 - Incorporates multiple measures and centers on student achievement
 - Extensive training of evaluators and participants
 - Evaluations from multiple sources including principals and peers
- Targeted, classroom based professional development tied to identified needs
 - Supports teachers in their efforts to achieve articulated standards
- Further alignment of rewards and incentives around demonstrated teacher performance and student achievement outcomes, as necessary
 - Differentially rewards our best teachers
- Anchors the other elements of our broader human capital strategy - recruitment, advancement and retention



Differentiated performance evaluation and feedback to increase teacher effectiveness



From

To

Impact

- Evaluations based on principal judgment alone with little inter-rater reliability

"Our evaluations here look totally different depending on whether the principal or AP does it"

- Binary "Satisfactory"/ "Unsatisfactory" system, with 98.5% receiving "Satisfactory" rating

- Multiple sources for measurement, evaluation, and development – including peers - with student achievement at the core and steps in place to ensure consistency

- Differentiated ratings reflecting multiple dimensions



90+%

Teachers agreeing "the evaluation process allows accurate assessment of performance"



90+%

Teachers who said the evaluation process helped them improve



Differentiated performance evaluation and feedback



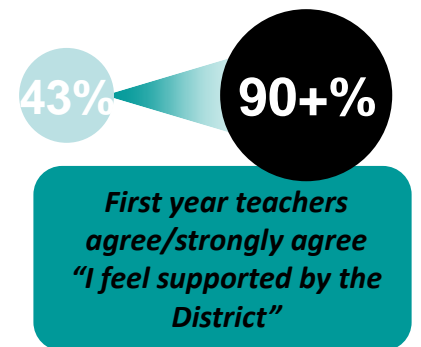
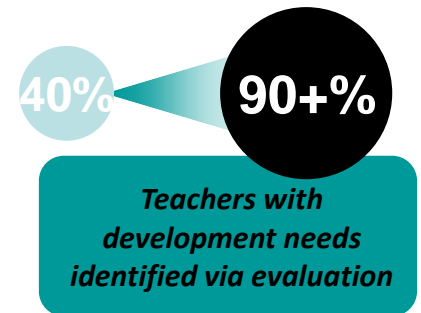
From

- Feedback and development opportunities not linked to identified areas for improvement
- New teachers receiving 1-day orientation and 20 hours with principal-assigned mentor

To

- Regular feedback from multiple sources and development needs linked to plans to address them for all teachers; additional tailored support for new teachers
- Intensive support of novice teachers tied to expected development trajectory

Impact



Accelerator Grant: Project Timeline

- Grant to be considered by BMGF in December, 2009
- January 2010 – December 2010: Development of systems, processes and tools to support teacher performance management; integrate preliminary MET research findings and qualitative data from PPWG and focus groups into the evaluation tool design; pilot elements of evaluation system
- January 2011- June 2011: Pilot and refine the evaluation and feedback loop and the remaining evaluation tools
- August 2011- June 2012: Roll out the new system to 4500 classroom teachers and 300 administrators at 125 schools.
- August 2012 – December 2012: Introduce new student performance measures to teachers who do not have classroom responsibilities.



Next Steps

- MET Grant to be approved by DPS Board of Education (11/19/2009)
- Broad scale MET Project teacher recruiting campaign (11/2009 – 12/2009)
 - DCTA Website
 - DCTA Communications
 - Joint email from DPS & DCTA to all teachers
 - Enrollment email
 - Posters and flyers at participating schools
- Accelerator Grant to be approved by DPS Board of Education (12/2009)
- Hire staff for Accelerator grant (1/2010)
- Begin conversations with teachers and principals regarding teacher effectiveness, design of evaluation and feedback loops (1/2010)
- MET Research begins (1/2010)

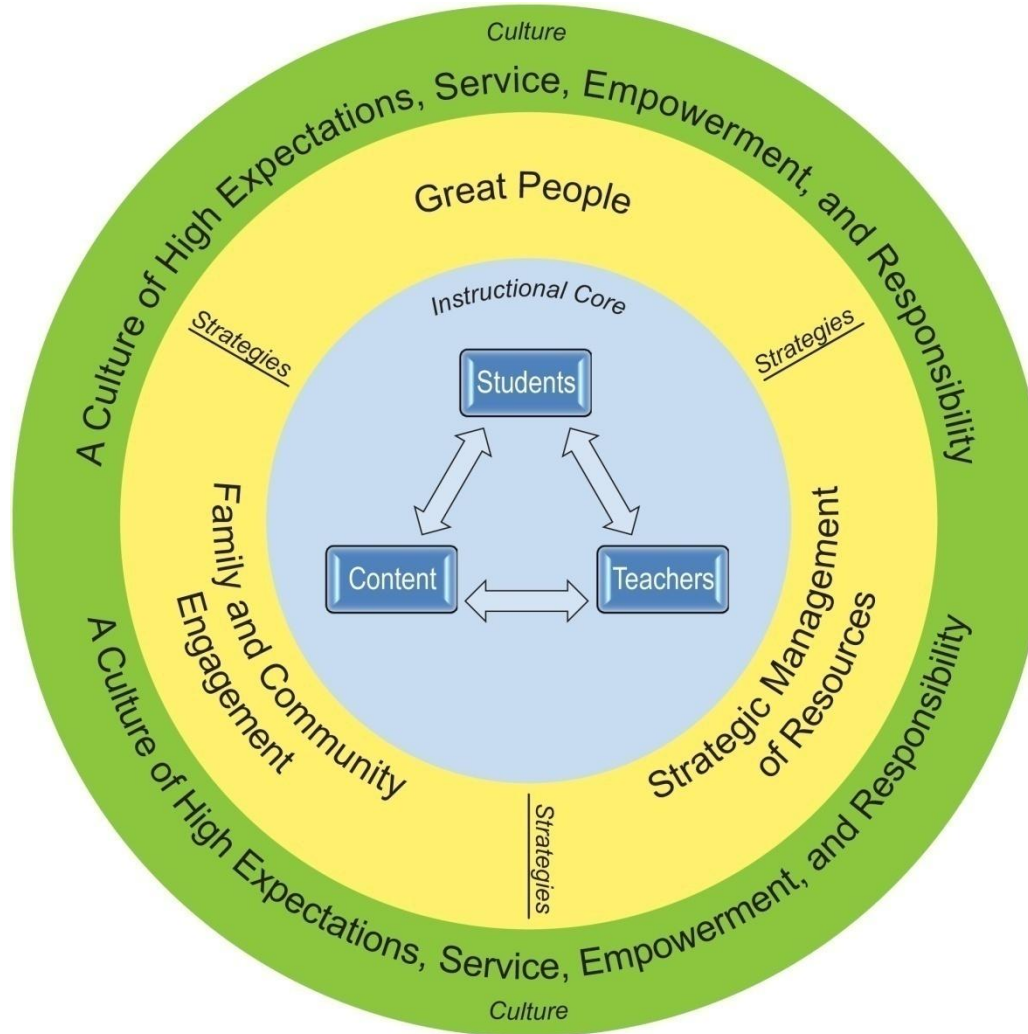
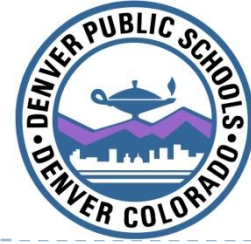




