MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING (02-06) OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1
IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER AND STATE OF COLORADO
HELD IN THE BOARD ROOM, 900 GRANT STREET
5:00 P.M., THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2002

I. **Call to Order – 5:00 p.m.**

A. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Members of the Board of Education and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. **Roll Call**

President Elaine Gantz Berman called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. The following members of the Board of Education were present: Ms. Elaine Gantz Berman, Mrs. Susan G. Edwards, Rev. Lucia Guzman, Mr. James Mejía, Mrs. Michelle Moss, and Mr. Kevin Patterson. Mr. Lester Woodward was absent and excused.

C. **Recognitions**

1. **Swansea Elementary School Students**

   Under the leadership of Esther Smith, students from Swansea Elementary School performed ballet exercises and dances for the entertainment of the Board and the audience. Ms. Smith said that she began the ballet program in October 2000, as a means of sharing her love of dance with Swansea students; and that in the fall of 2001, the Colorado Ballet became involved and funded the program, paying a salary to her and to the pianist who works with them during rehearsals and performances, and providing leotards and tights for the children participating in the program. She said that there are four classes per week and that the children are very serious about their pursuit of dance and work very hard as part of the program. As a result of their dedication and discipline, she said, they are more advanced than other children their age participating in once per week programs. She said that the program is provided to the children free of charge as an after-school activity, and that they are benefiting greatly from the opportunity to create something beautiful through dance, as well as the life lesson that it takes hard work and dedication to be successful.

   Ms. Smith and some of her students taught Mr. Mejía and Rev. Guzman the *demi-plié* movement.
Ms. Gantz Berman thanked Ms. Smith for her tireless efforts on behalf of Swansea’s students and for working to develop the partnership between the school and the Colorado Ballet. She acknowledged the children and their parents, and commended Mary Sours, Swansea principal, for her leadership.

2. **Student Board of Education**

Ms. Gantz Berman introduced Tavé Johnson, Student Board of Education representative from East High School, who was present at the meeting. She encouraged Tavé to participate in the meeting and offer comments when she felt it was appropriate.

D. **Approve Agenda**

Mrs. Edwards moved that the Board of Education approve the agenda for this meeting. 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, and Mr. Patterson. Mr. Woodward was absent and excused. 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 item be held for discussion:

IV-B-2a   Motion – Establishing Medical Coverage Subsidy for Retirees Under 65 Years of Age

Rev. Guzman 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, and Mr. Patterson. Mr. Woodward was absent and excused. The motion was declared duly carried.

The following items were approved under the consent agenda process:
A. Superintendent’s Office

1. Establishment of Boundaries – Stapleton Development – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the pupil assignment plan revision regarding the boundaries for Stapleton Elementary School and that staff implement the revision for the 2002-2003 school year. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-06, IV-A-1.

2. Resolution 2783 – KIPP: Sunshine Peak Academy Charter School Contract – It was recommended that the Board of Education adopt Resolution 2783, approving the renewal of the charter for the KIPP: Sunshine Peak Academy Charter School. A copy of this Resolution is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-06, IV-A-2.

B. Administrative Services

1. Facility Management

   a. Construction Contract for the Stapleton Elementary School Construction Project – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the construction contract for the Stapleton Elementary School Phase I construction project and the firm of Pinkard Construction acting as construction manager for the project, with the authority to award purchase contracts to vendors. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-06, IV-B-1a.

   b. Land Transfer to the City and County of Denver – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the transfer of a strip of land approximately 23 feet wide along the east property line of the Denver City-Wide School of the Arts along Quebec Street to the City and County of Denver as part of the Denver School of the Arts construction project. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-06, IV-B-1b.

   c. Construction Contract for the Colfax Elementary School Playground and Learning Landscape Project – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the construction contract for the Colfax Elementary School playground and learning landscape project, and that the firm of Colorado Designscape be approved for the contract. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-05, IV-B-1c.
d. Construction Contract for the Morey Middle School Phase II Renovation Project – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the construction contract for the Morey Middle School Phase II renovation project, and that the firm of Gamma Construction be approved for the contract. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-06, IV-B-1d.

e. Construction Contract for the Denison Elementary School Library and Science Classroom Addition Project – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the construction contract for the Denison Elementary School library and science classroom addition project, and that the firm of J.C. Brooks be approved for the contract. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-06, IV-B-1e.

DISCUSSION OF HELD AGENDA ITEMS

IV-B-2a Motion – Establishing Medical Coverage Subsidy for Retirees Under 65 Years of Age

Mrs. Edwards moved that the Board of Education adopt the proposed subsidy for medical coverage for Denver Public Schools retirees under 65 years of age. Mr. Mejía seconded the motion.

Mrs. Edwards asked that a staff member come forward to explain the changes in the district’s subsidy of health insurance coverage for district retirees under the age of 65.

Richard Allen, Assistant Superintendent of Budget and Finance, explained that there is a lot of financial turmoil within the health insurance industry of late, with rapidly rising premiums for all ages and categories. Under the current system for retirees, he said, there are a series of plans available that supplement Medicare for retirees over age 65, and the only changes to those plans will be a rate increase dictated by individual insurers.

However, he said, the item currently before the Board concerns the health insurance plan for early retirees, who are not yet eligible for Medicare coverage. He explained that people covered under that plan would see a very substantial increase in premiums effective July 1, 2002, and that the premiums would be split between the retiree and a subsidy provided by the district. There will be an increase in both amounts, he said, with retirees seeing an increase of about $64 per month in out-of-pocket expenditures, and the district subsidy would rise by approximately $138 per month to $282 per retiree. He said that the increase would constitute a substantial impact to both retirees and the district’s budget, causing an increase of approximately $4 million in the coming fiscal year. These actions, he said, would be painful both to retirees and the district, but are necessary to preserve the financial integrity of the health insurance plan for retirees.
Mr. Allen stated that, following Board action on the pending motion, a letter would be sent to all non-Medicare eligible retirees regarding the changes in plans and premiums, and that there would be a series of informational meetings around the open enrollment process, which retirees are welcomed and encouraged to attend.

A roll call vote was recorded as follows: voting “aye,” Ms. Gantz Berman, Mrs. Edwards, Rev. Guzman, Mr. Mejía, Mrs. Moss, and Mr. Patterson. Mr. Woodward was absent and excused. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-06, IV-B-2a.

V. Old Business

There was no Old Business.

VI. New Business

A. Information Only

1. Program Evaluation – Odyssey Charter School

Janet Raban, Director of Program Evaluation, said that, during last fall’s evaluation of the Odyssey Charter School, the Office of Program Evaluation identified several areas of concern, principal of which was literacy. At that time, she said, the school did not have a plan in place to support struggling readers, and the evaluation report suggested that the Odyssey community select a guided reading program for first and second grade students, more than 40 percent of whom were reading below grade level, as well as a remediation/tutoring program.

In the area of mathematics, she said, the Odyssey faculty was having difficulty finding a balance between learning expeditions for literacy and mathematics. She said that, when mathematics did not lend itself to an expedition, it was neglected. The evaluation report, she said, suggested that the school community select a schoolwide mathematics program and advised them to take advantage of any teacher training support provided in the most effective use and application of those program materials.

Ms. Raban said that Odyssey’s director has normally handled discipline issues, but that when he was unavailable, office staff would take on the responsibility—resulting in inconsistent discipline practices. For the sake of uniformity, she said, the program evaluation suggested that Odyssey select two individuals, such as the director and an experienced teacher, to administer discipline.

In special services for non-English speaking students, she said, Odyssey had not availed itself of district-provided training in the form of native language support, English language instruction, or sheltered instruction in literacy and content. She
said that school personnel did not distribute, nor did they have on file, copies of the required Home Language Questionnaire or Parent Permission Waiver forms. The report, she said, emphasized the importance of making those forms available to all families and to keep records of all identified students; and also recommended that Odyssey identify strategies to be used to help students reach their objectives in English language acquisition. Odyssey staff was advised, she said, that they should contact the Department of English Language Acquisition (ELA) for staff development opportunities, and that they assess their students’ progress using the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) test, writing samples, and portfolio evidence.

During the past year, Ms. Raban said, Odyssey hired three reading specialists that are supported by grant funds, while *Mosaic Thought* guides the principles of their literacy program. She said that in September, March, and June, the school administers the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) to first and second grade students; the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) is administered to students in third through fifth grade, to identify students who are not reading at grade level. She explained that specialists then intervene and develop a reading plan for those students, and those students either get in-class assistance or are pulled out of class for tutoring; additionally, Odyssey has implemented a comprehensive remediation/tutoring program, that includes more than 40 parents, who act as reading volunteers for an hour each week.

