I. Call To Order

A. Pledge of Allegiance

President Elaine Gantz Berman called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. Board members and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Roll Call

The following Board members were present at the meeting: Ms. Elaine Gantz Berman, Mrs. Susan G. Edwards, Rev. Lucia Guzman, Mr. James Mejia, Mrs. Michelle Moss, Mr. Kevin Patterson, and Mr. Lester Woodward.

C. Recognition

Ms. Gantz Berman stated that the Recognition would be postponed until 7:00 p.m., prior to the Public Comment segment of the meeting.

D. Approve Agenda

Mrs. Edwards moved approval of the agenda, as presented, for the Regular Meeting of March 7, 2002. Mr. Mejia seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was recorded as follows: voting “aye,” Ms. Gantz Berman, Mrs. Edwards, Rev. Guzman, Mr. Mejia, Mrs. Moss, Mr. Patterson and Mr. Woodward. The motion was declared duly carried.

II. Board Member Reports

There were no reports.

III. Superintendent’s Reports

There were no reports.
IV. Consent Agenda

Assistant Secretary Jacquie Lucero read the agenda items by section and number. In accordance with consent agenda procedures, Board members requested that the following items be held for discussion:

IV-A-1c  Construction Contract for the Smith Elementary School Playground and Learning Landscape Project

Mrs. Edwards moved adoption of the consent agenda and Mr. Mejía seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was recorded as follows: voting “aye,” Ms. Gantz Berman, Mrs. Edwards, Rev. Guzman, Mr. Mejía, Mrs. Moss, Mr. Patterson, and Mr. Woodward. The motion was declared duly carried.

The following items were approved as part of the consent agenda:

A. Administrative Services

1. Facility Management

   a. Final Settlements – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the Final Settlements for Contract Services. A copy of this report is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, IV-A-1a.

   b. Construction Contract for the University Park Elementary School Window Replacement Project – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the construction contract for the University Park Elementary School window replacement project, and that the firm of Allstate Products be approved for the contract. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, IV-A-1b.

   d. Architect Selection for the Columbian Elementary School Playground and Learning Landscape Project – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the firm of Intrinsic Design as the architect for the Columbian Elementary School Playground and Learning Landscape project. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, IV-A-1d.

   e. Architect Selection for the Eagleton Elementary School Playground and Learning Landscape Project – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the firm of Wenk Associates, Inc. as the architect for the Eagleton Elementary School Playground and Learning Landscape project. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, IV-A-1e.
f. **Architect Selection for the Crofton and Munroe Elementary Schools Playground and Learning Landscape Projects** – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the firm of GPD Land Design, LLC, as the architect for the Crofton and Munroe Elementary School Playground and Learning Landscape renovation projects. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, IV-A-1f.

g. **Architect Selection for the Remington Elementary School Playground and Learning Landscape Project** – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the firm of Design Concepts as the architect for the Remington Elementary School Playground and Learning Landscape renovation project. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, IV-A-1g.

B. **Budget and Finance**

1. **Appointment of External Auditors for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2002** – It was recommended that the Board of Education appoint the firm of Deloitte and Touche to perform the audit of the school district’s financial statements; and schedule of expenditures of financial awards and compliance with laws and regulations related to federal awards in accordance with government auditing standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and the Office of Management and Budget; and that the audit be in compliance with Colorado Revised Statutes. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, IV-B-1.

2. **Resolution 2779 – Supplemental Budget for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2001, and Ending June 30, 2002** – It was recommended that the Board of Education adopt Resolution 2779 adopting the Supplemental Budget, as set forth in attachments to the Resolution, as an official supplemental budget of School District No. 1 in the City and County of Denver and State of Colorado. A copy of this Resolution is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, IV-B-2.

3. **Resolution 2780 – Supplemental Budget Appropriation for Expenditures During the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2001, and Ending June 30, 2002** – It was recommended that the Board of Education adopt Resolution 2780 appropriating the moneys to be appropriated during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2001, and ending June 30, 2002. A copy of this Resolution is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, IV-B-3.
4. Resolution 2781 – Identification and Filling of Supplemental Adopted Budget and Appropriation Resolution and Copies Thereof – It was recommended that the Board of Education adopt Resolution 2781 regarding the identification and filing of the adopted supplemental budget and appropriation Resolution. A copy of this Resolution is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, IV-B-4.

DISCUSSION OF HELD AGENDA ITEMS

Mrs. Edwards said that she had received comments from the public that there was a general feeling that items approved under the consent agenda were not given due consideration by the Board of Education, and were simply being passed pro forma. She wanted to assure the public that the items on the consent agenda have been discussed by the Board, following thorough reports and recommendations by district staff and opportunities for input from the community. She said that the appearance of an item on the consent agenda simply means that the Board has discussed that item thoroughly and are to the point that they feel they can take action on it.

Ms. Gantz Berman agreed and stated that questions and concerns from the Board regarding certain items are discussed during Board Work Sessions, where appropriate staff members are present to provide clarification.

IV-A-1c Construction Contract for the Smith Elementary School Playground and Learning Landscape Project

Mr. Mejía moved that the Board of Education approve the construction contract for the Smith Elementary School Playground and Learning Landscape Project and that the firm of Colorado Designscapes, Inc. be approved for the contract. Mrs. Edwards seconded the motion.

Mr. Mejía said that he wanted it noted for the record that the motion read into the record is a revised motion, decreasing the amount of money to be spent on the project from what was originally proposed.

Mr. Patterson said that he wanted to clarify that the amount of the contract, technically, was not reduced, but was changed to correct a mathematical error that was discovered after the initial motion was made.

A roll call vote was recorded as follows: voting “aye,” Ms. Gantz Berman, Mrs. Edwards, Rev. Guzman, Mr. Mejía, Mrs. Moss, Mr. Patterson, and Mr. Woodward. The motion was declared duly carried.

A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, IV-A-1c.
V. Old Business

There was no Old Business.

VI. New Business

A. Information Only

1. Program Evaluation – Challenges, Choices, and Images Charter School

Janet Raban, Director of Program Evaluation, explained that Challenges, Choices, and Images Charter School (CCI) is in its second year of operation and currently serves students in grades kindergarten through twelve. Since its inception, she said, CCI’s director, Dr. Carolyn Jones, has dedicated herself to improving the achievement of her students by providing remediation and tutoring opportunities for all students; by attaining over 90 percent parental involvement in the school’s educational and operational concerns; by fostering a learning environment that reflects the Ancient African Guiding Principles of reciprocity, harmony, balance, order, justice, truth, propriety, and purpose; by hiring a full-time technology supervisor; by implementing a technology plan for students that includes students learning software applications, using remediation programs, and engaging in enrichment activities; and by consulting with The Modern Red Schoolhouse to align curriculum with state and district standards. The staff at CCI, she said, is committed to finding the strengths and weaknesses in their program, and are working toward building upon those strengths and addressing the problem areas.