Denver Plan 2009

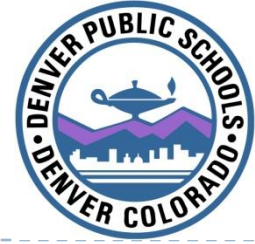
Summary of Feedback 11.16

2009 Denver Plan Summary of Feedback 11.16



2009 Denver Plan

Summary of Feedback 11.16



Feedback To-Date

- ▶ Emails / Web Survey (150+)
- ▶ All employee meetings (2)
- ▶ Principal meetings (6)
- ▶ Teacher meetings (2)
- ▶ Faculty meetings (10)
- ▶ Central office staff (3)
- ▶ Student engagement (3)
- ▶ DCTA (1)
- ▶ Community meetings (3)

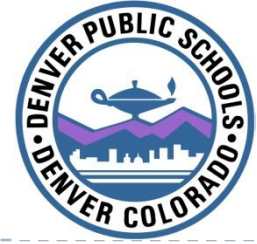
Attached Reports include all feedback received

Recommendations for revisions will be driven by feedback



2009 Denver Plan

Summary of Feedback 11.16



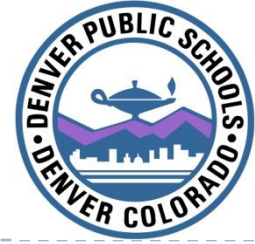
Instructional Core

- ▶ Expand definition of the *whole child*
- ▶ Review current and future curriculum so that schools may select materials appropriate for their students
 - ▶ “We need to be sure the curriculum based on the new state standards is not a rehash of what we have. We have made a huge mistake by limiting instructional options for our students. The reasoning is our students are so mobile we need a district-wide curriculum to meet their needs.” - Email



2009 Denver Plan

Summary of Feedback 11.16



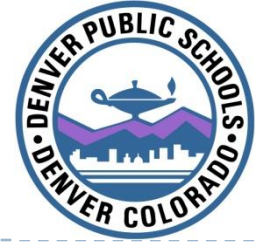
Great People

- ▶ Define standards for effective teaching
 - ▶ “We need to get clear on what teacher effectiveness means and how then to support teachers.” - Online Survey
- ▶ Develop teacher assessment system to provide meaningful feedback
- ▶ Replace teacher conferral after three years with a performance standard
- ▶ Develop training for teachers in cultural competency
 - ▶ “I have worked a lot with DPS teachers, and there is a lack of cultural competency in the teachers themselves. This high expectation about teachers cultural competency - doesn't exist.” - Meeting Notes



2009 Denver Plan

Summary of Feedback 11.16



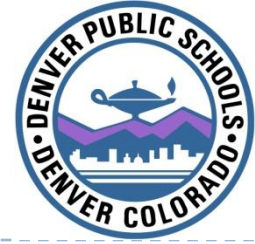
Community and Family Engagement

- ▶ Provide parents the information and training to be effective advocates for their children
 - ▶ “As parents, we need to support our school district, and take our effort and time to know what is working and what is not. And give our feedback and show our care.” - Online Survey
 - ▶ Partner with colleges and universities to help students reach their career goals
 - ▶ “I feel part of the problem we need to solve in high school is meeting the students needs in WHY they need to finish. Denver needs to give the student a reason they believe in to stay in school.” - Online Survey
 - ▶ Expand section on Resource Advocates
-



2009 Denver Plan

Summary of Feedback 11.16

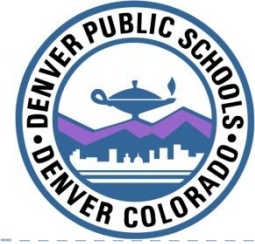


Managing Financial Resources

- ▶ Maximize the resources available and make sure the resources we do have are allocated responsibly
- ▶ Fund programs that work
- ▶ Concerns about class size
 - ▶ “In the early section of the new Denver Plan devoted to ‘Focus on the instructional core’, there are 4 key strategies identified. Expansion of classroom space, and reduction in the number of students assigned to each teacher, would address and satisfy each of those strategies.” - Email



2009 Denver Plan Summary of Feedback 11.16

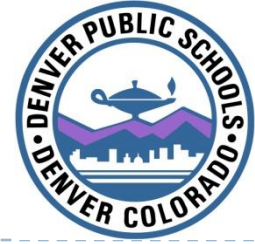


Culture of High Expectations

- ▶ The system of forced placement needs to be replaced by a system of mutual consent hiring
- ▶ The spirit of empowerment must also extend to the individual student
 - ▶ “In a quick read of the Denver Plan I see the word responsibility quite a bit. The Obama speech in Alexandria also pointed to responsibility. What or where is student responsibility in this?”



2009 Denver Plan Summary of Feedback 11.16



- ▶ Next Steps:
 - ▶ Revise draft based on feedback
 - ▶ Present revised draft in winter of 2010





**THE DISTRICT SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY COUNCIL (SIAC)
REPORT
TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
ON
CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL APPLICATIONS**

NOVEMBER 2009

Background

For many years, the District School Improvement and Accountability Committee (District SIAC) has reviewed applications for new charter schools and provided the Board of Education with its recommendations on whether to grant the requested charters, thereby establishing a new DPS school. A school created by this process is established for a set term, usually 3 years, and at the end of such term may continue in existence only if its charter is renewed by the Board. For the last few years, District SIAC has taken on the additional responsibility of reviewing and making recommendations as to whether the Board should renew the charters of those schools whose contractual term is expiring at the end of the present school year.

Process

To complete our review in a timely fashion, District SIAC formed a committee from its membership that included:

Sherry Eastlund, Community Person, Chair of the Subcommittee
Paula Ortlieb, Parent, Chair of District SIAC
Lorelei Cole, Parent, DPS Teacher
Jesse Sutherland, Community Person
Marsha Gonzales, Denver Council PTSA
Leo Smith, Community Person

Note: Ms. Eastlund is a member of the Board of Life Skills Academy. Accordingly, to avoid any conflict of interest she did not vote on and did not engage in any of the subcommittee's discussion concerning that school.

The Office of School Reform and Innovation provided the committee with the applications and the evaluation of those applications under the new School Performance Framework. The committee met on several occasions in October and November to consider each school and reach consensus where possible.

Criteria for Renewal

As in the past, the primary focus of District SIAC's evaluation of these applications for charter renewal is student achievement. This year we have relied extensively on the School Performance Framework rating developed by the District, including not only the "stoplight" charts but also some of the underlying data and quadrant maps. To the extent possible, we also took into account the school's response to the elements of the SPF rating. We also referenced the Colorado Growth Model ratings developed by the state Board of Education that in many respects closely resembles the SPF rating.