She said that the Odyssey community selected the *Investigations* mathematics program and has since hired a professional development coordinator, who happens to be a specialist in the *Investigations* program. This specialist, she said, conducts inservice programs to help teachers align their curricula with district and state content standards. She directed Board members to an example of such a curriculum alignment shown as a sample in Appendix A of her report.

Ms. Raban stated that Odyssey has not yet established a mass tutorial program for the lower grades, but they do expect to extend their network of parent volunteers and university interns to help younger students improve their skills in mathematics; seventh and eighth grade students can take a remediation program after school with their mathematic teacher two times per week.

She said that when the school director is unavailable, the special education teacher—who also happens to be a specialist in conflict resolution and counseling—has been charged with handling discipline issues at Odyssey.

Ms. Raban said that Odyssey now provides to parents, during the enrollment process, the forms needed to accept or waive special services for non-English students. She said that, even though there are not any English language learners at Odyssey this year, the school still must appoint a staff member to attend ELA training, in order to ensure that, if they do enroll a student who requires English
language learning services, they will have the personnel to accommodate the student’s English language needs.

Ms. Raban made the following recommendations as a result of the recently conducted program evaluation:

1. Odyssey should continue with its current efforts to strengthen its educational program to increase student outcomes to the same levels achieved by students in comparison schools.

2. Odyssey should consider eliminating combined grade levels to ensure that students who enter and exit the school will be afforded the opportunity to meet all content standards for each specific grade level.

3. Although Odyssey is well positioned to enter the contract renewal process next year, it should develop an action plan to address the needs of English language learners prior to the renewal process.

She introduced David Mooney, Odyssey Executive Director, who said that he feels that the program evaluation performed by Ms. Raban was thorough and well conducted, and that he was pleased that all of his staff was consulted during the process. He said that he believes that the evaluation paints an accurate picture of Odyssey at this time—it’s strengths as well as areas for improvement—and that there has been significant improvement since the program evaluation conducted in the fall, which detailed many areas for improvement. He assured the Board that the same attention would be paid to the recommendations made in the current program evaluation and that he felt that further improvement would occur as a result.

Mrs. Edwards thanked Ms. Raban for both the fall and spring program evaluations of Odyssey, and Mr. Mooney for his attention to the suggestions made in the fall report. She said that the current situation at Odyssey is a good reflection of the purpose of the program evaluation process and that she was pleased to see that the school made significant progress by heeding the suggestions made within the first report.

She noted that Mr. Mooney was newly appointed as director during the 2001-2002 school year and said that changing a principal in any school, charter or conventional, often results in a period of stress for the school and its community. She said that she feels that Mr. Mooney’s transition into the directorship was especially smooth and that the school has continued on a strong and steady course under his leadership. She stated that she visited the school two weeks before and that, as always, she was amazed at the amount of self-directed learning that was occurring in the classrooms and at how engaged students are in their work. In speaking with students, she said, they were able to explain to her what they were doing, why they were doing it, and how it tied in with what they were learning.
She said that she was also impressed with the parent-driven tutorial program available for the children and how so many parents at Odyssey understand the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children.

Mr. Patterson noted that the report recommended splitting combined grade classrooms into individual grades and asked Mr. Mooney what his feelings were in that area.

Mr. Mooney said that the concept of multi-age classrooms was a significant part of Odyssey’s initial charter proposal, and was a vision of the founders. He said that the primary impetus for that idea was to allow students to remain with a given teacher for a longer period of time and lessen the impact on students of transitioning into new grades with new teachers every year; and to allow teachers to really get to know the students they serve and how they learn, as well as giving teacher-devised educational strategies sufficient time to work. He said that there is also the benefit of older children assisting struggling younger students in many subject areas to the benefit of both students, as the younger student gets help and individual attention and the older student gets the increased self-esteem and confidence of being able to help.

However, Mr. Mooney said, Odyssey staff and community members keep the concept under constant discussion, as the multi-age classroom has drawbacks as well. This year, he said, the community has begun discussing the concept of “looping,” which would allow, for example, a first grade teacher to move with his or her class to the second grade level without the introduction of younger, incoming first grade students. For the time being, he said that multi-age classes would continue at Odyssey.

Ms. Gantz Berman noted that Mr. Mooney is an Interim Director at Odyssey and that he has stated that he did not intend to apply for the job on a permanent basis, which Mr. Mooney confirmed. She asked about the status of finding a permanent director for the school and what would be done to lessen the impact of getting a second new director within a two-year period.

Mr. Mooney said that the search for a new director was well underway, that they have collected all the applications for the position that would be accepted, and have narrowed the field to five candidates, all of whom have been interviewed. He said that the Odyssey board of directors would meet the following Saturday to determine the next step in the process and who from the community would be involved in the selection process.

Ms. Gantz Berman said that she has only heard excellent reports of Mr. Mooney’s leadership skills and expressed her sadness that he did not wish to pursue the position for the coming years.
In response to a question from Ms. Gantz Berman regarding Odyssey’s lease, Mr. Mooney said that they recently renegotiated a mutually beneficial lease with the Archdiocese of Denver for another year.

Mr. Mooney introduced Kirk Mueller, who serves as chairman of the Odyssey Board of Directors.

Ms. Gantz Berman welcomed Mr. Mueller and thanked Ms. Raban for her thorough program evaluation. She stated that Odyssey was modeled after the very successful Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning (RMSEL), which is a collective educational endeavor involving several area school districts (Cherry Creek, Douglas County, Littleton, and Denver Public Schools) and operated by a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), which was put into place prior to the enactment of the Charter School Law. She said that RMSEL had recently chosen a new director for the 2002-2003 school year, John Mann, and she wished him well in his new position.

A copy of the report entitled *Odyssey Charter School: Program Evaluation* is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-06, VI-A-1.

2. **Win One Customer At A Time – Meet The Challenge**

Superintendent Jerry Wartgow introduced André Pettigrew, Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services, to provide an overview of the reorganization of the Department of Human Resources. Like all district leadership, he said, Mr. Pettigrew is dedicated to improving student achievement through his responsibilities and his department. Dr. Wartgow explained that the changes in that department had occurred over the last nine months and were the results of cooperative thinking and teamwork among Mr. Pettigrew’s staff.

Mr. Pettigrew said that, as the district’s focus continues on the all-important goal of raising student academic achievement, the Department of Human Resources plays a pivotal role in making that happen. He said that it is imperative to provide a good environment and support for existing district employees, as well as attracting and retaining qualified candidates for the various vacancies that occur within the district.

During the past nine months since coming to the district, he said, he has spent a great deal of time examining the roles and responsibilities of the Human Resources Department within the Denver Public Schools; as well as reviewing studies regarding the science of human resources, and meeting with representatives of various departments to address questions and determine needs as they relate to the human resources system. The reorganization, he said, is a work in process and is open to adaptation as needed as the plan develops.
Mr. Pettigrew said that the first step in the process was meeting with Human Resources staff members to lay a foundation around expectations, program changes, and changes to the system that amount to a new program in that department. He stated that he has also given presentations to the Superintendent’s Cabinet and representatives from the Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA), as it is especially important that representatives from these entities understand the new procedures within the department.

He said that the Human Resources Department’s organizational changes, strategies, and action plan revolve around five distinct areas: communications, systems, relationships, motivators, and skills. On Monday, April 1, 2002, he said, the department launched a program called *Win One Customer At A Time! Meet the Challenge*, which recognizes that every transaction involving the Human Resources Department involves a customer, and affects and influences how people feel about working in the Denver Public Schools. He said that he is aware of the fact that his department has a lot of work to do to overcome its past reputation and, to do that, each and every transaction must be viewed as an opportunity to win a customer back. This challenge, he said, has been positively received by staff in the Human Resources Department, as well as the Cabinet and DCTA, as an initiative that is worth putting a great deal of effort into.

**Communications**

In January 2001, Mr. Pettigrew said, the Welcome Center went from being part of the Public Information Department to being part of the Human Resources Department, and essentially became the “retail face” of the Human Relations Department. He said that the Welcome Center is a place where current and potential employees can go to receive information about the department, and that, on an annual basis, over 1,600 applications for employment are accepted through the Center, most of which are for classified vacancies, such as paraprofessionals, bus drivers, and secretaries, but a significant amount of them are for certificated vacancies, such as teachers and principals. The Welcome Center, he said, also handles in excess of 3,500 telephone calls, 1,700 walk-in inquiries, and 500 e-mail inquiries. He said that three computer kiosks have been added to the Welcome Center, for applicants who do not have access to computers and the Internet at home to allow to search the district’s available employment positions, both classified and certificated, and will be a customer service feature that will help increase convenience to applicants and enhance service.