She said that her evaluation found that CCI faced significant educational and administrative challenges during its first year; however, Dr. Jones and her board of directors have built their school on a strong foundation that includes sound fiscal management, well thought out policies and procedures to guide the staff, student and parent interaction, the hiring of a committed staff, and effective professional development opportunities for all staff. CCI, she said, employed the services of The Modern Red Schoolhouse for the purposes of providing that professional development, assisting in aligning curriculum, and apprising the staff of classroom management strategies. She said that all teachers were required to develop rubrics, assessments, and lesson plans to accompany each standard; they received ongoing training from Dr. Jones and literacy training from balanced literacy experts Millie King and Nancy Harris.

Ms. Raban said that, last year, CCI administered the California Achievement Test (CAT-5) schoolwide and the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) on a limited basis to children in kindergarten through first grade. She said that all staff members have now been trained by district personnel to administer the QRI, as well as the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), and will now be testing
all students in grades kindergarten through five with either or both tests, and the entire student population with the CAT-5 test.

Due to the fact that CCI is only in its second year, Ms. Raban felt that it was inappropriate to make comparisons between the students’ scores on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) tests and those of schools with similar socio-economic status. She said that there are many ways to analyze data; however, due to the fact that CCI’s student population is so small, it would make any such comparison meaningless. Aggregate scores for these tests, she said, are included in the report, and can be used in the future as baseline data.

She said that her evaluation did find areas of concern that should be addressed by CCI:

- While recognizing that their small enrollment numbers necessitate multi-grade grouping, the looping process might leave some students at a disadvantage if they were to transfer to another school—especially the older students.

- Even though CCI is conscientiously identifying their students with special needs, it is the recommendation of the Department of Student Services that CCI expedite the process by either hiring a fully-licensed and endorsed special educator, or by encouraging one of their faculty members to pursue endorsement immediately. CCI also needs to request all pertinent student information in a timely manner from schools previously attended by students, so that staff can review student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP), to help students make a seamless entry into the school and follow an educational course that is appropriate for them.

- CCI has a contractual obligation to hire teachers who are certified or who are enrolled in a program to earn their certification. Currently, three of their eight teachers lack certification, three are certified, one is enrolled in a program, and one had recently applied for emergency authorization.

Ms. Raban said that CCI had met many of their objectives in a very short period of time and has reached an extraordinary level of parental participation. The staff, she said, is engaged in a process of continuous training to improve the quality of the educational program and instructional delivery and, with the support of various grants and business coalitions, they have been able to add a science lab and a recording studio to their facility. Additionally, she said, CCI has a shared arrangement with Technology For All, that allows students to earn a computer by learning to refurbish old, donated computers.

In closing, she quoted Dr. Jones, who said:
The foundation of the school is now in place. Our next steps are to spend more time analyzing the strengths and challenges of our students, strengthening the skills of our teachers, maintaining positive relationships with the district, and giving students opportunities to build solid academic skills that can be transferred to institutions of higher learning or to the job market.

Ms. Raban said that it appears that CCI is making strong and steady progress toward attaining their goals. She introduced Dr. Jones to help her address questions and concerns from the Board of Education.

Dr. Jones said that it was her pleasure to appear again before the Board; she welcomed the newest Board members, elected since her last visit, as well as Dr. Wartgow, and extended an invitation for them to visit the school at their convenience. She said that CCI staff and parents were in the audience to lend their support.

She said that she and her staff feel very positive about the relationship between CCI and the Denver Public Schools, and that the first year was dedicated, in large part, to learning the rules and procedures for getting things accomplished within the district’s system, as well as what the district’s organizational structure is and how CCI fits into it. She said that the school feels much more comfortable within the system in its second year, and that she looks forward to at least three more successful years, as that is the year that CCI’s charter is up for renewal.

Dr. Jones said that she has worked with Wayne Eckerling, Assistant Superintendent of Research, Planning, and Special Programs, and Ms. Raban to address the areas of concern in Ms. Raban’s evaluation, and that she wished to thank them for the time and effort they have put into working with her. She also extended her thanks to Sherry Eastlund, Charter School Project Leader, who put together a notebook for Dr. Jones and CCI staff to help them understand the structure of the district, which has helped them be able to carry on with the administrative duties of being part of this district.

Regarding the concerns raised about CCI’s special education program, Dr. Jones said that she realizes that their program has been problematic for them and that they have been working closely with the district’s Special Education Department and have established a good relationship with them. She said that it has been difficult to try to get records for special education student records for students attending schools outside of Denver. However, she said, staff has developed a procedure for obtaining records and that has helped the process move more smoothly.

Dr. Jones said that the fact that they have only 105 students in grades kindergarten through grade twelve means that they must loop the children in multi-age classrooms. She said that that CCI has worked with The Modern Red
Schoolhouse to make that loop effective for students. Toward that end, she said, teachers have broken down the curriculum so that it is not just specific to a certain grade but is specific in terms of content needed over a two-year period, so that a student may take the class for two years as opposed to a single year unit of study. She said that for high school students, they began with a ninth/tenth grade loop, but discovered that many students came to them without having taken algebra—even some who were in the tenth grade. Those students, she said, were put into a class combining algebra and geometry, taught by a teacher with a very strong background in mathematics, who has shown them how algebra and geometry intersect and relate to one another. She said that mixing these disciplines has been very helpful for those students who entered the ninth/tenth grade loop with sufficient mathematics skills to benefit from the class. There were, however, some students who did not possess skills at a high enough level to do either algebra or geometry, and those students were placed in a class to improve their basic mathematics skills to a point where they will be able to participate in the algebra/geometry class. She said that they have one student in eighth grade, who is taking all high school classes because classes in the seventh/eighth grade loop are not challenging to him, and that he is doing very well in those classes.

Dr. Jones stated that they feel they are doing very well placing students where they should be for maximum educational benefit. However, she said, sometimes placement of students takes longer because they receive some students, particularly at the middle and high school levels, who are not well-behaved and who do not have the skill level necessary to meet the challenges of their grade level. She said that that they look at each student individually and attempt to place them where they can receive the most benefit from their classes.

She said that CCI staff is also looking into methods of keeping their students engaged in the learning process, which is a major challenge for educators at all levels. She said that one of the ways that best seems to hold students’ interest is instruction through and around the computer. Through a Read to Achieve grant, she said, CCI was able to obtain a computer-based reading program that is appropriate for students of all grade and skill levels from kindergarten through college. She said that parents also have the opportunity to go to the school and use this program to improve their literacy skills as well.