Omar D. Blair Charter School

2008 SPF Rating – Meets Expectations

2008-09 General Fund Allocation \$5,600,883 (Enrollment 782)

2009 SPF Rating – Meets Expectations

2009-10 General Fund Allocation \$5,942,838 (Enrollment 791)

District SIAC Recommendation – Renew Charter – 5 yr Term

Rationale for Recommendation:

The School Performance Framework and other relevant data reveal this school to be providing a sound educational option to many Denver families. Although as in almost every school there are challenges to be addressed, we see no basis to oppose renewal for a substantial period

Southwest Early College

2008 SPF Rating – Accredited on Watch

2008-09 General Fund Allocation \$2,740,164 (Enrollment 400)

2009 SPF Rating – Meets Expectations

2009-10 General Fund Allocation \$2,687,006 (Enrollment 370)

District SIAC Recommendation – Renew Charter – 3 yr Term

Rationale for Recommendation

Overall academic achievement as indicated by the SPF has improved in this school from “Accredited on Watch” in 2008 to “Meets Expectations.” However, there have apparently been administrative and financial difficulties recently, and the school may be required to find a new location in the future. These issues could present problems for the school in continuing to provide a quality educational experience for its students and cause us to recommend a renewal for only a 3 year term.

Northeast Academy Charter School

2008 SPF Rating – Accredited on Probation

2008-09 General Fund Allocation \$3,260,329 (Enrollment 367)

2009 SPF Rating – Accredited on Probation

2009-10 General Fund Allocation \$3,450,681 (Enrollment 455)

District SIAC Recommendation – Continue Probation through 2010-11 School Year with strict oversight and no enrollment increase.

Rationale for Recommendation

This school was considered for renewal last winter by the District SIAC and, in our report submitted last February, we stated:

Examination of the available data for Northeast Academy reveals a school that has many serious deficiencies. Among the areas that are particularly troublesome is student growth in the elementary grades. In virtually every rating category, the school fails to meet expectations. The middle grades show a few instances of satisfactory growth, but there are many areas of weakness. Math is particularly deficient, with both elementary and middle grades achieving growth of only around the 30th percentile.

The SPF ratings concerning status or overall achievement levels on CSAP show more instances in which the school is labeled as “Approaching” or “Meets” a required standard. But our examination of the underlying data leads us to question how rigorous the SPF standards are. For example, the elementary grades at the school are labeled as “Approaching” the required standard in writing, but only 22.5% of the students score proficient or advanced on CSAP. Similarly, for middle school mathematics, the school is labeled as “Approaching” the required standard for CSAP achievement but only 17.1 % of the students score proficient or advanced on CSAP.

Under the School Performance Framework, Northeast Academy is given an overall rating of “Accredited on Probation.” District SIAC agrees that, given the academic shortcomings revealed by CSAP and other data, the school should be on probation with closure of the school as a potential result if positive changes in academic achievement are not forthcoming. The question then becomes the length and terms of that probation.

District SIAC believes that probation for 2 years would be appropriate for this school. A probationary period from now until the spring of 2011 would allow changes in the educational program to be implemented and for their impact to be revealed in future testing data, but would not be so long that it would allow the school to procrastinate about making needed changes.

As to conditions of the probation, we would emphasize two areas.

First, we note that the school's enrollment has grown from 367 last year to over 400 this year and that apparently there are some plans by the governing board for further expansion, with perhaps even the use of temporary modular classrooms. In light of the serious academic deficiencies among the students presently enrolled in the school, we believe it would be inappropriate for there to be any expansion of enrollment until there can be demonstrated a marked improvement in academic performance of the school at its present size.

Secondly, a thorough review of the existing academic program and its implementation needs to be undertaken. That review should focus especially on the mathematics program. Many schools use the Saxon math program apparently with good results, but for this school the data indicate that it is not being implemented successfully. It needs either substantial improvement or a different curriculum should be adopted.

In summary, District SIAC recommends that Northeast Academy Charter School be placed on probation for 2 years with the conditions that:

- 1. There will be no increase in enrollment of the school from its present size until it successfully completes the period of probation;**
- 2. The academic program will undergo a thorough review, analysis, and reform, with especial emphasis on improving student achievement in mathematics. "**

We consider this analysis as still applicable, and accordingly, we believe the school should continue to be on probation to the end of the 2010-11 school year.

We do note, however, that the school has substantially increased its enrollment from 367 last year to 455 this year and that its board continues to contemplate further enrollment increases (thereby necessitating increased class sizes). This is especially disconcerting to us, and we strongly urge that one condition of continued probation for the school should be no further increase in enrollment until an improved SPF ranking is achieved.

P.S. 1 Charter School

2008 SPF Rating – Accredited On Watch

2008-09 General Fund Allocation \$1,932,478 (Enrollment 280)

2009 SPF Rating – Accredited on Probation

2009-10 General Fund Allocation \$1,901,333 (Enrollment 257)

District SIAC Recommendation – Charter of P.S.1 should not be renewed, but the school, or a similar nearby facility, should be used as a District operated Multiple Pathways Center to open in 2010 with present P.S. 1 students given enrollment priority.

Rationale for Recommendation

This school was one of the first charter schools in Denver, and its original mission was to be a school that used the resources of an urban environment to provide a rigorous college preparatory curriculum to its students. Over the years, its mission seems to have lost focus and its levels of student achievement declined to such a point that, in January 2007, its closure was recommended by District SIAC. Instead, the Board placed the school on probation and a new leader made changes at the school that brought significant improvement. However, that administrator left the school, and achievement has again declined to unacceptably low levels. As a result, we again recommend that the charter of P.S. 1 not be renewed.

However, we recognize that the school presently enrolls over 250 students, a large proportion of which are special needs teenagers. Further, examination of the demographics of the students at P.S.1 leads us to conclude that the school is in substance if not in name an alternative education campus. And, as such, we do not believe Denver can afford to lose this option for its many students and families who need this type of educational choice. Hence, our recommendation stated above.

Skyland Community High School

2008 SPF Rating – Accredited on Probation

2008-09 General Fund Allocation \$770,510 (Enrollment 140)

2009 SPF Rating – Accredited on Probation

2009-10 General Fund Allocation \$699,250 (Enrollment 105)

District SIAC Recommendation – Deny Renewal

Rationale for Recommendation

In 2006, our examination of relevant data revealed unacceptably low levels of student achievement at this school and, as a result, District SIAC recommended that the school's charter not be renewed. (See Appendix A) Instead, the Board placed the school on probation.

In 2007, our examination of relevant data revealed unacceptably low levels of student achievement at this school and, as a result, District SIAC recommended that the school's charter not be renewed. (See Appendix B) Instead, the Board placed the school on probation.

In 2008, our examination of relevant data revealed unacceptably low levels of student achievement at this school and, as a result, District SIAC recommended that the school's charter not be renewed. (See Appendix C) Instead, the Board placed the school on probation.

This fall, our analysis of the relevant data leads us to the same conclusion for the fourth consecutive year.

Life Skills Center High School

2008 SPF Rating – Accredited on Probation
2008-09 General Fund Allocation \$2,203,555 (Enrollment 215)

2009 SPF Rating – Accredited on Probation
2009-10 General Fund Allocation \$2,404,162 (Enrollment 295)

District SIAC Recommendation – Probation for 2 years with continued oversight and special emphasis on improving student achievement in mathematics.

Rationale for Recommendation:

As an alternative education school that enrolls students who have dropped out of other schools and who are often several years below grade level in achievement, it is extremely difficult to evaluate the performance of this school. Many indicators show very low levels of achievement and could be used as a basis for a recommendation against renewal. However, the school has provided us with some data that reveals progress with a challenging student body. Notably, CDE data indicates that in the all important areas of reading and writing the school is attaining very high levels of growth in achievement. Further the administration of the school seems very professional and responsive to the needs of its students. Consequently, we believe the school does provide a valuable resource for DPS and would urge that, as the District develops a strategy for alternative education, this school should be integrated into that vision.