He stated that, in the past, the Human Resources Department had been criticized for poorly handling and/or responding to telephone calls. In response to that problem, he said, he has instituted a two-seat call center and that all calls relating to Human Resources issues would be handled first by people working in the call center, who will answer calls, then monitor their progress through the system to ensure that questions are answered and problems are resolved. He said that the call center is modeled after the Department of Technology Services (DoTS)
hotline, where two Human Relations full-time equivalent (FTE) positions were deployed, and the people who were selected to fill those positions were trained and provided with the knowledge needed to do their jobs. The number for the call center, he said, was published throughout the district and that, between early February and the final week of March, the center received in excess of 1,700 phone calls, 83 percent of which were handled by call center personnel without having to transfer the caller. He said that Human Resources personnel still get incoming telephone calls, but that they have been dramatically reduced by the call center and they mostly consist of calls from administrators or principals following up on the status of posted positions in their schools or departments. The strength of the call center, he said, is that the people who man it are not just operators, they are problem solvers.

Mr. Pettigrew said that another strategy for enhanced communications is better and more extensive use of the district’s website. He said that, when he first came to the district, he was surprised that the website was not being used to its fullest advantage by the Department of Human Resources. One of his first priorities, he said, was using the site to make more information available online so that applicants and current employees would be able to have information about career opportunities within the district. He stated that, from January through March, there were in excess of 300,000 ‘hits’ on the website, which is an increase of about 300 percent over the same period a year ago. The benefit to the increase, he said, is that people are able to access information for themselves, rather than having to make telephone or in person inquiries, which is more convenient for them and frees up employees to handle other inquiries and personnel business. He said that the only downside to the situation is that the Human Resources website has had to be moved to a larger server to provide faster response time and better tracking.

He said that during times of transition and change, it is important to fully communicate to people within the organization what the changes are and what they mean to remove doubts and uncertainty. As a result, he said, his goal is to deliver more formal communications from the Department of Human Resources, but that he wants to do so in a way that is not overly bureaucratic or that will overwhelm people with paper. Instead, he said, he wants to try to provide official communications to minimize the chance of rumors, misinformation, and multiple answers to the same questions. He said that he hopes to avoid these problems by issuing alerts, which he considers internal communications for the benefit of personnel working within the Human Resources department to respond to specific problems; bulletins, which are more process oriented, and are geared toward establishing procedures and communicating that procedural information to personnel; and fact sheets, which are intended for the public and employees outside the Human Resources department and are meant to provide detailed information about positions, policies, and procedures. He said that these communications would be maintained by his staff, and that they would be dated and sequenced to ensure timely follow-up and attention. Over time, he said,
people would become accustomed to looking for such information to provide accurate and timely information.

Mr. Pettigrew said that, as Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services, he has worked closely with Richard Allen, Assistant Superintendent for Budget and Finance, to tighten the focus of the administrative cabinet. The purpose of this strategy, he said, is to align the administrative support organization with the educational mission, goals, and objectives of the district. He said that the cabinet is currently very active and involved, but that it is vital that the administrative side of the district is fully aware of and understands the contributory role it plays in supporting those goals and objectives. He said that the cabinet is key to providing better communications across the system regarding expectations and the roles and responsibilities of all employees in fulfilling the district’s educational mission. The focus, he said, would be in three areas: improving customer service, workforce optimization, and leveraging business support systems. He explained that workforce optimization would entail raising the skill level throughout the district and the expectations of the workforce in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. Leveraging business support systems, he said, would include aligning information and data systems, which are currently disparate across the district, but have information that must be shared.

**Systems**

Mr. Pettigrew said that one problem area that he did not anticipate having to work on when he arrived at the district was the area of record-keeping and filing, but that it did, indeed, prove to be a problem, records that should have been centralized were kept in many different areas, making it difficult and time consuming to obtain information. In response to that problem, he said, Human Resources staff has created a centralized filing area in which all personnel files are in one place and easily accessible, catalogued, and tracked. He said that there are nearly 16,000 personnel files in all employee classifications and that a new software program, in use in the Jefferson County School District, helps keep track of them when they are removed from the central filing area.

This system, he said, provides efficiency for employees working with the files as well as employees outside Human Resources, who will be able to easily request and view their own personnel files. He explained that the file room has an area where employees are able to view their own files in privacy. Part of the contract with the Denver Classroom Teachers Association, he said, is that employees may submit a request to view their personnel file and that such a request must be granted within three days; the new system allows for better compliance with that requirement. In fact, he said, the system works so well that he would not hesitate to recommend that the contract be adapted to shorten the amount of time in which an employee can expect to see his or her file.
Mr. Pettigrew explained that the Lawson Resource Planning System is used by the district to store district personnel records and that, currently, its use is limited to personnel within the Administration Building with very little access to information at individual sites. This year, he said, Human Resources personnel put together a pilot program to begin to make Lawson information available within schools, and that pilot took place in six schools and two departments that did not have Lawson access previously. He said that these schools and departments were given access to employee information specific to their site, including pay rates and qualifications, although they were not allowed to make transactions or changes to that information. While it was good for the sites to be able to view that information and submit hard copy requests for changes to incorrect information, he said, the ultimate goal is to enable sites to make electronic requests for such adjustments, lessening the dependence on paper and multiple copies, and increasing efficiency. He said that sites having such information readily available to them would increase the effectiveness of site-based decision-making.

He said that another system change that had occurred was in the area of applicant tracking, which is what aided him in presenting to the Board at the last meeting the status of principal vacancies. It is very important, he said, to keep track of applicants and know where they are in the consideration/hiring process so that qualified applicants do not fall through the cracks. A system has been put into place, he said, that allows Human Resources staff to track all new applicants and that, as of the week before Spring Break, there were in excess of 1,000 new applicants for teaching positions. He explained that the tracking system shows teachers to whom contracts have been offered, and also those who have received “approvals to bid” which indicates that they are hirable if a position arises for which their qualifications make them eligible. The benefit to the “approvals to bid” category, he said, is that the district does not issue contracts to teachers that are not needed; and for applicants, it allows them to apply to specific sites that interest them with the assurance that if the interview process is successful, they will be able to work in the school in which they want to work. He clarified that teacher contracts are still offered in areas of high need after interviews are conducted and district representatives want to ensure that an applicant will not be lost during the decision-making process. The tracking system, he said, allows for immediate applicant contact in the event of incomplete applications or applicants who are not qualified for the positions to which they apply, as well as the ability to answer questions when applicants call with questions about the status of their applications. He said that he and his staff are working toward establishing an application process that is completely on-line, including the applicant’s ability to search for their own application status.

Mr. Pettigrew said that the firm of Deloitte and Touche did a workflow study of the district in 1998 and that he reviewed that study upon his arrival, although it seemed to him that the study was ignored at the time the study was conducted. He said that he found the information contained therein very interesting and
invited Deloit & Touche to return and, in partnership with the Department of Technology Services (DoTS), identify and define the processes mentioned in the study that relate to how the district does business, and develop a workflow gap analysis to attempt to follow the recommendations contained in the 1998 report. This is important, he said, so that processes are documented and refined and knowledge is institutionalized, making for clear, efficient, and consistent service to all customers of the system.

**Relationships**

Mr. Pettigrew said that in order to have a smoothly and efficiently run district, it is imperative that all systems are aligned and inter-organized. Upon his arrival in the district, he said, Dr. Wartgow arranged the educational side of the house into four areas for better, more personalized assistance and interaction. For the sake of consistency and better service, he said, the Human Resources Department has been reorganized to deliver services according to area, by establishing account teams that are consistent with the area quadrants. He said that these account teams deliver the full suite of Human Resources services to schools and departments within that quadrant. Formerly, he said, the department was divided into representatives who served certificated employees or classified employees; now all classifications of employees are served by one team contingent upon areas. He explained that the new organization allows for consistency of service and support, as well as the benefit of schools having a single point of contact for all personnel questions and concerns, backed up by a team of individuals who can assist with hiring personnel in all job categories.

He said that an advantage for administration in this organizational setup is the fact that it allows personnel in the Human Resources Department to cross train. The way the department was operated previously, he said, specialists truly were “specialists” and did not work outside of their areas of expertise, i.e., individuals who hired paraprofessionals did not have the ability or know-how to hire bus drivers or teachers. He said that the teams now work together and that there is already evidence of dramatically higher levels of communication and sharing of information. Part of the team concept, he said, is for Human Resources personnel to know the personnel at the schools they serve and vice versa and, toward that end, pictures of each team have been sent to each school and department under their jurisdiction, and have also been posted on the Human Resources website. This has been done, he said, in an effort to inform schools and employees that the Human Resources Department serves schools.