Dr. Jones said that CCI staff and administration are looking at a variety of methods to meet the needs of their students, and that that exploration would always be a learning process for them. They are also involved, she said, in ways to find appropriate staff—people who are qualified and have a desire to work with the kinds of students CCI has. She said that she has received offers from several people in the community, many of whom are retired, who have expressed an interest in teaching but who do not wish to go through all the steps involved in teacher certification—such as a retired physicist who wants to teach physics. She stated that she is working with Dr. Eckerling to see if there is a way for that to
happen. It is important to realize, she said, that the people who teach at CCI are very qualified in regards to skills, but that there are some who are still working on obtaining certification in teaching.

All in all, Dr. Jones said, the CCI community feels that the school is doing well at this point in time, midway through their second year, and that they are looking forward to administering CSAP tests to their students in the coming week. She said that they are pleased to be a part of the Denver Public Schools and hope very much to be an asset to the district.

Mr. Mejía asked Dr. Jones if she feels that, at this point, CCI has sufficient baseline data to be comfortable in comparing those scores to future assessment scores.

Dr. Jones replied in the affirmative, and said that they currently have baseline CAT-5 scores and DRA scores for all students from kindergarten through fifth grade, and are working to obtain QRI scores for all students above fifth grade.

In response to a question from Mr. Mejía regarding the specific staff recommendations in the program evaluation report, Dr. Jones said that she agrees fully with most of them and will work to address them. However, she said, she does not agree with the recommendation regarding teacher certification, and that she, Dr. Eckerling, and the CCI attorney are working toward drawing up an agreement that would be acceptable to both the school and the district.

Mrs. Edwards said that one of the purposes for the establishment of charter schools was to help public education try to improve student achievement using a variety of methods in smaller settings. She said that one of the things that has most concerned her while visiting schools this year is the attitude she has seen among middle school students and wondered whether CCI students of the same age are demonstrating the same negative character traits. She stated that she had read with interest about CCI’s “Circle of Elders,” comprised of building administrators and community members, who work as a group to help parents and students resolve issues that affect a student’s ability to become successful in school.

Dr. Jones said that they have the same problems with bad attitudes in children just reaching adolescence, and that that problem is compounded by the fact that they have a large number of boys who, at that age, seem to demonstrate more types of behavior problems. She said that they are fortunate to have many men in the building, who seem better equipped to deal with boys of that age. One of the male teachers, she said, has formed a Boys’ Club, for middle and high school age boys, with one of the chief activities being an anger management course because he found that many of the boys carry a great deal of anger inside of them. She said that the Boys’ Club meets once a week to talk about what makes them angry and alternatives to angry, inappropriate behavior. That same anger, she said, is
apparent in girls, too, but to a lesser extent; therefore, they also have similar groups for girls at the middle and high school levels but with a slightly different focus—helping the girls bond together to help one another rather than turn against one another. She said that they have excellent counseling services for students and that the great degree of parental involvement in the school also helps to keep discipline issues in check and act as role models for proper behavior.

In response to a question from Ms. Gantz Berman regarding projected future enrollments, Dr. Jones said that they currently have an enrollment of 107 students and that there are, to date, 20 students on the waiting list for the 2002-2003 school year, with more people calling on a daily basis to express interest in enrollment. The projected enrollment in the initial report, she said, was 125 students in the third year of operation.

Ms. Gantz Berman asked about CCI’s relocation that happened between its first and second years of operation, and Dr. Jones explained that the school now occupies a refurbished warehouse, with both floors completely renovated to include a science laboratory, a technology laboratory, and a workshop to teach various industrial arts programs.

Dr. Jones thanked the Board and Superintendent Wartgow for their leadership and their support of CCI.

A copy of the report entitled *Challenges, Choices, and Images Charter School Program Evaluation* is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, VI-A-1.

**B. Issues Requiring Action By The Board of Education At This Time**

1. **Grant Proposals**

   a. **CDE Summer School Proposal**

   Rev. Guzman moved that the Board of Education approve submission of a grant application to the Colorado Department of Education Summer School Grant Program in Reading, and that the Superintendent be directed to submit all necessary documents consistent with grant application guidelines and be authorized to make any technical or administrative adjustments deemed necessary. Mr. Patterson seconded the motion.

   A roll call vote was recorded as follows: voting “aye,” Ms. Gantz Berman, Mrs. Edwards, Rev. Guzman, Mr. Mejía, Mrs. Moss, Mr. Patterson, and Mr. Woodward. The motion was declared duly carried.

   A copy of the motion and summary of the grant application is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, VI-B-1a.
b. **CDE Colorado Reading Excellence Act**

Rev. Guzman moved that the Board of Education approve submission of a grant application to the Colorado Department of Reading Excellence Act Tutorial Assistance and that the Superintendent be directed to submit all necessary documents consistent with grant application guidelines and be authorized to make any technical or administrative adjustments deemed necessary. Mr. Woodward seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was recorded as follows: voting “aye,” Ms. Gantz Berman, Mrs. Edwards, Rev. Guzman, Mr. Mejía, Mrs. Moss, Mr. Patterson, and Mr. Woodward. The motion was declared duly carried.

A copy of the motion and summary of the grant application is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, VI-B-1b.

**RECESS AND RECONVENE**

Ms. Gantz Berman recessed the meeting at 5:50 p.m. for the Board’s dinner break. She reconvened the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

**RECOGNITION**

Dr. Wartgow introduced Kiko Sanders and his wife, Amber. He said that it was a pleasure and an honor to recognize Mr. Sanders who, on February 26, 2002, showed care and concern toward a lost and fearful little girl, who was clearly in need of help. Mr. Sanders, he said, showed courage by stepping into a difficult situation and taking responsibility for a young child, and provided a good example of community involvement by taking the girl to the proper authorities so that she could be reunited with her very worried family. Dr. Wartgow thanked Mr. Sanders for his care, courage, and deep sense of community involvement. People throughout the city, he said, gave a sigh of relief when it was made known that the young girl had been found and reunited with her family.

**SUPERINTENDENT’S COMMENTS**

Dr. Wartgow said that he wished to thank the community for their support over the past few weeks when the district, and the City of Denver as a whole, have faced very difficult and disturbing situations in the form of a rash of reports of indecent exposure to children, culminating in the kidnapping of two young girls which, happily, avoided tragedy when both children were returned to their family.
He said that it is imperative that the citizens of Denver remain alert and work together because there is still a kidnapper at large. He urged the public to be the eyes and ears that children often cannot be, to be vigilant in its concern for children, and to notify the Denver Police Department with any leads or information. There is currently a $12,000 reward, he said, for the apprehension of the person involved in kidnapping the children, and there is not any doubt that the police and everyone involved in the situation are doing everything possible to resolve the matter and keep any more children from being traumatized. He stressed the urgency of educating children in ways that they can protect themselves to minimize the chance that such a heinous act would be repeated.