Appendix A – Excerpt from DSIAC Report of February 2006

Skyland Community High School

This school does not meet District SIAC's criteria for renewal of its charter. The evidence of student achievement that we have examined shows the school to be consistently performing well below other schools that have similar demographics. For example, in 2005, CSAP data shows Skyland to have none of its students proficient or better in math, merely 29.2 percent of its students proficient or above in reading, and only 8.3 percent of its students at least proficient in writing. Schools with comparable demographics in Denver averaged 11.1 percent proficient or above in math, 36.1 percent proficient or above in reading, and 21.7 percent proficient or above in writing. Further, Skyland's School Accountability Report for 2005 showed it to be rated low, and significantly to us, it indicated that there was a decline in the academic growth of its students.

Skyland purports to focus on preparing its students for college, but its eleventh grade students had scores well below the state average on the ACT. Further, even the school's assessment data from its *Accuplacer* system showed its students to be far below the level necessary to be ready for college. Under these circumstances, even if the Skyland diploma is considered technically sufficient for college admission, it would seem to provide no assurance that students can be successful in a rigorous college program.

In light of these deficiencies in promoting student achievement,

District SIAC recommends that the application for charter renewal by Skyland Community High School be denied.

Appendix B – Excerpt from DSIAC Report of March 2007

District SIAC recommends that the charter renewal applications of P.S.1 Charter School and Skyland Community High School be denied.

P.S.1 has over the past three years been consistently rated either "low" or "unsatisfactory" in its SAR. Further the SWT score for the P.S.1 middle grades and the high school have been over 2 standard deviations below the mean. This means that P.S.1 falls well below at least 95% of Colorado school in its CSAP scores. Further, the SWT scores in 2006 were even worse than they had been a year earlier.

Similarly, an examination of the percentage of students showing proficient or advanced achievement on CSAP tests have been consistently dismal, seldom exceeding 30%. And, the scores of an age cohort of P.S.1 students have, more often than not, declined as the class progressed through the school.

The schools that we consider most comparable to P.S.1 are South, Montbello, Smiley and MLK. With few exceptions, all of these schools demonstrate better levels of student achievement than P.S.1.

The record of Skyland is similar. Its SWT score for 2006 is -2.26 standard deviations below the mean, barely sufficient for it not to be rated as "unsatisfactory." Further, its

SWT score has consistently become worse since 2004, falling from -0.96 to -1.73 in 2005 and then further to its present value.

Its CSAP results are particularly disturbing, often showing that less than 10 per cent of the students are proficient or advanced in either reading, writing, or mathematics. Indeed, time and again the record shows that none of the students in a particular class are able to demonstrate proficiency in one of these core subjects.

The schools we concluded were most comparable to Skyland High School are Montbello, West, and North. Even though these schools have substantially higher percentages of students eligible for free or reduced lunch and even though they have CSAP scores that are disturbingly low, Skyland's scores are generally even worse. For example, the 2006 reading scores for ninth grade shows that only 8 percent of Skyland's students are proficient or advanced while the similar schools have 22 to 28 percent of their ninth grade at least proficient in this core subject. (See Appendix B)

In summary, whatever may have been the hopes and dreams for these schools in the past, it is now painfully clear that they have failed and should be discontinued.

District SIAC is well aware and we regret that ending these charters will be disruptive to the student and families in them. And, we are particularly concerned that a number of students now at Skyland were among the students displaced by the temporary closure of Manual. We hope the District will make every effort to assist these students in continuing their education. Nevertheless, we believe that to renew the charters for these schools would mislead their students and families into believing that they are receiving an adequate education. All available data leads us to conclude to the contrary.

Appendix C – Excerpt from DSIAC Report of February 2008

Unfortunately, we cannot say the same for Skyland Community Charter School. In past years, District SIAC, the DPS administration, and the Board of Education have been concerned with the inadequate student achievement indicated by CSAP results at this school. It has been given two one-year extensions of its charter as opportunities to improve its performance. It has failed to do so in any substantial way. In three of the five major rating areas of the District's system the school did not meet the standard set, thereby receiving a "redlight" rating. The two other areas merely show the school as "approaching" the standard. Further, and even more disconcerting, the composite score that determines the school's SAR rating has been getting worse for the last several years, declining from -0.96 in 2004 to -2.38 this year so that the school now has an "unsatisfactory" SAR rating.

Thus, District SIAC recommends that the application for charter renewal by Skyland Community Charter School be denied.

Denver Public Schools



THE DISTRICT SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

COUNCIL (SIAC)

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

ON

CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

NOVEMBER 2009

INTRODUCTION

The Charter Schools Act requires the District School Improvement and Accountability Council (District SIAC) to review Charter School applications. This responsibility was delegated to a subcommittee. This report is the result of that process for the 2009-2010 school year. The persons who participated in a portion or all of the subcommittee work included the following:

Sherry Eastlund, District SIAC Subcommittee Co-Chairperson
Paula Ortlieb, DPS Parent, Chair of District SIAC, Subcommittee Co-Chairperson
Marsha Gonzales, Denver Council PTSA, District SIAC
Leo Smith, Community, District SIAC
Dr. Jesse Sutherland, Community, District SIAC

After the subcommittee received the 5 charter school applications, it engaged in a series of meetings in which it interviewed the applicants of the three schools who have not previously been interviewed by the subcommittee and discussed the merits of each application.

In late October, the subcommittee presented District SIAC with a progress report including an overview of its recommendations. The complete report was presented to District SIAC by electronic means in early November for their comment, and the full council indicated its support for the report.

Criteria and Analytical Process

In reviewing charter school applications, District SIAC's principal test has consistently been whether the proposed school is likely to be successful in providing its students with an educational environment that results in high levels of academic achievement. To meet this test, the school must, of course, also be functionally sound, both in terms of its educational program and its financial operation.

This test remains of critical importance and represents an initial condition that must be met before any charter application will be successful in gaining our recommendation. However, the District has embarked on a policy not only of continually adding multiple new schools of widely differing types to coexist with traditional neighborhood schools but of also dictating the location of these new schools. Because of this change of policy, District SIAC has concluded that other factors are also of vital significance to whether a proposed school should be granted a charter.

Among these additional issues are the following:

- The relationship between the proposed charter school and other nearby schools, especially when the proposed school will be co-located with an existing school;
- The relationship between the proposed charter school and any educational management company or similar parent entity that will be involved in the school's operation;
- The relationship of the proposed charter school and other District schools that are designed to serve students of a particular type or demographic character;
- Enrollment policies that may affect the access of neighborhood families to nearby schools;
- The existence of alternative arrangements, such as creating a performance school, a contract school, or redesigning an existing program that would address the circumstances underlying the proposed charter.

Recommendations

Janus International Academy

Janus International Academy would initially be a K-8 school with ultimate expansion to K-12. It would be open to all students but would place its primary emphasis on serving recent immigrants to Denver, especially those from Mexico, Africa and the Middle East. One feature of the school would be an 8-week required summer session in which students would receive intense English language immersion for 40 hours each week.