Mr. Pettigrew said that his goal for the reorganization of the Human Resources Department is to enhance the workplace for district employees and that his department owns a great deal of the burden for that goal. He said that this would be accomplished with the new communications strategy, clearly defined roles, training, and a problem-solving approach. The department, he said, can and will
contribute to how Denver Public Schools employees feel about their jobs and their workplace.

In the area of recruitment, Mr. Pettigrew said that the effort is going well, based on feedback from administrators and applicants who have sought employment in the district in previous years. He said that there is a definitive strategy for recruitment, as well as a strong focus on customer service. He said that communication has been enhanced by increased employee bulletins as well as the district’s website. The driving motto of recruitment in the district, he said, is “Everyone in DPS Recruits,” which means that an environment is being created in the district that is so good that any employee of the district would not hesitate in recommending to his or her best friend that the Denver Public Schools is a great place to work. He said that this effort is greater than just the Human Resources Department and one in which every district employee can and should share. It will be a serious undertaking to improve the environment, he said, so that people feel confident in their attempts to recruit the very best candidates, knowing that these people would enter an employment situation that would be fulfilling for them. He said that they are committed to the goal of hiring the best candidates to work in the district’s areas of highest needs, especially in schools that are performing in the “low” and “unsatisfactory” ranges.

He said that the recruitment process has gone from being process-oriented to being customer service-oriented, and that the change has been effective in that they have contracted five highly qualified teachers specifically to work in high needs areas. He cited several instances of individuals who were hired as a result of the new approach to recruitment.

Mr. Pettigrew explained that plans call for the establishment of a Human Resources Customer Council, comprised of teachers and department heads who would meet on a monthly basis to be an advisory board to Mr. Pettigrew regarding ways to make the department more efficient and customer-friendly. He said that the department would also welcome internal feedback, as it is fundamental to process improvement. It is important, he said, to formalize the feedback process to allow feedback collection and provide a response to that feedback.

**Motivators**

He said that the Human Resources Department is competing for the hearts and minds of district staff. The district’s employees, he said, are dedicated and committed to the Denver Public Schools and it is important that the district recognizes and celebrates success stories within the district so that employees continue to stretch to reach goals and move beyond what they formerly expected from themselves. Also, he said, it provides an opportunity to establish performance expectations and personal accountability.
Mr. Pettigrew said that he has tried to instill a sense of pride in his employees, as it has been a personal motivator throughout his life. Regarding pride, he said, there is only so much that a supervisor or manager can do to instill it in others, as it is a deeply personal calling. He said that he heard Tom Sullivan, a motivational speaker, turn pride into an acronym that defines it: Personal Responsibility for Individual Daily Effort. This motto, he said, is posted throughout the Human Resources Department, and he stated that he has asked for that level of commitment from his employees.

**Skills**

He said that new expectations have been put into place that raise the bar for employees of the Human Resources Department. If the children of the district are expected to meet high expectations, he said, it is only fair to hold the employees to the same expectations. He said that these expectations must be matched by competencies and that, toward that end, job descriptions must be modified to include not just what people do, but the competencies that are expected to successfully perform the job in question.

Mr. Pettigrew said that he has set the following goals for his department:

- That each employee becomes a technical expert and advisor in matters related to Human Resources.

- That each employee become a service partner both internally, as a member of the department, and externally, by providing the best service possible to the district’s “customers.”

- Improving the working environment within the district by acting as a cultural leader within it.

- The use of technology to empower employees to provide better and more effective services.

He said that directors and managers will be expected to be mission oriented, problem solvers, effective communicators, staff developers, risk takers, people who value diversity, and people who champion Human Resources principals and values externally and internally. Department generalists are those who handle most transactions, he said, and will possess technical knowledge of Human Resources process and procedures, be customer service-oriented, effective collaborators and communicators, people who can identify problems and create solutions, and be computer efficient. He explained that clerical support staff would have strong internal partnership skills and strong external customer service skills, would maintain efficient workflow and documentation, and be literate in all aspects of office technology.
The expected competencies, Mr. Pettigrew said, can only happen through adequate training of all personnel, and that training is a shared responsibility. He said that he is committed to ensuring that all employees have the time and the opportunities to obtain training. In return, he said, he has asked employees to let them know what areas of training would be most useful to them and to make themselves available to the training. Toward that end, he explained the concept of the Human Resources Academy, which he hopes to begin in June 2002, and said that he will hold a one-day retreat during the last week in June during which he will conduct an assessment of the changes that have occurred in the department since the beginning of the year. This assessment, he said, would provide team building information, provide input about the areas in which staff feels they need the most training, and allow for the setting of goals and expectations for the 2002-2003 school year. He said that additional training for staff would be held in the areas of Lawson and Microsoft Office to ensure that skill levels are compatible with the demands of the employees’ positions.

He said that, along with higher expectations, personnel in the Human Resources Department would have increased accountability and a commitment to improvement, both on a personal and departmental basis. He said that his staff is working very hard, but in a different manner than they formerly did; and that he is very pleased with the response he has received from them.

Mr. Mejía commended Mr. Pettigrew on the comprehensiveness of the Human Resources reorganization plan and how it addresses some longstanding problems within the department. The new system, he said, brings a sense of ownership and responsiveness to Human Resources personnel; and he said that he would like to see similar reorganization plans put into place in all district departments so that employees see that they play a valuable role in meeting the district’s goals and objectives, as well as promoting the Denver Public Schools as a good place to work.

Mr. Patterson echoed Mr. Mejía’s commendation and said that he was especially impressed with the concept that the process was improved first so that staff could be trained to work with and through those changes. He said that Mr. Pettigrew’s approach is proactive, rather than reactive, and that that should dramatically increase the plan’s chances for success.

Mr. Pettigrew said that a new banner has been posted in the Human Resources Department that states: “Win One Customer At A Time: Meet The Challenge”; and that every staff member in the department has signed that banner as a commitment to honoring their new motto and living the values of the program.

Mrs. Edwards said that she favors the move to allow teachers to apply for specific positions within the school system and said that she has long felt that they should be hired in such a manner. However, she expressed concern about the prospect of
a good, qualified teacher deciding not to apply in the event that it does not appear that there is an opening for which he or she is suited.

Mr. Pettigrew said that representatives from the district have been, and will continue to be, present at job fairs across the state and in the immediate area. Those recruitment representatives, he said, are empowered to interview candidates and offer contracts on site to qualified applicants, and that the same applies to recruiting staff in the administration building. He said that qualified applicants are put into the system immediately and are followed up promptly with a customer service approach to recruiting.

Ms. Gantz Berman said that the innovations to the Human Resources Department are reminiscent of hiring practices in the private sector and she praised the new approaches as something that the district has needed for a long time.

Mr. Pettigrew agreed and said that he had hoped to emulate the private sector approach to hiring. He said that the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce had been very helpful in the process by arranging for district staff to visit various personnel departments in companies throughout the city, as well as holding an orientation around call-centered customer service. The Chamber, he said, has made a commitment to provide access to information and training that will support Human Resources staff in moving forward with the reorganization plan.

Dr. Wartgow stated that Mr. Pettigrew had made a similar presentation to the Superintendent’s Cabinet and that its members were equally impressed with the plan. He said that the reorganization plan is not merely a “quick fix” but, rather, that it addresses a systemic problem in a long-term manner. There are still many personnel issues to resolve, he said, but this reorganization is a definite step in the right direction and has been implemented in a well thought out manner with an eye to the future of the department. He said that department staff, as well as district administration, is committed to the reorganization and supports the effort wholeheartedly. If the district is to be all it can be, he said, a quality Human Resources Department is essential.

A copy of the slideshow presentation entitled *HR Reorganization Strategy and Plan* is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 02-06, IV-A-2.

**RECESS AND RECONVENE**

Ms. Gantz Berman called for a recess at 6:35 p.m. and reconvened at 7:10 p.m.
VII. Public Comment – 7:00 p.m. (First Thursday of Each Month)

Gloria Semien, parent of a child attending sixth grade at Morey Middle School, said that her son’s Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) test scores from fifth grade indicated that he was performing at the 92\textsuperscript{nd} percentile in reading and mathematics, and that the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) tests showed him performing in the “Advanced” category in reading and “Proficient” in mathematics. At the beginning of sixth grade, she said, he scored in the 99\textsuperscript{th} percentile in reading with a 13.2 grade equivalent for reading comprehension. She read the following excerpts from an essay entitled “First Impressions” that her son wrote at the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year:

These are my first impressions of Morey Middle School. First teacher (name not provided) is one of my favorites because the work is challenging and fun at the same time. Second teacher (name not provided), probably my favorite teacher, has given the most homework, but all of it was fun, very interesting, and funny. Next teacher (name not provided)—class itself is cool, but he’s too by-the-book. The amount of homework we get is large, but it’s relatively easy. Next teacher (name not provided) gives us a good amount of homework, but it’s all very easy. Next teacher (name not provided) is very strict, still all the things we do are really fun. Next teacher (name not provided)—pretty fun.