Dr. Wartgow explained that a second unfortunate incident began when a former Denver Public Schools student came forward to report that a teacher had sexually assaulted him years ago when he attended a district school. He said that the district cooperated fully with the Denver Police Department in the investigation and that the teacher, who was still employed by the district, was arrested and remains in custody awaiting trial. Dr. Wartgow stated that he has recommended that teacher’s dismissal, and that he would continue to work cooperatively with the police to resolve their investigation. He assured the public that any further such situations would be handled immediately and appropriately should they arise in the future.

He said that a third event occurred in which attention was focused on a sexual assault that took place in October between students at Grant Middle School, and the manner in which Denver Public Schools handled the reporting and subsequent investigation of that incident. In light of this, he said, district staff has reviewed and clarified all policies and procedures for reporting and investigating serious incidents. He said that the Denver Police Department has reported that the vast majority of incidents revolving around Denver Public Schools were reported promptly and appropriately, but that that is not good enough. He expressed his commitment to ensuring that every incident is reported promptly and appropriately, and said that the district is working hand-in-hand with the police department, the District Attorney’s office, and other community organizations to review all policies. The district’s schools are safe, he said, and he is committed to ensuring that they remain safe; the safety of Denver’s children is the number one priority of the Denver Public Schools.

Dr. Wartgow said that he met with all principals and assistant principals on February 25 to convey a very simple and very important message: Report all incidents immediately to the police department and the school district, and report them even when in doubt. He explained that he was joined at the meeting by Denver Police Chief Gerald Whitman, who pledged his support to the Denver Public Schools and the children of this city. He said that there would be a follow-up meeting for principals and assistant principals on March 12, 2002, and that Chief Whitman and Denver District Attorney William Ritter would join him in addressing specific questions and concerns from the principals and assistant principals. Principals, he said, have been reminded of, and provided with, resources available for victims’ assistance, as well as the availability of prevention and intervention programs related to bullying, harassment, assault, and other forms of violence.

He said that he and district staff are also working with the District Attorney’s office and the Denver Police Department to provide clarification on complicated issues related to the
definitions of “sexual harassment” and “criminal assault,” and the appropriate reporting and investigative steps for each. The district, he said, works on a continuous basis reviewing, clarifying, and updating its policies to make them as clear and responsive as they can be, and to ensure that there is immediate reporting of incidents and timely communication with parents and the community. He asked that parents and community members also help to keep children safe, and offered parents and family members sources of information and assistance to help them talk to children about safety issues.

Dr. Wartgow said that the Denver Public Schools community includes more than 72,000 children and 15,000 employees and that, relative to those numbers, the number of people who have been accused of inappropriate actions has been extremely small—less than one-one hundredths of one percent. These individuals and these incidents, he said, reflect an absence of basic societal values and a lack of respect between individuals that is of grave concern, as it should be, to all of us. He explained that these concerns do not begin and end at the schoolhouse door, as the Denver Public Schools is also part of a larger community, and a reflection of the city’s fabric, culture, and values. The problems faced by the district, he said, are also the city’s problems; the district will take its share of accountability and provide leadership, but everyone in the City of Denver shares in the responsibility to improve the safety of children.

He said that the district must work to send two messages out to all Denver students: First, that violence, intimidation, bullying, and harassment will not be tolerated; and second, that education is something to be cherished and valued. He thanked the community for its continued support, assistance, and confidence in Denver Public Schools; and shared the district’s commitment to work with the community to provide the safest possible educational environment for the children it serves.

Dr. Wartgow said that concomitant to its commitment to providing a safe educational environment for children is its commitment to attaining the district’s goals of setting high expectations for all students, improving student achievement, and closing the gap between better and poorer performing students. He thanked the district’s principals, assistant principals, and staff who have responded to these crises in a caring and professional manner.

On behalf of the Board of Education, Ms. Gantz Berman thanked Dr. Wartgow and his staff for their masterful handling of these issues and their remarkable leadership throughout the district.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Edwards announced that the Thomas Jefferson High School’s production of Peter Pan would take place that weekend, as would George Washington High School’s performance of Fame and East High School’s performance of Cabaret. She said that attending these performances would give people a great amount of enjoyment, an opportunity to show their support, and a chance to see “kids making good choices” for their lives.

Those who prefer athletic pursuits, she said, could attend the state basketball tournament that weekend, where the boys’ basketball team from Abraham Lincoln High School would be

March 7, 2002 13 02-04
competing on Saturday afternoon, the boys basketball team from East High School and the girls’ basketball team from Montbello High School would be competing that evening.

VII. Public Comment – 7:00 p.m.

Cisa Moya said that she is the parent of a seventh grade student at Place Middle School and wished to bring to the Board’s attention the use of a disciplinary referral form that is currently in use in the Denver Public Schools. On February 8, she said, her son was sent to the office for disciplinary action because he had fallen asleep in his first period class. She said she was contacted immediately, for which she was grateful, but that she was concerned about her son’s health because she felt that it was unusual for him to fall asleep in the first fifteen minutes of a class.

However, Ms. Moya said, she was also greatly concerned with the referral form that was sent home with her son. She said that she was disturbed about the demographic information being collected and she questioned why that information was necessary and what was being done with the data—particularly because the form did not have a space to indicate white children. Additionally, she said, the terms used to classify children of color were derogatory, racist, and insulting.

She said that the school principal informed her that the data collection was a mandate from the district, and that the data was being collected to track who was being sent to the office in an effort to ensure that no group was being singled out for disciplinary action. Whatever the reason for the data collection, she said, the method of collecting it is extremely flawed chiefly because it assumes that the reason the child ends up in the office in the first place was done fairly and consistently; in her experience, and in the experience of other parents with whom she has spoken, that is not the case.

Ms. Moya said that since the incident concerning her son, and because of media scrutiny, the disciplinary form was pulled out of some, but not all, of the schools. She said that the district responded to her that the form was eight to ten years old and was overlooked in revisions, and that she found that response unacceptable. The children, she said, are aware of the inequity of the form, as she learned when she sat in on one of her son’s classes and the students were discussing racism. She said that the teacher in that class was chastising some of the students for referring to other students by their race, and the students replied that the district’s form refer to students by their race and that was not considered wrong. The students, she said, claimed that, when it comes to discipline, they are being categorized by who they are and what they look like. She stated that it sends a bad message to children of color to be tracked in this manner.

She said that she has requested that the district investigate situations in which discipline has not been applied fairly and equitably, and that she hopes that the district will give the matter the serious consideration it deserves. She urged the Board not to believe that inequitable application of discipline is an isolated incident or that by merely dispensing of the disciplinary referral form, the problem will be solved.
Dr. Wartgow said that the matter brought forth by Ms. Mayo had been brought to his attention the previous week and that he wanted to assure her that he and his staff were taking the issue very seriously. He asked John Leslie, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, to address the matter and outline the steps being taken to rectify the situation.