This application has a number of deficiencies. Salaries for teachers are set at a meager \$35,000 for the academic year and, although the applicant indicated teachers would receive additional pay for the two month summer session, such funds are not listed in the budget. The deductions for PERA and for PCOPS obligations as listed in the budget are not in the required amounts. The applicant indicated that each classroom would be staffed by two teachers – one regular and one ESL, but that substantial cost is not reflected in the budget. The school intends to become a pre-IB school, but staff development funds and other costs for such program are not budgeted. The applicant indicated that the school would attempt to hire teachers that already have IB training, but the budget does not reflect additional pay to compensate such staff for this specialized background.

Further, for the targeted population transportation to the school from throughout Denver would be vital to its success. However, the applicant indicated only as “hoping” that transportation could be provided by the District. Yet, nothing is budgeted to reimburse the District for that service and the applicant has not contacted the transportation department about the issue.

Also, of critical significance to the subcommittee, the District presently provides a well-designed educational program to immigrant students at Place Bridge Academy, as well as similar programs at Merrill and South High. We see no advantage in the proposed charter over these existing programs.

Accordingly, the subcommittee unanimously recommends that the charter application of Janus International Academy be denied.

Denver High School of Medical Science

This application proposes the creation of a high school designed to prepare its students for careers in the medical field to be located in southeast Denver. The school is planned to offer a full high school curriculum with a special focus on science and mathematics. The school would seek to guide its students to pursue, after completing their high school degree, a wide range of medical occupations ranging from insurance coding technicians to physicians and nurses. A key proponent of the application presently operates a private school that provides vocational training for a variety of medical careers.

The subcommittee has a number of concerns about this application. Of major significance, we are not convinced that the school, even if successfully formed, would offer a program that is substantially different than a student could obtain in any comprehensive Denver high school. Indeed, there are DPS schools, such as DSST or the new Math and Science Leadership Academy, that would provide a student with a superior preparation for a medical career.

Second, there appear to be major problems with the proposed first year budget. To achieve a positive final balance, it postulates obtaining grants and “Intervention Resources” in amounts that are far from certain. Also, its proposed salary for each teacher in the 2010-11 school year is a penurious \$36,000. Nor does the budget indicate the required 3% TABOR reserve.

Other items of concern arise from the absence of parental or community support for this type of school in southeast Denver and from a curriculum that lacks specificity.

For these reasons, the subcommittee unanimously recommends that the charter application of the Denver High School of Medical Science be denied.

Girls Athletic Leadership School

This application is for a 6-12 college preparatory school for girls that uses an experiential learning educational program with elements of wellness or health integrated throughout the curriculum.

This application represents a modified version of the application that was submitted to DPS last spring. At that time a majority of the subcommittee recommended that the application be approved; however, District staff opposed granting the application and the Board of Education denied the application as then formulated. As we did last spring, the subcommittee generally finds the proposal to be for a truly innovative and well researched program that has strong leadership. It has the potential to provide a desirable choice for some Denver families. Further, the concerns about the single sex nature of the school are addressed in the new application by a legal opinion, and, notably, the proposal now budgets for a starting teacher salary of \$43,000 – a significant increase over the amount budgeted last spring.

As a result, it is now the unanimous recommendation of the subcommittee that the charter application of the Girls Athletic Leadership School be granted.

Global Village Academy

The proposed Global Village Academy would be an elementary school designed with a primary focus on providing its students with the opportunity to become fluent in either Mandarin Chinese or Spanish. This language instruction would be provided through an immersion model that, in essence, replicates a school now operating in Aurora. This application essentially duplicates one that was presented to the District last spring. At that time the subcommittee did not make a recommendation either to approve or deny the application. Although generally supportive of the concept of providing intensive world language instruction to elementary students, members had some concern about the excessive amount of instructional time spent on the second language at the expense of instruction in English. Other members believed it would be more appropriate for the school merely to expand its operation in Aurora, instead of starting another school in Denver. Also, the inadequacy of budgeted teacher salaries (an average of \$37.5 K in 2010) was to at least one subcommittee member a fatal flaw in the application.

Upon further consideration, including especially the continued community interest in and support for the school, all members of the subcommittee, save one, now favor the granting of this charter. The one dissenter remains unconvinced that the school can fulfill its mission while providing inadequate compensation to its instructional staff.

Accordingly, the recommendation of the subcommittee is that the charter application of Global Village Academy be granted.

Independence High School

This application is for the establishment of an alternative education high school to be focused on students that are either drop-outs or likely to become so. The school would enroll approximately 200 students next fall and would provide a curriculum designed to prepare students to pursue a college education but would also emphasize vocational choices and work opportunities.

This application presented a dilemma to the subcommittee. We are acutely aware of the need for alternative educational programs that would address the unacceptably high drop-out rate in DPS, and this proposal, even though having some weaknesses, does show promise in that persons with strong backgrounds in dealing with the targeted population are involved. However, even if successful, this school would assist only a negligibly small percentage of the Denver youth who need an alternative educational opportunity.

District SIAC believes that the needs of the Denver community for alternative educational opportunities for secondary students are not well served by the present system of soliciting charter applications. At best, that process results in schools with a very small enrollment being located in a random and uncoordinated pattern throughout the city, whereas the large numbers of dropouts calls for a systematic district-wide approach. It is not sufficient to occasionally send one lifeboat to save a handful of teenagers when what is needed is full armada of schools and resources.

Accordingly, District SIAC strongly recommends that, instead of merely granting or denying this charter application, the Board and the District should form a task force consisting of the backers of the present application and others in the Denver community to design and implement a concerted comprehensive strategy to reduce the number of dropouts and improve graduation rates throughout DPS. That strategy could consist of systematically establishing schools such as the proposed Multiple Pathways Center, or like Independence High School, either as charters or contract schools, or could be directed at providing additional resources and programs in existing schools.

Additional Issues

In our previous report last June (see Appendix A), we noted issues that need resolution concerning the continued establishment of charter schools and their co-location with existing schools. We again urge that these issues be addressed by the Board and District. One of these issues we think is of particular importance to be resolved before the many new schools are opened in 2010.

With one exception, DPS charter schools admit children living anywhere in the District through a lottery process that provides no preference to families that live in the neighborhood near the charter. The result of this process is that, even if a highly

desirable charter school begins operation in a particular neighborhood, the families living there cannot be assured that their children will be able to attend that school. This is in stark contrast to families who live near traditional DPS schools and are therefore given preference in enrollment in those schools. We consider this result to be divisive and to be a cause of hostility towards the District. The difficulties presented by this situation will become more acute as families seek to secure enrollment of their children in the charter schools that are perceived to be high performing and that are scheduled to begin operation next year.

Hence, District SIAC recommends that the Board take needed action, either through seeking changes in the Charter School Act or through charter provisions with individual schools, to assure that families in geographic proximity to charter schools will be accorded enrollment preference in those schools.