Discipline system is really stupid. I think the Highly Gifted and Talented (HGT) Program could be a little more challenging. My first impression of Morey is that it’s kind of disorganized.

Ms. Semien said that, at the beginning of the school year, it was not planned that there would be an election of parents to the Collaborative Decision Making (CDM) team at Morey, but that such an election was held because of her vehement objections. She read the following excerpts from a letter about the issue that she received from Aaron Gray, Director of the Community Relations Department:

Although we often disagree, I recognize your concern for your children and the policies that might impact them. I believe we ought to be able to disagree without being disagreeable. Let me formally share the outcome of the process and concerns at Morey Middle School. Based on the way the team was constituted last year, I feel that there is one two-year position available.

Once the team is formed, there are many issues to address, and I assure you that there will be follow-up in these areas.

She said she also received a letter from the Department of Assessment and Testing, which stated the following:

I was glad to talk with you about the experience you had in regard to the School Satisfaction Survey. We strive to make the survey process as clear, simple, confidential, and voluntary as possible; and we did not measure up in your case. As
you requested, I have enclosed a copy of the administration instructions sent to each school. In fact, the principal was sent a copy prior to distribution of the surveys and a second copy is included with the survey’s shipment. I have reread the instructions and see that you are correct in that the voluntary nature of participation is not clear. In fact, it is missing from the instructions. I will correct this oversight for next year’s survey.

It is certainly our intention that the survey be both confidential and voluntary, as these two conditions lead to more valid results. In our office, we have discussed the situation in some schools where the survey process is not taken as seriously in execution as we do in its planning. This was clearly the situation with the person you spoke with at Morey. We have not arrived a solution to this situation.

Ms. Semien quoted again from her son’s comments about his perceived disorganization at Morey, and read from published minutes, prepared by the principal, of a Morey CDM meeting:

Student Issues and Concerns: High Strides students seem to be given special privileges with discipline. Election process was a little disorganized. Principal to review.

She said that she made several requests for a copy of the school’s lunchroom procedures after her son was involved in a discipline situation with a teacher, and was told that the school did not have written procedures. However, she said, despite the lack of written procedures, her son was still given a written referral, which she challenged in a meeting with the teacher and the assistant principal. She said that she has spoken with the Denver District Attorney’s office, as well as the captain of the Denver Police Department precinct of which Morey is a part, and was told that Morey has significant issues regarding behavior and discipline of its students. She said that she has requested copies of reports of police calls to the school and found that there are many and that some of them are significant.

Ms. Semien said that she feels that the climate and tone at Morey are very oppressive, and that staff is disrespectful and rude to both students and parents. She said that there are issues regarding discipline and safety that are not being addressed and, as a result, she has had to seek assistance from outside sources because no one in authority in the school has listened to or addressed her concerns.

In response to Ms. Gantz Berman’s suggestion that she speak with the Area Superintendent for Morey, Irene Martinez-Jordan, Ms. Semien said that she had a letter from Dr. Jordan that stated that she should take her concerns to Morey’s principal. She stated that an e-mail correspondence to her from Morey’s principal stated that, since her staff and the school have not met the needs of Ms. Semien’s son, she would be happy to meet to make other arrangements for the remainder of the 2001-2002 school year and the following year.
Dr. Wartgow said that he would discuss the matter with Dr. Jordan and Morey’s principal and that he would direct Dr. Jordan to follow up with Ms. Semien.

Robert Tiernan said that he is a special representative of an organization called The Freedom From Religion Foundation, which has the primary function of promoting the constitutional separation of church and state. He said that he has addressed the Board in the past regarding the Boy Scouts of America and that he was present again to state that that organization is not entitled to free use of public school facilities when other organizations, including non-profit organizations, must pay for the use of school facilities.

He said that the Boy Scouts of America discriminate on the basis of religion, as membership requires boys to recite the Boy Scout Oath, which includes a profession of belief in, and doing a duty toward, God. A boy who is an atheist, he said, cannot, in good conscience, subscribe to that oath and, therefore, is ineligible to become a Boy Scout, which constitutes discrimination in favor of religion and against non-religion. He said that it is unfair to treat a child in such a manner simply because he is not a part of the majority who believe in God.

Mr. Tiernan said that he had made three requests during his previous appearance before the Board: (1) that the district stop allowing the Boy Scouts of America to recruit in schools during school hours; (2) that the district stop allowing officially sanctioned Boy Scout troops to operate within the district; and (3) that the Boy Scouts of America be required to pay the same fees for use of facilities as other non-profit organizations. He said that the first two requests were granted, according to written correspondence from district officials; however, the third request was denied.

On May 2, 2001, he said, the Freedom From Religion Foundation received a letter from the firm of Semple, Miller, and Mooney that said that the Foundation had not explained the basis for its contention that the Boy Scouts of America are not involved primarily in health, safety, education, or welfare—making them eligible for free use of school facilities as a Category B organization under the Board of Education policy concerning Community Use of School Facilities. He said that the Foundation was also informed that the school district is in no position to treat an organization differently regarding school facilities simply because of the organization’s position on religion.

The Foundation, Mr. Tiernan said, responded that the Boy Scout were, in fact, treated differently than other organizations because of their Category B status, when most other non-profit organizations are classified as Category D and, as such, must pay a fee for their use of district facilities. He said that it is incumbent on the Board, rather than the Freedom From Religion Foundation, to justify that categorization.

The district’s legal counsel, he said, replied on May 21, 2001, with a letter that stated, “…the district is not interested in providing a detailed explanation for its policy of choice regarding categorization of scouting activities, in sight of the U.S. Supreme Court decision to justify that position.” He said that the Foundation responded in disagreement.
in a letter dated May 24, 2001, which has never been answered by district officials or legal counsel.

Mr. Tiernan said that he did not wish to repeat himself, but that he wanted to make it clear that the Boy Scouts of America do discriminate on the basis of religion. He said that the Foundation does not feel that the organization should not have use of school facilities, but that they should not get a special preference not provided to other non-profit organizations.

In response to a question from Rev. Guzman regarding the allowance of free use of district facilities to the Boy Scouts of America, Ms. Gantz Berman replied that the district has a rather complicated policy for the use of facilities by outside organizations, and that the policy has not been revisited since Dr. Wartgow began his tenure as Superintendent. She said that several Board members have requested that the policy be reviewed and reevaluate how non-profit organizations are categorized. She said that she anticipated that the issue would come before the Board in a Work Session in the near future.

Dr. Wartgow agreed and said that such a review would be conducted by Dr. Darlene LeDoux, Assistant Superintendent of School/Community Partnerships, as part of her responsibilities as the incoming assistant superintendent of this new department. He said that he would stress with her that the review is a priority and that it would be addressed soon.

Jeanne Price, parent of three children attending district schools, said that she has observed the Collaborative Decision Making (CDM) process in various schools for the past six years. She said that she was present at the meeting to support the idea of disbanding CDMs and replacing them with School Leadership Teams. The proposal for such a change, she said, contains many good points and addresses many of the problems with CDMs that she has encountered over the years. She said that changing to School Leadership Teams would have minimal impact on schools where the current CDM is operating efficiently and effectively, but would make a dramatic impact in schools whose CDMs are non-existent or are functioning poorly.

She said that removing consensus from the decision-making groups, she said, has the potential of entirely shutting out certain underrepresented factions of a school community. Changing the decision-making process from consensus to majority, she said, would serve to ensure that, in many cases, the groups that have always been in the minority would remain such. She said that it is difficult for people who have never worked within the consensus system to get used to doing so, but that when the concept is understood and abided by, that it is the fairest method of decision-making. In her many years working with CDMs, she said, there were only a few instances where the group was unable to come to consensus around issues—despite the fact that there were many factions with many different points of view.

Mr. Mejía asked how decisions were made in instances where the group could not come to consensus, and Ms. Price replied that the principal overrode the impasse. Under the
current system, she said, the CDM of which she is a member has six district employees—one classified position, four teacher positions, and one principal position—versus five elected members representing parents, community, and business interests. As such, she said, the district employees would always have the majority if the decision-making process were changed from consensus to majority.

Mrs. Moss said that she agrees about the importance of keeping consensus in the decision-making process, as its elimination would erode the parents’ role in the process. She said that a collaborative process must honor all players in the process and that consensus is the most effective means of doing so. Concerns such as these, she said, must be addressed by the Board and defined for the district, so that parents see their role as valuable and valued by the district.

Mr. Patterson said that one aspect of the School Leadership Team proposal is paying parents for their participation, and he asked how Ms. Price felt about the idea.