Mr. Leslie said that he and his staff checked into the disciplinary referral form and found that it was last revised several years ago when the district still had a Division of Education. He said that while reviewing the disciplinary form, they also discovered several other forms that had similar obsolete and incorrect racial categorizations. As a result, he said, a memo was sent to all principals and assistant principals the previous day telling them that the obsolete forms, in most cases, had been revised and to replace them with corrected forms that were available in the district’s warehouse.

He said that reporting by racial category is required by the State of Colorado and that reporting electronically via the School Administration Student Information (SASI) system would ensure that the proper and approved racial categories are used. That information, he said, is then used for school accountability reporting. He said that some schools still choose to use hard copy forms for reporting, and that there are correct forms for such reporting.

Mr. Leslie said that he would be interested to learn about situations in which discipline is inequitably applied because that is something that must be taken seriously and investigated.

Mr. Patterson asked if the revised forms and the electronic reporting media contain categories for Caucasian students. Mr. Leslie replied that the hard copy form has a category for “white/other” and that the SASI disciplinary report simply says “white.” Mr. Patterson said that he feels there should be consistency between the two formats. Mr. Leslie stated that there are some reports that require the specific use of “white/other,” but that the state requires the use of the term “white.” In the case of multi-racial children, Mr. Leslie explained that parents are asked to make a declaration of their child’s race upon enrollment, but that he feels that that is a policy that should be looked at.

In response to a question from Rev. Guzman, Mr. Leslie said that the state requires that disciplinary actions be reported by race as part of the Safe Schools Reporting Act, and that that information be disaggregated by race. He said that, although he did not know the reason for the requirement, he surmised that that information is required to ensure that children of color are not being discriminated against.

Rev. Guzman said that the use of the outdated form, without the “white” category, discriminates against children and families of color and wondered how it was that some schools continued to use that form long after its revision and replacement.
Mr. Leslie said that he did not have an answer to that question, but that schools had since been advised to remove the form from their supplies and to destroy it and have also been encouraged to file this information electronically and print out hard copies for their files. He said that the district warehouse had also been advised to send samples of every form currently in stock and in use to the appropriate department heads for review and revision, if necessary.

Rev. Guzman said that since state law dictates reporting by ethnic category, then the district must comply with that requirement. However, she said, it is imperative that schools use the updated version of forms and that the district do everything within its power to ensure fair and equitable disciplinary measures for all students.

Mr. Leslie agreed and said that, in addition to equitable application, it is also important to ensure that the discipline measure used fits the situation for which the student is being disciplined. He said that they are very interested in that area and that the information that they receive electronically from the schools will help school officials begin to detect patterns of disparate treatment.

Rev. Guzman apologized to Ms. Moya and assured her that the district would do whatever necessary to remedy the situation she encountered.

Mr. Mejía thanked Ms. Moya for bringing the issue forward, as he had not heard of any other complaints about it. He said that it is important for the Board to see the data regarding disciplinary incidents so that they, too, can be assured that the district is not unfairly disciplining students of one ethnicity over another. He said that he, too, finds the manner of data collection distasteful and he apologized to Ms. Moya and her son, assuring them that the situation would be corrected.

George Lang said that he wished to speak on issues of safety, having read accounts in the paper of the incidents of the past few weeks. He explained that he is originally from New York City and that in that school district—as well as in Miami and Los Angeles—schools have only one entrance by which visitors can enter the building, usually the entrance closest to the front office. He said that schools have either a police officer or a security guard stationed by the door to be able to know exactly who enters or leaves a building and that visitors and guests must register and identify him/herself with that person to obtain authorization to further enter the building.

He said that there is a serious problem with security in the district and that, at one middle school in which he volunteered, the main entrance is not at all near the school office and, therefore, anyone can get in and have access to the rest of the school. It is time, he said, for the citizens of Denver—those with children and those who do not have children—to come together to ensure the safety of children. He said that he lives one block from Ebert Elementary School and that he has taken it upon himself, when possible, to watch and make sure that the children are safe crossing the street.
Ms. Gantz Berman thanked Mr. Lang for taking the time to voice his concerns to the Board and assured him that the situations he mentioned would be looked into.

Patrick Ridgeway, parent of children attending Academia Ana Marie Sandoval, said that he has been involved with that school since it was first announced that there would be such a school and that, currently, he is a member of its Building and Safety Committee. He said that, although the school is very new, there are still safety concerns and that, prior to opening, the Committee had toured the school with the project manager and discussed some of those issues. In the eight months since that visit, he said, the Committee has not received a response to their safety concerns.

Mr. Ridgeway said that they were particularly concerned with the fencing surrounding the playground. He said that they have very young children—aged three to five years old—at the school and that there is accessibility to the playground from the employee parking lot. He explained that the building of the school is between 35th and 37th Avenues, necessitating the vacation of 36th Avenue. During the building of the school, he said, a promise was made to the community that there could be a pass-through across the playground, and the Committee had assumed that if such a pass-through were built, it would not be allowed to be used during the school day, but that traffic officials are saying that it would need to be in use all the time. He explained that Jo Ann Trujillo-Hayes, Sandoval’s Principal, walked through the neighborhood speaking to residents about the situation, and that she wrote letters to every major neighborhood association to ensure that the people who lived in the area and used the streets would not be opposed to having gating off all three sides of the school playground so that the very young children could be contained for their safety. He stated that none of the area’s residents or homeowners associations voiced any objections to that plan.

He said that Ms. Trujillo-Hayes sent a fax to Mike Langley, Executive Director of Facility Management, to facilitate some action on that request and various other safety issues, but that they did not receive a response for three months until they received assistance from Dave Debus, Assistant Area Superintendent for the Northeast area, after which they received a cursory and negative response to their requests, which stated that the community needed the pass-through on the Sandoval playground—a fact that was negated by their survey of neighborhood residents and homeowners associations.

Mr. Ridgeway said that the Sandoval school community is working together to address safety issues at the school and that they are meeting a great deal of opposition from the district’s “system.” He said that he has worked with the Board and district officials in many areas since being part of the committee selected to choose the educational design at Sandoval, and that he wants to work cooperatively with the district to address issues at the school that he considers very serious, including the fact that parents are not allowed to use the school’s parking lot to make way for the vehicles of district staff occupying space at Sandoval for the Northeast Area office—which further complicates the traffic situation around the school.
He expressed appreciation for the increased safety measures enacted by the district, but said that the best thing that can be done for children in the area of safety is for parents to be involved and for everyone to work together with the common goal of keeping children safe.

**Kathleen Dreier**, Denver Arts and Technology (DATA) Charter School board member and parent, said that she was present to express her support for the expansion of DATA in its new home at 32nd Avenue and Newlon Street, and to urge the Board of Education to support it as well.