Appendix A – Excerpt from District SIAC Report of June 2009

Beginning in the Spring of 2008, the Board and District embarked on a process of seeking to open new schools through a yearly RFP process that invited persons inside and outside the District to create diverse schools to be placed, at the administration's discretion, in locations throughout Denver. That policy may eventually prove to be successful in enhancing overall student achievement of DPS, but any definitive answer to that question is years away. What does seem totally apparent to the subcommittee, however, is that it would be extraordinarily unwise to continue year after year to add school after school to Denver neighborhoods without full public understanding and support of the ultimate vision that the District seeks to realize. Indeed, the RFP process is already beginning to appear to be some type of sorcerer's apprentice that continues blindly to dump new schools on astonished and recalcitrant neighborhoods.

District SIAC strongly recommends that the RFP process should be suspended until the Board and the District engage in a full, open, and genuine public discussion of the future of DPS. That discussion should address multiple issues, including the following:

- What does the Board foresee as the ultimate goal of this redesign of the District, i.e., in ten years, what percentage of DPS schools will be traditional neighborhood schools, charter schools, performance schools, and innovation schools;
- What specific policies and resources will be provided to support traditional neighborhood schools as they compete with new schools;
- How will the District maintain a consistent curriculum throughout the District so that students are not disadvantaged by moving from one neighborhood to another;
- What changes in transportation policies will be necessary to assure equitable access of all students to schools throughout the District;
- What enrollment policies should be required of new schools so as to assure that families living nearby will be able to enroll in any new schools added to their neighborhood;
- Given the long time line before most of the proposed new secondary schools will actually be enrolling student in upper grades, what assistance will be provided to schools serving the present generation of secondary students;
- What steps should the District take in order to evaluate and/or develop community support for proposed new schools *before* a new school is located in a neighborhood and what role should a lack of community support play in deciding to establish a new school in a given neighborhood.

To: DPS Board of Education
From: David Suppes, Chief Operating Officer
Re: Recommended Early Education Tuition Changes for the 2010-11 School Year
Date: 11/9/2009

Background

Over the past 2 years, DPS has dramatically expanded its preschool and Kindergarten offerings. DPS now offers half-day or full-day classes at 85 school facilities across the city. Over these last 2 years, we have increased the number of students in full-day preschool classes by 5 times, from 500 in the 2007-08 school year to over 2,500 this year. 80% of DPS preschool students are from families living in poverty, higher than the district student average of 67%. And the quality of DPS preschool classrooms is high. All of DPS preschool classrooms are Qualistar rated. DPS has 17 4-star-rated school facilities, and an overall average rating of well over 3-stars on the Qualistar rating scale. We also are offering integrated special education/general education preschool classrooms funded almost exclusively from DPS General Funds. Over the past 2 years DPS has also dramatically expanded Kindergarten offerings, going from 72% full day classes to over 92% full-day. DPS now offers up to 6,500 full-day Kindergarten spots.

DPS Costs and Funding Status for Preschool and Kindergarten

DPS incremental cost for providing full-day preschool services is approximately \$775-800 per student per month. For Kindergarten, costs are approximately \$340-350 for the second half of the day.

DPS preschool and Kindergarten budgets are expected to be under considerable strain for the upcoming 2010-11 school year. Denver Preschool Program, which provides 30% of preschool revenues, is looking to cut their funding to DPS significantly in 2010-11 (estimated cut at \$2.5-3 million). Colorado Preschool Program, which provides 55% of preschool funding, is currently not proposed to be cut in the Governor's 10-11 budget proposal. With the current state budget crisis, however, cuts to this program during the legislative session are possible.

Kindergarten revenues are similarly at risk. The state, which had committed to fully funding the second half of the Kindergarten day within 6 years, is already 2 years behind in their projected funding growth. The result is a potential gap of more than \$3.5 million. DPS's goal – despite revenue shortfalls – is to continue to offer preschool and Kindergarten services to as many students as possible.

We believe it is necessary to modify tuition for several reasons:

- Funding for both in ECE and Kindergarten is likely to be reduced; DPS would like to preserve all programs possible (increasing the costs for tuition-based programs for those who can afford to pay makes sense as those programs generate limited CPP & DPP funds).
- ECE and Kindergarten costs have continued to increase.

- Particularly at the ECE level, DPS is priced very low compared to the market for comparable services.

Principles to adhere to in maintaining programs & considering changes:

- Protect our most vulnerable students – continue to ensure that we can provide these programs affordably to those who most need them and have limited options.
- Charge tuition where necessary reflecting the actual cost to run programs less other funding available.
- Base tuition on a sliding scale for those who can afford to pay – consider market rates in establishing tuition.
- Charge non-Denver residents rates that ensure no city tax dollars are used for those students.
- Try to offer full-day programs wherever possible, as these positively impact student achievement.
- Make the tuition categories as clear and straightforward as possible to parents.

Proposed Tuition Changes

Preschool

In an effort to bring DPS preschool tuition more in-line with actual DPS costs and market rates, and to align tuition rates with families’ abilities to pay, DPS is proposing decreases at several of the lower income levels with increases at the high end of the tuition scale. We are recommending a new tuition category at 710% of poverty (gross income of \$150,000+ per year). These families would pay \$750 for a full-day preschool class per month, roughly 6% of gross monthly income (at the lowest end of the income category) and a rate that approximates the cost of serving these students less the DPP subsidy. Out-of-district students would pay the highest tuition rate of \$800/month, recognizing that no DPP funds are available to support this population. Half-day preschool rates are 50% of full-day rates. Montessori tuition rates would stay the same for next year.

Full-day Preschool Proposed Tuition – 2010-11

ECE Full-Day Category name	Income categories							
	A Up to 185%	B Up to 225%	C Up to 240%	D Up to 300%	E Up to 340%	F Up to 710%	G Over 710%	NR Non-Residents
Minimum gross monthly income for family of 4	\$0	\$2,714	\$3,269	\$4,241	\$5,301	\$6,007	\$12,500	n/a
2005-06 to 2008-09	\$0	\$60	\$150	\$270	\$390	\$390	\$390	\$390
2009-10	\$0	\$60	\$60	\$270	\$390	\$450	\$450	\$760
2010-11 (proposed)	\$0	\$50	\$60	\$220	\$390	\$600	\$750	\$800
% increase (proposed) one year	0%	-17%	0%	-19%	0%	33%	67%	5%
Estimated # of students in each category	2065	8	35	96	76	250	70	25
% of ECE pop in each category	79%	0%	1%	4%	3%	10%	3%	1%
Tuition as a % of min. monthly income (proposed)		2%	2%	5%	7%	10%	6%	n/a

Half-day Preschool Proposed Tuition Rates – 2010-11

ECE Half-Day Category name % of poverty level	Income categories							
	A Up to 185%	B Up to 225%	C Up to 240%	D Up to 300%	E Up to 340%	F Up to 710%	G Over 710%	NR Non-Residents
Minimum gross monthly income for family of 4	\$0	\$2,714	\$3,269	\$4,241	\$5,301	\$6,007	\$12,500	n/a
2005-2008-09	\$ -	\$ 30	\$ 75	\$ 135	\$ 195	\$ 195	\$ 195	\$ 195
2009-10	\$ -	\$ 30	\$ 30	\$ 135	\$ 195	\$ 225	\$ 225	\$ 385
2010-11 (proposed)	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ 30	\$ 110	\$ 195	\$ 300	\$ 375	\$ 400
% increase (proposed) one year	0%	-17%	0%	-19%	0%	33%	67%	4%
Estimated # of students in each category	903	5	46	87	48	411	100	50
% of ECE pop in each category	55%	0%	3%	5%	3%	25%	6%	3%
Tuition as a % of min. monthly income (proposed)		1%	1%	3%	4%	5%	3%	n/a

Half-Day Kindergarten Proposed Tuition Changes – 2010-11

Tuition in Kindergarten has not been changed since 2005, while costs have grown each year. DPS has aligned Kindergarten and preschool tuition categories. The highest end of the tuition scale would pay \$325 (same price as Littleton and well below Douglas County and Boulder Valley) for the second half of the Kindergarten day. This amount is slightly below the DPS cost of providing half-day Kindergarten. Parents in the F category would see an increase in tuition of 15%. Non-Denver residents would pay the approximate cost of providing the Kindergarten program.

