I. **Call to Order**

A. **Pledge of Allegiance**

B. **Roll Call**

President Elaine Gantz Berman called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. The following Board of Education members were present: Ms. Elaine Gantz Berman, Mrs. Susan G. Edwards, Rev. Lucia Guzman, Mrs. Michelle Moss, Mr. Kevin Patterson, and Mr. Lester Woodward. Mr. James Mejia was absent and excused.

C. **Recognitions**

Students from Academia Ana Marie Sandoval Montessori School sang for the Board at the beginning of the meeting.

Ms. Gantz Berman thanked Sandoval Elementary School for hosting the meeting and Joann Trujillo Hays, Principal, welcomed the Board and audience.

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, and the motion passed unanimously.

II. **Board Member Reports**

Ms. Gantz Berman read statutory requirements regarding the posting of public notice for the Board of Education meetings.

III. **Superintendent’s Reports**

There were none.

IV. **Consent Agenda**

Assistant Secretary Jacquie Lucero read the consent agenda items by number and sequence, in accordance with consent agenda procedures as follows:
A. Board of Education

There were none.

B. Superintendent’s Office

1. 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant for Lake, Cole, Smiley Middle After-School Programs – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve submission of the grant application as described in the proposal summary and that the Superintendent be directed to submit all necessary documents consistent with grant application guidelines and be authorized to make any technical or administrative adjustments that may be necessary. A copy of the motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 03-01, IV-B-1.

1. 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant for Harrington, Barnum, and Columbine After-School Programs – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve submission of the grant application as described in the proposal summary and that the Superintendent be directed to submit all necessary documents consistent with grant application guidelines and be authorized to make any technical or administrative adjustments that may be necessary. A copy of the motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 03-01, IV-B-2.

C. Administrative Services

1. Human Resources

   a. Personnel Transaction Report – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the Personnel Transaction Report. A copy of this report is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 03-01, IV-C-1a.

D. Facility Management

   a. Final Settlements – It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the Final Settlements for Contracted Services as described on the attached schedule. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 03-01, IV-C-2a.

Mrs. Edwards moved and Mr. Patterson seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda. A roll call vote was recorded, and the motion passed unanimously.

V. Old Business

There was none.

VI. New Business
A. Information Only

1. Approval of Design-Build Agreement for a Green Valley Ranch K-8 School - It was recommended that the Board of Education approve a design-build contract for the new Green Valley Ranch Town Center K-8 School with the firm of Oakwood Homes, LLC, and the amount of $12,025,125 be approved as the construction budget. Such budget to be allocated as follows: $11,452,500 (Construction and DoTS), and a contingency of five percent of (5%) or $572,625. A copy of this motion is appended to the official minutes of this meeting as Appendix 03-01, V-A-1.

Dr. Jerry Wartgow, Superintendent, said this was a new, innovative, collaborative partnership between DPS, the City and County of Denver, and Oakwood Homes. The proposal would use certificates of participation to build a new K-8 school in the Green Valley Ranch area where there are overcrowded schools and a rapidly growing enrollment. The DPS would collaborate with the City and Country of Denver, Denver Parks and Recreation, to build a school on a site on which there would be a recreation center, a Denver Public Library, and would be surrounded by park land and playing fields.

Councilwoman Happy Haynes said she had been working for years to make the most productive use of public, school, and city facilities through cooperative and joint use. Tremendous strides had been made over the last few years, but there had been difficulties in persuading taxpayers to believe they were getting the most use out of the facilities they were paying for. She felt that this project was the best opportunity they had ever had to serve the families of a community in a very unique way. She said Oakwood Homes were very invested in the outcome of the project.

Kelly Leid, Project Coordinator for Oakwood Homes, highlighted various components of the project. He said the idea was to accelerate the development of a K-8 school for Green Valley Ranch. One of the components was support from the Foundation for Educational Excellence in helping with debt relief in the first year. Another component was the commitment of Oakwood Homes to provide staffing to work on the project. He described the Green Valley Ranch area and focused on the Town Center site. He said there would be multiple components: a recreation center, a school, a public amphitheater, a public plaza and lake, and a park. He described the development status of each of the components and possible uses upon completion. He said the project would be completed on time and on budget.