She said that she began looking for a suitable elementary school for her son when he was two and one-half years old because she was not pleased with any of the public elementary schools in her neighborhood. She explained that until she discovered charter schools—and DATA in particular—she was prepared to spend the extra money to send him to a private school, although she is a single parent on a limited income, to ensure that he was properly educated. Subsequently, she said, she learned of DATA when her son was four years old, and she became an active board member for the school to ensure that he would have a place at the school when he was old enough to attend.

Ms. Dreier said that she is very pleased with her son’s education at DATA—the teachers are enthusiastic, the learning is exciting, and her son has progressed very well thus far. She said that there is an air of decency and integrity about the school and its staff and that there is a good character that is developing among its students that focuses on politeness and respect.

**Lynette Little** said that she is the parent of a child attending Wyatt Edison Charter School and that she is concerned about the increased emphasis on reporting assaults—especially among children at the elementary level. She said that children at that young age are still developing and learning, and that a child might carry a long-term stigma should they be accused of assault by a peer and have the situation turned over to civil authorities. For children at that age, she said, physical harassment, assault, or verbal threats should be dealt with in a proper manner in the school setting and only be turned over to authorities if the situation absolutely warrants civil involvement. She said that, as a parent and a taxpayer, she fears what is to come if so many children are run through the judicial system and charged with petty charges, when the situation would have been more appropriately dealt with in the school or home setting.

She said that it is important to stop bullying and violence in schools, but that it is also imperative that adults make the proper choices for children. She said that her child is in the fifth grade at Wyatt Edison, that this is his first year at the school, and that she has been extremely pleased with his academic success since entering that school. However, she said, she was alarmed to find items on his conduct report of which she had not been made aware and she feels that parents are not properly contacted and that incidents are reported to civil authorities before the parent is notified or given a chance to intervene on the child’s behalf.
Ms. Gantz Berman thanked Ms. Little for sharing her concerns and said that she had raised some very important issues regarding the parents’ right to be notified immediately of behaviors in their children that might warrant civil action, as well as the possibility of overreaction in light of the current climate.

Dr. Wartgow said that he shares Ms. Little’s concern about the possibility of overreaction, and that he has discussed this possibility with the Chief of the Denver Police Department as well as the District Attorney. He said that the advice he was given, and that he passed on to principals, is that if there is any doubt at all about whether it is appropriate to make a report, to err on the side of caution and make the report. They said that there is an age of culpability and that the police and the District Attorney are the ones best qualified to make such a determination and to bear the responsibility for that determination and referral to an appropriate social agency. He said that the District Attorney is attempting to put together a list of frequently asked questions around this matter and their answers. In the meantime, he said, school officials have been advised to make a report if they are in doubt about whether or not something is a reportable offense.

Mrs. Moss said that she agrees wholeheartedly that police should be contacted in any situation in which there is a question of appropriateness. However, she said, she would also hope that parents would be notified at the same time as there is never an excuse not to inform and involve parents when a child is involved in a serious incident—either as the victim or the accused. She said that she believes that if the incident is severe enough, that it warrants notification to all parents of children attending the school. The district, she said, must cultivate a climate in which parents are involved and informed of serious incidents in the school.

Gully Stanford, Denver representative to the State Board of Education and representative of the Denver Center for the Performing Arts (DCPA), said that he was pleased to appear before the Board on behalf of the e-Shakespeare Distance Learning Program, an on-line learning program promoted by the DCPA for the Denver Public Schools through funds made available to the district several years ago for an on-line elementary arts program. He said that the e-Shakespeare program would be more encompassing and able to serve more students at every grade level and throughout the state rather than just in the Denver Public Schools because of the wonder of digital technology.

He said that the DCPA and the Denver Center Theater Academy are very proud to have been sponsored by Qwest to create a program to bring professional inservice, guidance, and technical assistance to district teachers to help them prepare their students for the world renowned Shakespeare Festival that takes place in the district each May. With help from Qwest and Jones Knowledge, Inc., he said, a template was created to adapt to their software so that teachers, students, and parents can log onto the site and take advantage of a great resource. He said that he also wished to acknowledge Jeanne Ross, Distance Learning Coordinator, and Tom Stevens, Chief Technical Officer, who assisted greatly in moving the project forward.
Tam Frye, representing DCPA Qwest, said that the teaching artists that she has employed to assist district teachers in helping students understand Shakespeare come from all over the United States and that many of them were pleasantly surprised to find how the children of the Denver Public Schools embrace the works of Shakespeare—how they are not daunted by the thought of it, how they want to learn it, how they ask for it, and never tire of it. She said that she has worked with Joe Craft, who coordinates the Shakespeare Festival for the district, for a number of years and that it has been a pleasure to be part of the program and to bring artists into classrooms to help Shakespeare come alive for children.

Ms. Frye displayed the site to the Board and the audience and said that it was set up so that any district teacher who would like to include his or her class in the Shakespeare Festival, or would simply like lesson enhancement, will be able to access the games and ideas there and immediately apply them to regular coursework. She talked about some of the menu options, including Basic Acting; Voice and Speech; and Movement, which includes such items as dance, as well as technical movements such as blocking scenes. The information includes various methods of teaching so that children with different learning styles will be able to benefit from it, and that it has been designed to be easily accessible to anyone who has an interest in teaching or learning about Shakespeare, regardless of their previous experiences or lack thereof. She said that special attention was paid to helping teachers who have not previously participated in the Festival so that they know how to begin the process.

She said that the program was demonstrated to a group of teachers the previous week and they were allowed to log on and navigate through the site. They were directed to a chat site where they could submit questions regarding such things as suggested scenes for children and costuming, which would be answered by Mr. Craft.

Pete Kirchhof, representing the Qwest Foundation, said that one of the main focuses of the foundation is to connect technology and education, and that when Mr. Stanford and DCPA representatives came forth with the idea for the e-Shakespeare Distance Learning Program, they felt that it was a worthwhile and innovative idea. He said that the foundation is pleased to see the success of the program and hopes to use it as a basis to create programs that use technology in ways that had not previously been explored.

Julie Machac, representing Jones Knowledge, Inc., said that her firm has been very excited to be part of the e-Shakespeare Distance Learning Program. Jones Knowledge, she said, assisted with the development of the program for on-line delivery through their e-Education software, as well as providing net servers and the technical infrastructure which hosts and delivers the content to the Internet.

Joe Craft, Shakespeare Festival coordinator, gratefully acknowledged the participation of the DCPA, Qwest, and Jones Knowledge, Inc. and said that it was heartening to see all the planning and work come to fruition in the e-Shakespeare Distance Learning site, which will be an invaluable tool not only to teachers, but to many others engaged in
learning about Shakespeare and theater, or who are interested in introducing the arts into the classroom.