Kinder 2nd Half Tuition Category name % of poverty level	Income categories							
	A Up to 185%	B Up to 225%	C Up to 240%	D Up to 300%	E Up to 340%	F Up to 710%	G Over 710%	NR Non-Residents
Minimum gross monthly income for family of 4		\$2,714	\$3,269	\$4,241	\$5,301	\$6,007	\$12,500	n/a
2005-2010	\$ -	\$ 90	\$ 180	\$ 180	\$ 270	\$ 270	\$ 270	\$ 270
2010-11 (proposed)	\$ -	\$ 90	\$ 140	\$ 180	\$ 280	\$ 310	\$ 325	\$ 340
% increase (proposed) 2005-2011	0%	0%	-22%	0%	4%	15%	20%	21%
Estimated # of students in each category	4220	132	30	148	152	1058	260	25
% of Kinder pop in each category	70%	2%	1%	2%	3%	18%	4%	0%
Tuition as a % of min. monthly income (proposed)	0%	3%	4%	4%	5%	5%	3%	n/a

Comparable ECE Full-Day Tuition Rates

Provider	Full-day 2009-10	Notes
Primrose (for profit)	\$1,100	3 day a week
Boulder	\$888	Estimated--Does not have full day
Douglas	\$750	Estimated--Does not have full day
DPS Proposed	\$750	New tuition category for family income greater than 710% of poverty (\$150K/year)
Littleton	\$726	Based on 4 day
Denver Coop Preschool (non-profit)	\$713	Not including lunch period
Jefferson Co	\$658	Has full day
Cherry Creek	\$640	Estimated--Does not have full day
DPS Proposed	\$600	Max tuition for families up to 710% of poverty
DPS Current	\$450	

**Comparable Half-Day Kindergarten
Tuition Rates**

2nd Half of Kindergarten Day			
Provider	2009-10 (assuming 5 days per week)		Notes
Boulder	\$426		
Douglas	\$414		
Littleton	\$325		
Montview Preschool	\$312	\$624 for full day	
DPS Proposed	\$325		
Jefferson Co	\$285		
Cherry Creek	\$285	Free (only 6 schools); rest of schools have paying \$285 option for Ka	
DPS Current	\$270		
Aurora	\$250		

Denver Public Schools
BOARD AGENDA ITEM
November 12, 2009

Subject: Policy IKF-Graduation Requirements policy revision

Recommendation: Increase the Electives requirement from 50 hours to 70 hours and reduce the World Language requirement from 20 semester hours to 0 semester hours.

Background: The board of education discussed possible revisions to Policy IKF during their meetings in August, September and October, 2009. Several revisions were approved during the October meeting.

The intent behind the 2006 revised graduation policy was to institute a more rigorous high school experience that prepares all students for post-secondary success. The number of credit hours increased from 220 to 240. The recent changes provided for additional flexibility for students to pursue coursework to best meet their interests and needs while maintaining the increased number of credit hours. We are still committed to this philosophy and the proposed change to the World Language requirement offers additional flexibility. If approved, World Language courses would count as elective credits. In an effort to pursue multiple pathways for graduation, it would be a student's choice, guided by parents and counselors, to take a world language. As part of counselors' work with students we would ensure that students are aware of the college admission requirements for world language for the colleges they wish to pursue.

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) process for working with students and their parents is central to achieving the District's goal of growing college enrollment rates by 3.5% each year to 63% in 2013. The district is creating a common PEP template for all DPS students to use. The PEP will include students' career goals, post secondary goals, and DPS course of study which fulfills the graduation requirements and post secondary plans. These plans will be housed in our post secondary planning system, Naviance, in which students, parents, and staff members can access the plans. Counselors have been receiving extensive PD the past 2 years on a variety of classroom guidance lessons, which assist students in the post secondary planning process. Counselors have also been trained on collecting and analyzing data on the impact of these classroom guidance lessons.

The attached materials include the red-lined version of the current policy. Suggested changes to the policy are highlighted in red, bold italics.

Submitted by: Office of the Chief Academic Officer

Date: November 12, 2009

Policy IKF- Graduation Requirements

Note: These requirements begin with the graduating class of 2011.

The high school diploma awarded by Denver Public Schools represents a high standard of quality in curriculum content, instruction, and student learning, and should be maintained as a document that reflects substantial effort by the student and the school district in preparation for the world of work or higher education.

THE PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN

Each student who enters a Denver Public Schools high school will develop a personal education plan (P.E.P.). This plan will set his/her intended course of study as he/she begins his/her journey toward graduation. The student and an academic adviser (this may be a teacher, counselor, dean administrator or other professional school staff member) will review and amend the P.E.P. each semester, prior to the development of a new class schedule (for students attending the 8th grade in the Denver Public Schools, the P.E.P. will be initiated during the spring semester of the 8th grade year). Schools may opt for an "advisement" class to provide for the P.E.P. This process will not only provide clear information and a focus on the future for the student, but also bring a new purpose to the important articulation between middle school and high school staff members.

The course requirements stated are definitive. An individual school may not impose course requirements beyond those stated as a condition of graduation from high school, unless permission is granted by the Chief Academic Officer.

A high school principal may waive a given requirement if, in the principal's judgment, it is determined to be in the best educational interest of the student or if required in order to provide each student with disabilities a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

A high school diploma from Denver Public Schools certifies that a student has fulfilled all graduation requirements in one of five course areas. A personalized education plan is required for each course area:

- General Course of Study
- Accelerating Student Through Concurrent Enrollment (ASCENT)
- Combined General Course of Study
- Work Experience and Study
- Designated Course of Study.

The Combined General Course of Study, Work Experience and Study, and the Designated Course of Study options are available only to students with identified special education needs or to students whose Individualized Education Program necessitates one of these courses of study. A student's course of study is not reflected in a differentiated

diploma, but rather in the student's transcript. Every student diploma will state, "This diploma is reflective of the student's course of study as recorded on an official transcript."

REQUIRED UNITS OF STUDY

General Course of Study

Twenty-four (24) units of study (240 semester hours) shall be required in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 for students to graduate from high school and receive a high school diploma. The content area requirements are as listed below.

1. Language Arts

A minimum of forty semester hours (4 units) shall be earned including ten semester hours (1 unit) of Introduction to Literature and Composition 1 & 2 (9th Grade), ten semester hours (1 unit) of American Literature 1 & 2 (10th Grade), ten semester hours (1 unit) of upper division writing academic elective or world literature, and ten semester hours (1 unit) of other language arts.