Ms. Price said that serving on a decision-making body entails a great deal of work, and that it has been her experience that parent members shoulder most of the background work for such groups. However, she said, she is not entirely comfortable with the idea of paying parents for their participation, when teachers, principals, and classified members are also using their free time to participate and would not be compensated for it. She expressed awareness of the fact that the idea was put forth to help schools who have a difficult time recruiting parents to participate, but that she is ambivalent about whether the idea is a good one or whether it would actually work.

In response to a question from Mr. Patterson about school staff members who are also parents of children attending the school participating on CDMs, Ms. Price said that some people are not comfortable with such members serving in two capacities, but that she does not see that as a problem because the ultimate goal is the welfare of the children of the school.

Frank McLaughlin, member of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1563, said that ATU representatives had appeared before the Board four years previously to bring to light some problems between the union members and management of the Department of Transportation. Since that time, he said, the situation has not improved.

Tony Kotris, maintenance technician in the Department of Transportation, said that he has been employed by the district for 23 years, and that he and his co-workers feel that it is important that the Board understand problems faced by employees in that department. He said that many of the problems they are experiencing have been occurring for years and that they have been subjected to nearly every violation possible in the workplace. The workplace, he said, has become a place of constant threats, intimidation, and favoritism and their cries for help have fallen on deaf ears. He urged the Board to listen and address the problems, and to meet with ATU representatives to correct the many inequities faced by employees in the Department of Transportation.
Diane Godfrey, ATU member and employee of the Department of Transportation, urged the Board to closely examine the department to see the conditions under which its employees must operate. Freedom of speech is curtailed, she said, and employees are apprehensive about joining the union because of the perception that employees who are vocal in their dissatisfaction with workplace conditions are harassed by management, and that union stewards are not as effective as they could be because of the threat of retaliation. She said that rights that are guaranteed by contract are continually violated and that the atmosphere of fear that employees face does not make for a pleasant workplace environment. She urged the Board to investigate the concerns of Department of Transportation employees, as there are cases in which basic human rights are being violated.

Richard Fritchie, ATU member and district bus driver, said that conditions in the Department of Transportation have caused a serious lack of motivation for employees of that department. He said that he has worked for the district for six years and that one of the first things he noticed when he began working in the Department of Transportation was an atmosphere of fear among employees, and that that has not changed over time. There are near constant threats, he said, of employees losing their jobs.

He said that Department of Transportation managerial employees show a severe lack of respect for employees, although it has been his experience in past work and volunteer situations that people who are respected by their superiors tend to work up to that respect and meet higher standards. Lack of respect, he said, depletes morale and brings about lackadaisical job performance. He said that the goal of the Department of Transportation is to safely transport children to school and back home, and low morale might cause a critical lack of attention that might adversely impact a driver’s ability to safely perform his or her job.

Yolanda Reedy, representing ATU Local 1563, said that, following an injury in 1998, she was not permitted to drive a bus pending a review of her medical records, despite the fact that both the district’s Workers Compensation and her own personal physician, cleared her as fit to resume driving responsibilities. In frustration, she said, she went to the State of Colorado’s Department of Transportation and Safety, who certified that her condition did not require that she refrain from driving a bus, and contacted the Department of Transportation to share those results. She said that she would refrain from supplying details that led to the situation she found herself in, but that she would supply a written account for Board members so that they would be able to see for themselves that she was a victim of discrimination. She expressed the opinion that the confidentiality between her and her physician was violated in this case, that it has been three years since she requested arbitration on the grievance she filed, and she wonders if an impartial judge will ever hear her side of the story. She stated that hers is not the only case that should be heard and said that employees of the Department of Transportation simply want justice.

Bill Moland, President of ATU Local 1563, said that he had presented an informational packet to each member of the Board of Education containing a listing of all of the issues and concerns of employees of the Department of Transportation. He said that there is
also a listing of blatant violations of the ATU contract by Department of Transportation management.

Several years before, Mr. Moland said, ATU representatives came before the Board with an almost identical list of concerns and violations and, at that time, Craig Cook, Chief Operating Officer, and Guy Champlin, Executive Director of Transportation, were directed by the Board to meet with ATU officials and work through the concerns and issues raised. He said that, not only were the conditions not improved, they have steadily become worse in the intervening years.

He said that he spoke with André Pettigrew, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, and that Mr. Pettigrew had assured him that he did not want an adversarial relationship with the ATU, and that he wanted to work cooperatively to resolve the issues raised by employees of the Department of Transportation. Mr. Moland said he asked for a guarantee from Mr. Pettigrew that there would not be harassment or retribution against Transportation employees, and that Mr. Pettigrew assured him that such actions would not take place. Unfortunately, he said, Mr. Pettigrew is a very busy man and was unable to follow up on the situation as closely as necessary. He said that retaliation and harassment continue on a daily basis and that the only way to halt it would be for a representative to be present constantly.

Mr. Moland urged the Board to carefully consider the information he provided to them, and assured them that ATU representatives would make themselves available at the Board’s convenience to discuss the issues and possible solutions for them. He said that ATU representatives would prefer to meet privately, so that there is not a need for them to “air their dirty laundry” in a public forum. Every point in the informational packet, he said, has been documented and can be proved, and the ATU’s only interest is resolving the many problems with management.

He said that their union has been rendered nearly powerless by the amendment to Resolution 2056, which says that unions are not allowed to strike, or participate in work slow-downs or sit-outs, or they will be decertified as a collective bargaining unit. That fact, he said, plus the fact that the union does not have binding arbitration does not allow for their organization to have much leverage or negotiating power. He said that the union’s powerlessness allows managers to exploit and intimidate workers because there are no consequences for their behavior.

Rev. Guzman thanked the ATU members who spoke and those who attended the meeting in support of their fellow union members. She said the district is undergoing a time of great change and that, to do so, requires the cooperative efforts of everyone involved in the district; therefore, it is incumbent upon the district and the ATU to forge some kind of working relationship. She promised that members of the Board would watch the situation closely and work with both the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent to find the root of the problems and correct it. She thanked the ATU membership for all that they do to ensure the safety of district children.
Mr. Mejía said that he has met with ATU leadership and that he believes the organization has some very legitimate areas of concern, and that the situation warrants very close monitoring. He stated that he has served on the Board for two and one-half years and that for the first eighteen months of that time, he experienced frustration at the fact that the same issues were brought to the Board over and over, without resolution or even much progress. However, he said, the past year has shown that progress can occur more quickly and that issues can be worked toward resolution. He expressed the belief that it is a “new day” in the Denver Public Schools and that there are people in position to improve the relationships between the district and all of its collective bargaining units. Under Mr. Pettigrew’s leadership, he said, these issues can, and will, be addressed.

He said that it is important to remember that, often, bus drivers are the first contact the district has with students in the morning, and the last contact at the end of the school day. These drivers, he said, fill a critical need and position within the Denver Public Schools family, and he extended his appreciation to them for the important work they do and for the care they give to the children of the district.

Dr. Wartgow expressed his thanks as well and stated that he understands the importance of the work they do for the children of Denver. He recalled seeing children and their parents at bus stops in the city on the first day of school and noting their apprehension as they were about to embark on an unknown experience. Bus drivers, he said, are the first step in easing that apprehension and making the educational experience a pleasant and rewarding one. He said that if children are delivered to school safely, on time, and in a good mood, there is a much better chance that they will arrive happy and ready to learn.

He said that he has met with some of the drivers and is aware of their problems and concerns. In order for the district to move forward in its goals and objectives, he said, it is vital that all employees experience a healthy and cooperative work environment. He said that he has discussed the situation with Mr. Pettigrew, and was assured that he is committed to opening the lines of communication with an eye toward resolving the issues at exist within the Transportation Department.

Mr. Pettigrew said that he has met with ATU leadership on a number of occasions, the most recent being the day before this meeting. He stated that he values and respects the very important role they play within the district, and that he is willing and committed to communicating and dialoging through the issues and resolving them to the satisfaction of everyone involved. He said that it is important to the district, and to him personally, to do everything possible to improve the work environment of every employee of the Denver Public Schools; and that he would meet the following day with members of his management team to discuss the issues brought forth by the ATU representatives. Dialogues between both parties, he said, would be ongoing and he would do everything within his power to see that those discussions are productive and meaningful. He promised the Board that he would present an action plan to them at the April 18, 2002, meeting with recommendations for steps to move forward toward resolution of the issues.
Mr. Pettigrew stated that he has met with Mr. Champlin to discuss some options and that he and Mr. Champlin believe that there are positive steps to be taken, and that they are putting together a presentation for the Board and ATU leadership that will include those proposals. Many of the issues are significant, he said, and might take a great deal of time and effort, especially in the areas of improving the work environment and building a level of trust between ATU members and the transportation management team.