He said that one of the foremost considerations in the development of the site was its ability to address the district’s curriculum, and each activity is calculated to fulfill standards for excellence in a variety of subject matters and grade levels, resulting in a valuable resource for outcome-based learning. This site, he said, sets a high bar for future distance learning programs, and is intended to offer comment and answers to various users via direct contact with either him or specialists from the Denver Center Theater Academy, offering a truly interactive approach. He said that there is a great deal of information that may be downloaded and printed out for use in the classroom, as well as the forms needed for teachers to enroll their classes and students for participation in the Shakespeare Festival.

Marie Ogle, Lincoln High School librarian, said that she has introduced students in the Denver Public Schools to Shakespeare for the past twelve years and has enjoyed the positive energy she has reaped. She said that she has had great success teaching Shakespeare using on-line sources and that the e-Shakespeare Distance Learning Program is a tool that will empower teachers by enhancing instruction and enabling staff members within the district to share their successes.

Reaching standardized goals, she said, requires fulfilling students’ right to know the best of great writers. She said that Shakespeare is worth teaching because he concerned himself with universal values, which find expression in all cultures.

Dr. Wartgow said that he is excited about the possibilities for the e-Shakespeare Distance Learning Program, explaining that he has long been a proponent of on-line education and the use of technology.

He thanked Mr. Craft for his tireless efforts on behalf of the Shakespeare Festival and stated that no event within the district brings more pride and recognition, nationally and internationally, to the Denver Public Schools. He said that he is proud to be associated with a school district that provides such a rich educational opportunity to its students. He also thanked the representatives from Qwest, Jones Knowledge, and DCPA for their strong partnerships with the district, and said that he looks forward to the day when all classes will have similar technological opportunities.

Mr. Mejía said that he is anxious to examine the website to see what it has to offer. However, he stated that he has serious doubts about the ability of most of the district’s computers to download video and sound clips.

Jeanne Ross, Distance Learning Coordinator, said that she did not know the precise individual system requirements for multimedia applications, but that the district’s technological infrastructure is being helped immensely by Qwest.
Pola Swartz, Application Specialist in the Department of Technology Services (DoTS), said that there are cases in schools where the computer hardware is not sufficient to meet the needs of the website. He said that schools equipped with IMAC computers do very well with the site, because the audio and video files are run through QuickTime, which is a McIntosh function; however, some teachers do not even have computers in their classroom. He expressed the hope that providing the opportunity for students to use this website and program would be an impetus for the district to review and update hardware for individual users.

In response to a question from Mr. Patterson regarding infrastructure upgrades throughout the district, André Pettigrew, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, explained that the district has an approved Technology Plan and that district representatives have been working closely with Qwest to follow it as it was laid out. However, he said, technology advancements greatly drive demand and the district is working to keep up with that demand.

Mrs. Moss said that, as the parent of a child who has participated for three years in the Shakespeare Festival, she could state without hesitation that the children enjoy it and look forward to participating in it. She asked about promotion of the website and what is being done to make sure that every school knows of its existence and how to access it.

Mr. Stanford said that the Public Information Department has been very helpful in promoting the site and that a districtwide announcement about it would be forthcoming with instructions for its use. The site, he said, had only been brought online for widespread use the previous week and was not ready for viewing before that. He said that the teachers who had already viewed and worked in the site stated that they were excited about the fact that they could use it at home as a tool for preparing lesson plans. He said that it has been a pleasure to be able to provide support for one of the district’s finest programs and that he foresees the site growing and adapting over the years to meet the ongoing needs of district students and teachers.

Tony Lewis, representing the Donnell-Kay Foundation, said that members of the Foundation feel very privileged to have been able to fund the study entitled Principals in Colorado: An Inventory of Policies and Practices. He said that the study is very important, as it is the only one that has collected and examined data regarding principals, including who they are, how they are trained, and their perceived effectiveness. The study, he said, was conducted by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), who did an excellent job of collecting and analyzing the information. He expressed the hope that staff from the Denver Public Schools will use the information contained therein to help improve principals within the district.

Eric Hirsch, Executive Director of the Alliance for Quality Teaching and former manager of Education Program of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCL), said that the Alliance for Quality Teaching is a new non-profit organization that focuses on improving teaching and learning in Colorado. The NCL, he explained, is a bipartisan
group that helps state legislatures from across the country improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their institutions of learning.

Mr. Hirsch said that the study was conducted because the state of leadership in school across the country is an emerging issue for states, as there has been a much greater focus on the status and effectiveness of teachers than of principals in their role as instructional leaders. The role of principals and what is expected of them, he said, has changed dramatically over the past five years.

He said that district superintendents were surveyed and that they received responses from 115 of them; focus groups were conducted for principals across the state and nearly all of them were involved in the study. Nearly 84 percent of responding principals, he said, said that increased accountability has led to the recent radical changes in their roles. He said that, based on local and state policies, principals are now expected to examine subject content, student achievement, and assessment scores, and to adapt curriculum to meet the needs of their individual sites. Many principal respondents, he said, stated that they do not feel adequately prepared to make such adaptations.

Mr. Hirsch said that superintendents responding to the surveys also expressed concern that principals are not enthused about the skills of new principals coming out of principal preparation programs in Colorado. Virtually all principals in Colorado, he said, are prepared in one of the seven institutions in the state that provide such training, the largest of which is the University of Phoenix, which prepares approximately one-third of state principals. He said that, in questioning principals emerging from such programs, study representatives found a very real disconnect between theory and practice. A very important reason for this disconnect, he said, is the fact that the performance-based standards that apply to teacher preparation do not apply to principal preparation, especially in light of altered expectations for principals.

Mr. Hirsch said that another problem concerning the quality of principals emerging from training programs is inconsistencies in the programs and their requirements. One program required 18 credit hours to graduate, he said, while another program required 42 credit hours; one program required 135 hours of clinical work (actual in-school experience), while another program required 460 clinical hours. He said that the study also concluded that Colorado is not training a sufficient number of principals to meet the growing needs of schools across the state. These programs, he said, show that an average of 200 to 300 principals are licensed in Colorado on a yearly basis; however, most of those principals do not become principals in Denver Public Schools or other districts in Colorado. He said that, in the past year, there were approximately 270 principal vacancies reported in Colorado, and that superintendents responding to the study survey stated that their experience spoke to a shortage of qualified principal candidates and that they did not foresee the shortage being remedied in the near future.

He said that, at the state level, there are not any existing programs to encourage recruitment of qualified principals, although about half the districts surveyed reported such programs on a local basis, although most such programs exist in areas of higher
population, as opposed to more rural school districts. Many of the existing principal recruitment programs, he said, are conducted on a less than formal basis and that there are not a lot of formal programs in place to ensure that every school in the state has a qualified, competent instructional leader.