2. Social Studies

Thirty semester hours (3 units) shall be earned: ten semester hours (1 unit) in U.S. History, five semester hours (.5 units) in Civics, and fifteen semester hours (1.5 units) of other Social Studies are required.

3. Science

Thirty semester hours (3 units) shall be earned: Students will be required to complete 30 semester hours of science credit, 20 semester hours (2 units) must come from Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, or Physics.

4. Mathematics

Forty semester hours (4 units) shall be earned. Ten semester hours (1 unit) of Algebra I or its integrated equivalent (9th Grade), ten semester hours (1 unit) of Geometry or its integrated equivalent (10th Grade), ten semester hours (1 unit) of Algebra II or the integrated equivalent, and ten semester hours (1 unit) of higher math from an approved course list are required. Except that the high school Algebra requirement will be waived for a student who successfully completes one year of algebra in middle school. However, such students will still be required to complete forty semester hours (4 units) of mathematics in high school, including ten semester hours (1 unit) of Geometry and 10 semester hours of Algebra II (1 unit). In no case, will students receive high school credit for courses completed in middle school.

5. Physical Education/Dance, Citywide Marching Band, ROTC, or DPL Athletics

Ten semester hours (1 unit) of Physical Education or Dance shall be earned or an equivalent shall exempt the student from this requirement. Equivalents shall include: Citywide Marching Band, ROTC, DPS Athletics.

Athletic sports that are sanctioned by the Denver Public Schools Board of Education and meet the criteria below may exempt a student from the physical education graduation requirement. No grade or credit will be given for athletic participation and such exemptions will not reduce the total number of hours required to earn a diploma. Both semesters of the physical education requirement may be exempted by athletic participation.

Criteria governing physical education exemptions:

- a. The student must maintain academic eligibility for the entire season.
- b. One full sport season is required to exempt a student from five semester hours (5 units) of P.E. requirement,
- c. A student must be a high school freshman, sophomore, or junior to qualify for the exemption. Seniors who have not yet met the physical education requirement are not allowed to take this exemption and must enroll in a physical education course.
- d. The waiver must be requested in the same semester that the sport is played. The waiver must be requested in the same semester that the sport is played.

6. Academic Electives

Twenty semester hours (2 units) shall be earned. Ten semester hours (1 unit) of fine arts (Music, Art, Drama) or Career Technical Education (CTE) shall be earned. Another ten semester hours (1 unit) shall be earned from an approved electives list.

~~7. World Languages~~

~~Twenty semester hours (2 units) of the same language shall be earned. Students will not have the option to waive one year of World Languages. However, a student may take a proficiency exam in eighth grade to test out of level one of a World Language. The student must then complete 20 semester hours of a higher level of the same language or take another language.~~

8. Community Service and Service Learning

Within the 240 semester hours (24 units) required for a diploma, a minimum of 220 semester hours (22 units) shall be earned in classroom-based instruction. Students may, therefore, earn and apply a maximum of twenty semester hours (2 units) of community service and/or service learning experience, approved by the school, toward graduation requirements. These experiences may include, but are not limited to, field or service

experiences, work experiences, volunteering with community organizations, and internships.

9. Electives

Student must earn **70** ~~50~~ semester hours of electives, of which 20 semester hours may be community service and service learning.

General Course of Study Additional Information

At least four years (eight semesters) of attendance is required for students to complete grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 except that:

* students with a 3.0 GPA who have completed all core curriculum/elective requirements and 240 credit hours (24 units) and all required assessments may graduate in seven semesters

* students with a 3.5 GPA who have completed all core curriculum/elective requirements and 240 credit hours (24 units) and all required assessments may graduate in six semesters.

* students with an Individual Education Program who are working towards a general course of study may earn up to 40 semester hours (4 units) in Special Education classes in only one core subject area. In addition, they may earn up to twenty semester hours (2 units) of Special Education credit in world language classes.

Accelerating Student Through Concurrent Enrollment (ASCENT) Requirements COURSE OF STUDY

Provided that the high school has approval by the Superintendent or his designee, students will be awarded an ASCENT diploma if they meet all of the requirements in one through five in the general course of study, earn 35 hours of elective credit, and meet the requirements to earn an Associate of Arts (A.A.), Associate of Science (A.S.), or Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) Degree from a community college or a certificate of career and technical education.

Combined General Course of Study

The combined General Course of Study requirements are the same as those for the General Course of Study, except that students with an Individual Education Program may earn up to 140 semester hours (14 units) in Special Education courses in the core subject areas and world language classes.

Work Experience and Study

Two hundred and forty semester hours (24 units) will be required in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12, and/or through the first semester in which the student's twenty-first (21st) birthday falls, from courses approved by the school principal and determined by the staffing team. Transcripts will reflect differences in program content. The content areas and work study requirements are as listed below. Numbers of units are stated as minimums:

1. Language Arts 3.0 Units

2. Social Studies 2.0 Units

3. Science 1.0 Unit

4. Mathematics 2.0 Units

5. Physical Education/ Dance, Citywide Marching Band, or ROTC 1.0 Unit (unless otherwise specified by IEP)

6. Electives

1.0 Unit in vocations and/or Transition Classes - Required

8.0 Units (may include work experience)

7. Work Experience and Study 6.0 Units of work experience earned in Special Education-coordinated work experience. Vocations/Transitions course must be taken and passed as a prerequisite or in conjunction with work experience/study

1. Language Arts 3.0 Units

2. Social Studies 2.0 Units

3. Science 1.0 Unit

4. Mathematics 2.0 Units

5. Physical Education/ Dance, Citywide Marching Band, or ROTC 1.0 Unit (unless otherwise specified by IEP)

6. Electives 1.0 Unit in vocations and/or Transition Classes - Required

8.0 Units (may include work experience)

7. Work Experience and Study 6.0 Units of work experience earned in Special Education-coordinated work experience. Vocations/Transitions course must be taken and passed as a prerequisite or in conjunction with work experience/study

Designated Course of Study Requirements:

The designated course of study will substitute for the curriculum/content standard approved by the Board of Education. In making determinations for earning a diploma, assessment instruments will be selected and administered so as to best ensure that when an assessment is administered to a student with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.

1. Students with severe and profound disabling conditions that interfere with their ability to meet the requirements for either of the above courses of study and have satisfied the requirements of an Individualized Education Program shall graduate with a high school diploma.
2. Students may attend school in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12, and/or through the semester in which the student's twenty-first (21st) birthday falls, as determined by the IEP.

Transfer Students

A transfer student from outside the Denver Public Schools must meet the requirements to receive a diploma from the Denver Public Schools. All graduation requirements must be met prior to graduation, including attendance in the Denver Public Schools for at least two semesters, with a minimum of 50 semester hours (5 units) of credit earned.

Certificate of Attendance

Students who attend school regularly but do not meet the course of study requirements in any of the three courses of study areas may be awarded a Certificate of Attendance.

CROSS REF.:

IHCDA, Post Secondary Options/Concurrent Enrollment

IHDB, Adult High School/GED Programs

IKE, Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration of Students

Portions adopted April 22, 1977, September 17, 1981, April 7, 1994. June 1995

Revised: August 21, 2008

Revised:

May 19, 2005

December 1996

May 1997

May 1999

May 2000