Mr. Moland said that many drivers expressed support of their fellow ATU members addressing the Board and bringing forth their concerns, but also stated that they could not offer public support because of fear of retribution. Other drivers, he said, work in the evenings and, although they wanted to be present at the meeting to show their support, they knew that it was much more important that they remain on the jobs serving the district’s students.

Ms. Gantz Berman reiterated the district’s sincere desire to resolve the issues brought forth by ATU members. She expressed confidence that the new team in Human Resources would live up to their commitment to work toward that resolution and that discussions would begin soon and be fruitful. She thanked the ATU representatives for appearing before the Board and sharing some of their concerns.

Tenley Stillwell said that she is a district parent and former member of three CDMs, and chairperson of one of them. She stated that she is also the former director of the Center for Quality Schools (CQS), which was created in 1992 as a citizens’ advocacy and watchdog group, to assist in the development of CDMs and the training of their membership. The ultimate goals of CQS, she said, were improved student achievement and success, and reflect the current and ongoing goals of the Denver Public Schools. She said that Ms. Gantz Berman and Mr. Woodward were among the CQS founding membership.

CQS, she said, was created to support CDMs and to help provide training and outside resources to the district and the site-based management teams. She said that the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce supported the effort and recruited and trained CDM business representatives. She said that CQS was disbanded in 1998, and that the district took over all CDM training.

Ms. Stillwell stated that talks between the district and the Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA) would be held the following weekend and would include discussions about the future of the CDM process, as its functions and roles are outlined in the DCTA contract. She said that she is gravely concerned about the process and the content in this arena. As elected officials, she said, the Board of Education represents parents and the community in the area of contract negotiations, and she expressed concern that there has not been a public dialogue about the CDM process or the results of the recent CDM survey. She said that it is important for the public to know the Board’s position regarding CDMs prior to entering into negotiations with the DCTA.
Ms. Stillwell said that, several years ago, the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC) of Boston, Massachusetts, was hired by the district to analyze CDMs and their effectiveness. Although a thorough report was delivered by CTAC, she said, it was never fully discussed by the community at large, nor were its recommendations implemented. She said that the first recommendation was that the district conduct a large public gathering of all CDM stakeholders to discuss roles, responsibilities, and membership. She said that such a gathering was not held and that the omission was a mistake, as a public forum about the CDM process is long overdue. She said that many people involved in education and the CDM process are not even aware that a change is being contemplated.

She said that the Board should release the results of the recent CDM survey, as well as recommendations from the CDM Improvement Council (CIC) around those survey results. After providing an opportunity for public comment, she said it was hoped that the Board would enter negotiations with the added bonus of having the community’s perspective and input.

Ms. Stillwell said that she is opposed to the recommendation of the Community Relations Department that site-based management teams’ membership be reduced to eliminate two parents and two teachers, as well as the recommendation to move from consensus decision-making to an option for simple majority decision-making. As was stated by a previous speaker, she said, eliminating consensus would effectively disallow those who hold the minority point of view. She said that consensus decision-making forces serious and in-depth discussion of issues and, while it might be more time consuming than simple majority decision-making, it provides an opportunity for all parties to be heard through ongoing dialogue.

She acknowledged that there are problems within the CDM system in the areas of functioning and efficiency, but it would be a mistake to jump to the conclusion that the solution is to be found in limiting the size, representation, and diversity of site-based management teams. She said that the original spirit of forming CDMs was to increase parent and teacher involvement in the management of schools and that the current proposal to decrease participation in those categories destroys the original intent of the process. Some CDMs, she said, have not been effective, and those groups should have the benefit of independent mediation; however, the problems of a few CDMs should not mean the downfall of the entire system. If the same reasoning were used on the district as a whole, she said, the district’s central administration should be dismantled, since it has not always been totally effective, and has suffered from conflict, turnover, and lack of independent outside input.

Ms. Stillwell said that one person should not be able to keep a CDM from making decisions and, if that kind of thing happens, it is due to a lack of training and understanding of the consensus model. She stated that, in the rare event of the failure of consensus to reach a decision, a two-thirds majority vote could be used when there is not another viable alternative; however, training for CDM members in facilitation would be a better solution. She said that effective training, mediation, and continued investment by
parents and community would do more to improve public schools than would dismantling
the current CDM structure.

Rita Gibson said that she is the parent of two children in the Denver Public Schools and
that she has never served on a CDM, but that she does not feel that these site-based
management teams should be eliminated. She said that she has read the CTAC report and
has spoken with friends and acquaintances who serve on CDMs, and that she has come to
believe that there is more merit in working to improve the current model than in
implementing a new and untried decision-making model.

Ms. Gantz Berman thanked Ms. Stillwell and Ms. Gibson for their thoughtful input and
said that she, herself, feels that there should be more public dialogue before making a
decision about the CDM process and entering into contract negotiations.

Mr. Pettigrew said that the upcoming discussions of CDM as part of DCTA negotiations
would include a presentation of CDM survey findings, as well as background
presentations both favoring retention of the current system and revamping the system as
proposed. He said that, while negotiations are ongoing, at this stage they are merely
holding discussions and not making decisions.

Ms. Stillwell said that she understands the necessity for closed contract negotiations, but
feels that the results of the survey and recommendations around it should be made
available to the public.

Mrs. Moss noted that decisions regarding CDMs would not be made that weekend, and
asked if it were possible to determine when such decisions might be reached.

Mr. Pettigrew said that a goal has been set to complete DCTA negotiations by the end of
April and that the CDM portion of the contract is simply one part of the larger set of
issues that make up the entire contract. He said that, while he does not anticipate any
separate decisions to be made regarding CDMs in the immediate future, it is part of the
overall package. He said that the Board would be briefed in closed Work Sessions about
the ongoing progress of contract discussions.

He agreed that it is important to get public feedback regarding the issue of CDMs, but he
did not have a recommendation regarding the best method for obtaining that input.

Dr. Wartgow said that he assumed, from Ms. Stillwell’s comments, that she feels that part
of the problems with CDMs stem from the fact that they are part of the DCTA contract.
He asked if that were a correct assumption.

Ms. Stillwell replied that that question had been debated for many years and that she
believes the idea has merit for discussion and consideration.

Dr. Wartgow said that he is very anxious to complete negotiations with DCTA and,
personally, would like to see all matters resolved by April 18, 2002. He said that it is
extremely difficult to finalize the district’s budget without knowing the results of negotiations with the district’s largest bargaining group. He said that he does not have a strong opinion on either side of the question of whether CDMs belong in the DCTA contract and that he would be willing to consider removal of that clause if it would mean swifter resolution of other contract issues. He said that negotiations teams were meeting late into the evenings and during the weekends in order to arrive at mutually beneficial conclusions and that, while CDMs are an important part of the contract, there are other issues that have equal and higher priority.

In response to a question from Ms. Gantz Berman, Ms. Stillwell said that there are good reasons to consider removing CDMs from the DCTA contract. Foremost, she said, is the fact that decisions about CDMs have a profound impact on segments of the education community who, because of the closed nature of negotiations, are not allowed any input into those decisions. Removing CDMs from the contract would allow more stakeholders a greater voice in determining the future direction of these groups. However, she said, having CDMs as part of the DCTA contract has given them a secure foundation and guaranteed their existence for the past ten years.

Prentis Vandoval, Chairperson of the Hallett Elementary School CDM, said that their school is facing a shortage of funds. He stated that, currently, Hallett has twelve teachers and five reading assistants to assist in their primary goal of closing the gap between better and poorer achieving students. Next year, he said, they will not be able to support their reading assistants or other paraprofessionals through their budget, and will have to use all available funds in order to have the thirteen teachers they will need to move forward with their educational plan.

He said that he and the other parents are concerned about the loss of staff, and he presented signed letters from more than 80 Hallett parents who were unable to attend the meeting but who wished to have their concerns heard by the Board. It is especially alarming, he said, to lose the reading assistants, who work with the children from kindergarten through second grade. He said that children are now tested through the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) beginning in the third grade and that test scores will surely drop without the preparatory work done with younger children. Hallett, he said, does not have an assistant principal, nor do they have a lead teacher.

Mr. Vandoval said that he has come before the Board to see if there is any way for Hallett to receive more funding so their children do not suffer through the loss of so many of the school’s necessary support staff.

Nicole Smith said that she is the parent of three students attending Hallett and that she was very upset to learn about the elimination of reading assistants due to budget constraints, which will hinder the educational progress of 300 students. She said that it is a travesty that the school’s budget had to be cut to the point that they had to eliminate much needed reading assistants just to be able to afford the teaching staff they need to serve their students. These cuts, she said, would be felt by every child at Hallett as they attend classes with more students than the teacher should have to have in a classroom and
are not exposed to small group or individual learning experiences. She said that circumstances such as those would set Hallett’s children up for failure, as they lose the support of reading assistants who have guided them on a daily basis in the classroom.