Mr. Hirsh said that, in addition to a paucity of high quality training programs, there is also a serious lack of ongoing professional development for principals. Under state law, he said, in order to move from a provisional license to a professional license, principals must go through an induction program; however, only two-thirds of state school districts offer such programs. He said that there are programs in which provisional principals work with principal mentors, but that such mentors must be trained to act as mentors and must evaluate their protégées, and this is not happening. Only one-third of districts, he said, provide release time for mentor principals to work with provisional principals or to pursue their own ongoing professional development. He said that such practices have led to very low retention rates for principals in Colorado and that, after five years, more than one-third of all principals hired in a district have left that district.

Regarding professional development opportunities for principals, Mr. Hirsch said that three out of every ten districts in Colorado do not provide any such opportunities for principals, despite the reported disconnect between what principals feel they are trained to do and what is expected of them. He said that more than half of all Colorado school districts spend less than $3,000 per year on professional development for teachers, and that two of those districts serve more than 25,000 students.

He said that the recommendations contained within the report are geared more at the state level, especially given the fact that the report’s target audience consists of state legislators. However, he said, many of these recommendations are also applicable at the district level. Some of these recommendations are as follows:

- **Conduct more thorough analysis of supply and demand of principals and consider state incentives to recruit principals** – Given the current state of demand for qualified principals, the state and local districts must give consideration to very serious recruitment policies, such as formalized preparation programs that provide release time for principals, scholarship programs that encourage teachers to become principals, signing bonuses, etc.

- **Reconsider the accreditation process for principal preparation programs to ensure that all preparation programs are imparting the necessary knowledge and skills for principals to become effective school leaders** – Ask principals currently at work in the district how well they feel they were prepared to do the job they are expected to do. Conduct an analysis of how much the district spends on professional development for principals and determine whether that amount is truly sufficient to provide the kind of quality professional development principals need to be able to conduct their duties to expectations and to enhance the learning of principals, who are critical to increasing student achievement and ensuring a teaching population that is able to really concentrate on teaching.
Examine the job of principalship to determine whether there are better, more efficient means of providing school leadership – Consider alternative methods of school leadership, such as the use of teachers to provide instructional leadership. Compare the compensation of principals to that of the most senior teachers to see if there is an incentive for those teachers to consider participating in principal preparation programs.

Superintendent Jerry Wartgow thanked Mr. Hirsch for his presentation and said that he and the Board had read with a great deal of interest the report on principals. He said that the district was, of course, very interested in getting the highest caliber of principals and asked which of the principal preparation programs Mr. Hirsh felt was the best.

Mr. Hirsch said that rather than simply identifying which of the programs he, personally, considered the most effective, it would be more useful to look at the key components identified as being essential to a high quality principal preparation program. He said that there is an increasing trend toward more cohort-based programming, where districts and preparation programs work together to identify potential leaders and to provide them with the release time, access, and support to become principals. Such programs, he said, are expensive but effective, and that, currently, four of the seven principal training programs in Colorado are working intensively with school districts throughout the state to provide instructional leaders that will meet the needs of these districts.

Mr. Woodward asked how many other states have significant state-sponsored principal training programs. He said that there are some programs in Colorado that promote new teacher participation, and asked if there are similar programs in other states for principals.

Frances Groff, senior policy specialist in the Education Program of the NCSL, said that there are five states that are currently introducing legislation concerning principal training and mentoring programs, and that there are 35 states that have introduced performance standards for principals.

Mr. Hirsch said that there are standards for principal performance in Colorado, but that they have not been revised since 1994, as opposed to teacher standards for performance, which were revamped in 1999, as part of Senate Bill 154, which called for the establishment of performance-based standards for teachers.

Mr. Woodward said that the fact that most principals leave their positions within five years of accepting them is disturbing to him and said that perhaps part of the problem stems from the fact that many principals come from the ranks of teachers. He said that there is a profound difference between working well with fifth grade students and having the ability and personality to be able to manage a building with 35 teachers and other support staff members.

Mr. Hirsch agreed and said that many principals gave opinions along those lines and also gave the opinion that they were expected to take on duties beyond mere management and
administration of the schools. Also, he said, principal preparation programs must make a more concerted effort to select appropriate candidates for their programs—candidates who are not only good teachers but who possess other qualities necessary to ensure proper functioning as a principal.

Ms. Groff said that there is also the current problem of a shortage in the teacher pool, which has always been the major source of principal candidates. Many of the most appropriate candidates, she said, are teachers who have observed firsthand the duties of the principal and what is expected of someone in that position and, from those observations, have been discouraged from seeking out such a position for themselves.

Mr. Woodward said that more emphasis should be placed on entering school administration as a career field, rather than waiting for students to become teachers first and then decide to try training for a principalship. Being a principal, he said, is more than simply a step up from being a teacher and the training for principals should reflect that notion. He said that changing that notion would allow for appropriate candidates to receive the required training immediately, and might also keep good, qualified teachers in the classroom, where they can make the most impact.

Ms. Groff agreed and said that many principal preparation programs now place an increased emphasis on principals’ roles in the classroom, in addition to administrative training. She said that that allows aspiring principals who miss time in the classroom and who miss direct student contact to have that contact time back while helping teachers become more effective instructors.

Dr. Wartgow asked if there had been identification of specific characteristics necessary to be a successful principal in an urban school setting, as opposed to a suburban or rural school.

Mr. Hirsch said that the Denver Public Schools could find out that information within its own system by doing research on its own principals and conducting exit interviews with principals who have decided to move onto other positions. He said that communicating with principals through surveys and focus groups would not only reveal what makes successful principals successful, it would also point the district in the right direction in formulating plans for professional development opportunities for principals.

Ms. Groff added that there had been a recent study conducted jointly by the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals about the skills that leaders need. This study, she said, shows that the problem of recruiting and retaining qualified principals is one that is faced by school districts of all kinds—urban, suburban, and rural. She promised to forward a copy of that study to Dr. Wartgow.

In response to a question from Ms. Gantz Berman regarding follow-up on the recommendations, Mr. Hirsch suggested that district staff be proactive in discussing and
implementing the recommendations, rather than waiting for follow-up from outside organizations such as the Alliance for Quality Teaching.

Mr. Lewis said that discussions would be ongoing among foundations, legislators, the State Board of Education, and the Colorado Department of Education to encourage local districts to address this very important issue. Mr. Hirsch said that there is currently a bill pending in the Colorado legislature—Senate Bill 182—that would create some performance-based standards for principals and, as introduced, included provisions for a Principal In Residence program.

Ms. Gantz Berman said that the presentation had been very interesting and very pertinent to the situation in the Denver Public Schools, and she thanked Mr. Lewis, Mr. Hirsch, and Ms. Groff for taking the time to bring the issue before the Board of Education.

A copy of the report entitled Principals in Colorado: An Inventory of Policies and Practices is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-04, VII-A.

VIII. Adjournment

Ms. Gantz Berman adjourned the meeting at 8:44 p.m.

Susan G. Edwards, Secretary
Board of Education