Ms. Smith said that reading assistants are absolutely essential for children in the early grades, as they are the ones who take the extra time with children and reinforce the lesson plans set forth by the teachers. Reading assistants, she said, provide added attention, guidance, and caring to children who need it desperately, and eliminating these people in the lives of children would take away people who, for some of the children, provide one of the few sources of consistency in their lives.

She said that the initial purpose of providing reading assistants for children in the lower grades was to assist students who were in genuine need of assistance in reading to help them reach a level of literacy comparable to other children their age throughout the state. She said that the program has not had sufficient time to succeed and that elimination of it dims any hope that many schools in the district might have about recovering from “unsatisfactory” ratings. She urged the Board to look at the situation again and come up with a way for Hallett to have the teachers the school needs but not at the expense of losing their valuable reading assistants.

Yolanda Rodriguez, parent of two children attending Hallett who are performing very well in school, attributes a great deal of their success to the attention they have received from reading assistants and teachers who have extra time because of the presence of reading assistants in their classroom. She said that she has been a member of Hallett’s CDM for several years and that, year after year, the school has had to face budget cuts and losses of staff and materials. She said that the name of the school is the Hallett Science and Technology Academy, yet they lost their science teacher due to budget cuts; they are not able anymore to offer children the opportunity participate in the Shakespeare Festival or Destination Imagination because of the lack of staff and resources. In order to retain their reading assistants, she said, they would have to cut teachers so that the ones who were left would have to teach classes of 35 or more students.

She said that it hurt her to read in the newspaper that Hallett is considered a “failing school” because she knows that her children and their friends and peers are capable of so much more, but won’t be able to reach their level of achievement because of the lack of funds, staff, and supplies. She stated that she could not sit quietly by and accept the fact that they have to shortchange their children simply to provide the proper number of teachers for them.

Mrs. Edwards thanked the Hallett representatives for their appearance before the Board and for their commitment to providing the best educational experience possible for their children. She said that she and her fellow Board members could appreciate the concerns raised by Hallett parents, as the Board faces similar concerns about every school in the district. So many of the issues raised, she said, deserve attention and comment, but that the people involved might be better served to bring up those concerns with their Area Superintendent and the Hallett principal.
Mrs. Edwards said that she wanted to make it abundantly clear that every school in the
district is staffed equitably using a set student-to-teacher ratio, which is 25 students for
each teacher at the elementary level. Therefore, she said, if a school loses one or more
teachers it is most likely due to the fact that they are projected to have a decrease in
student membership. She urged them to find out what Hallett’s projected enrollment for
the 2003-2004 school year would be to ensure that their teacher allocation is correct.

Ms. Rodriguez said that, historically, their projections have always been lower than the
actual amount of students they serve, as their student population tends to have a higher
mobility rate than many district schools.

Mrs. Edwards said that she, too, is concerned about the status of programs such as the
Shakespeare Festival and Destination Imagination because participation rates are down
across the entire district. In most schools, she said, those programs are staffed by
volunteers and oftentimes sponsored by local businesses, and she encouraged the Hallett
community to seek out volunteers and sponsors for the programs. She said that there are
people who are willing to step forward to ensure that children are able to take advantage
of these enriching activities. It would be unlikely, she said, that the Board would approve
additional funding for Hallett that would not be available to other schools.

Mr. Patterson asked several questions for background information and said that he would
be pleased to meet with Hallett representatives to discuss their options regarding funding
and budgeting.

Carla Santorno, Northeast Area Superintendent, said that Hallett did have a decrease in
enrollment during the 2000-2001 school year, which should have led to the loss of a
teacher, but that resource was not taken away from the school because of the
Superintendent’s commitment to supporting schools rated “unsatisfactory.” Therefore,
she said, when the second consecutive decrease in enrollment caused a staffing
adjustment, Hallett lost two of its teachers—the one it should have lost for the first
enrollment decrease and the one they lost for the second enrollment decrease.

Dr. Wartgow said that Hallett’s student membership as of the official October 1, 2001,
pupil count day should have caused a decrease of one full-time equivalent (FTE) position.
At that time, he said, he declined to remove that FTE from Hallett’s allocation because of
his desire to support their educational program. He said that, as much as he would like to
be able to continue to provide that extra FTE, he cannot justify it on an equity basis.
Staffing and budgeting for the district is very complex and difficult, he said, and it is
always the district’s intent to provide as much support as is fiscally possible. He said that
he and his staff would be working closely with Area Superintendents and the Chief
Academic Officer to offer viable alternatives to schools in the area of assistance. He said
that the Reading Assistant Program is one form of support for teachers, but that there are
also other types of support that have proven to be very effective.
In response to a query from Mr. Mejía regarding instructional coaches, Dr. Wartgow said that the district would be providing schools with such coaches, who would be master teachers and experts in the area of teaching methodologies. He said that schools with an “unsatisfactory” rating would receive one coach for every eight to ten teachers on staff, and that these coaches would work with both teachers and students to enhance student achievement.

Mr. Mejía said that Hallett representatives spoke of being disappointed and disheartened by the school’s “unsatisfactory” rating and that, in his opinion, continuing on as they have been will not help the school approve its rating. He said that a new method of instruction and assistance is being proposed in the hopes of producing different results, and that what is being proposed has been studied and has been shown to produce higher student achievement.

Mr. Vandoval said that parents and members of the Hallett community certainly want to see the children learning more and an improvement in the school’s rating. However, he said, given the overall state of education in Denver, it does not seem to him that many of the past methods, which had also been proven effective, worked particularly well. He stated that he did not feel very confident that the new methods proposed would work any better than ones proposed in the past.

Mr. Mejía expressed optimism that the new methods would, indeed, make a difference and contribute to higher levels of learning for the children. He said that the instructional coaches program has been studied extensively and documented as effective, and he urged the parents to look into the program and work with the district to implement the program as it should be, so that it can produce better results in Denver as it has in other areas of the country.

Ms. Smith said that major changes occurred at Hallett during the 2001-2002 school year, as they received a new principal and a large number of new staff members; and that the changes were very good and resulted in smaller class sizes. However, she said, the positive changes that were made have not been given a chance to succeed before instituting a new program. She said that one instructional coach will not make much difference and will not be able to reach the same amount of students on an individual basis as five reading assistants have done.

Rev. Guzman said that, based on Hallett’s staff size, they would only get one instructional coach. She said that she understands the issues raised by the Hallett community and that she has been concerned about the formula for determining how much, and what kind of, support each school receives. She said she feels that schools that have an “unsatisfactory” or “low” rating should not be in a position of losing resources in any manner, particularly good teachers. A new formula must be developed, she said, and the issue of equity must be examined and reevaluated, so that schools with “unsatisfactory” and “low” ratings receive priority support. She said that an instructional coach would primarily be of assistance to teachers, but that losing reading assistants means the loss of staff members who work on a day-to-day basis directly with students.
However, Rev. Guzman said that she also agreed with Mr. Mejía in that new methods for improving student achievement must be sought when the former methods do not seem to be working as well as they should. To do so, she said, would mean that the entire issue of the district’s support to schools must be examined, and new approaches must be considered. She said that she also believes that the instructional coaches program is a valid approach, but that they should not be assigned based on the number of students enrolled, but rather on the needs of the population of each school.

Northeast Area Superintendent Carla Santorno said that it is important to clarify some of the issues. In 1998, she said, the voters of Denver approved additional funds to provide reading assistants in the lower grade levels, but that the district, at that time, also gave schools the discretion to convert reading assistant allocations to teacher allocations. She said that using those reading assistant allocations to convert to a teacher position is a difficult decision because it decreases the student-to-adult ratio in a school, but it does not signify a decrease in the allocation that school receives.

She also stated that instructional coaches would be assigned to schools and paid for with Title I funds. In Hallett’s case, she said, they would receive one instructional coach, but would still have Title I funds remaining, which the school would be able to use at its own discretion.

Mrs. Edwards said that, as an “unsatisfactory” school, Hallett would also have received an additional $75,000 allocation, and she asked how those funds had been spent. Mr. Vandoval replied that, as a new CDM Chairperson, he was still learning how allocated funds were being spent. Mrs. Edwards suggested that he speak with Ms. Santorno after the meeting to learn more about Hallett’s allocations and what the school has reported as the uses of those funds.

Ms. Gantz Berman thanked the Hallett representatives for bringing their concerns to the Board of Education, and stated that Ms. Santorno would remain after adjournment to clarify issues for them.

**VIII. Adjournment**

Ms. Gantz Berman adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Susan G. Edwards, Secretary
Board of Education