Mrs. Moss asked Councilwoman Haynes to speak to the commitment of the City and about resolving issues with the City regarding common use of the facilities. Councilwoman Haynes said the parties had discussed all of the issues and that she would take personal accountability to make the agreement happen.
Mr. Patterson said that with the current economic conditions, the district and the city needed to look at the most efficient and effective ways to provide services for residents.

Ms. Gantz Berman asked about potential problems with having people from the community using the same facilities as students at the same time. Mr. Leid responded that this was one of the issues that must be resolved, and he said he was confident that by working together they could deliver a program that worked for everyone.

Ms. Gantz Berman summarized the proposal by saying she felt that with the partnership and the design-build the district would be able to build the same quality of building that they had built in the past, and for approximately the same amount of money. The district would have a higher level of guarantee that the school would open on time, and additional school space was desperately needed in Green Valley.

Mr. Patterson moved and Mr. Woodward seconded a motion to approve the recommendation. A roll call vote was recorded, and the motion passed unanimously.

RECESS

Ms. Gantz Berman recessed the meeting and explained that the Board would reconvene at 7:00 p.m. for the Public Hearing segment of the meeting.

RECOVENE

VII. Public Comment (First Thursday of Each Month)

Ms. Gantz Berman explained procedures used for this portion of the meeting.

Jay Smith – English Plus Representative – He said English Plus ran the “No on 31” campaign, and on behalf of English Plus he presented an award to the parents of Academia Sandoval and the parents and children of Colorado, thanking them for their tireless commitment to defeat Amendment 31.

Trip Reynolds – Vacation Payout – He said he had sent a letter to the Board on a personal matter, had received no response, and asked if there was any feedback.

Ms. Edwards said the Board did not respond to personnel issues at the meeting. Ms. Gantz Berman said she would meet with him to discuss his problem.

Patrick Ridgeway – Academia Ana Marie Sandoval – He said district bureaucracy was standing in the path to success for children. He said first and second graders did not have access to the second floor because there was no fire escape, and that they would outgrow the first floor at the end of the next school year. He said the principal and the building and
safety committee had worked on the issue for two years, that there had been meetings with
top administrators, but nothing had been done. He asked for a written commitment for a
fire escape, and that it not be tied to a bond issue.

Jose Amaya, Facility Management, responded that the school had been designed to
accommodate the original programs planned for the school. He said that though there
were sketches, there was no finished plan for a fire escape. In response to a question
from Mr. Woodward, Mr. Amaya said they had no design, no architect, and no funds
for a fire escape, but that it might be incorporated into the next bond issue.

Rev. Guzman said that the school needed to have the second floor available by the Fall
of 2004. She had talked to Mike Langley, Executive Director of Facility Management,
and was assured that the fire escape would be constructed with or without bond money.
She said she understood that programs were added after the architectural design was
done, but that a fire escape was needed. Mike Wonsik, Program Project Director, said
that state law required a fire escape be constructed before students could be placed on
the second floor. He said that they had a commitment to provide one by 2004. Dr.
Wartgow said that with increasing enrollment it was not just a program design for the
fire escape, but were a fundamental design issue for the school.

Phil Antonelli - Ana Marie Sandoval School Fire Escape – He said he was a parent of two
children at Sandoval and CDM Chairperson. He said what he heard from the Board was
different from his perception as a participant in the process of launching the school. He said
the committee came up with a program that called for a dual-language Montessori and the
program was approved. He said the program was in place before the building was built, but
it was built incorrectly. He said if their building was built incorrectly, how could the Board
ask for another bond issue to build other schools. He said parents were committed and
asked for commitment from the Board.

Ms. Gantz Berman said the process used to build schools from the last bond was the
first time they had used that process and it was mostly successful, but they had learned
from it and would make the appropriate adjustments as they build new schools. She
said he had the commitment of the Board and Superintendent to complete the project by
the Fall of 2004.

Theresa Becker, Peter Thomas, Jamie Sarche, and Andrew Kerr – Proposed Highly Gifted
and Talented (HGT) Program at Carson Elementary School – Theresa Becker, Carson
CDM Chairperson and parent, said that staff and parents had discussed the proposal and
felt it would be a wonderful thing for Carson. She said the PTA had been working to attract
students to the school, and the program would help accomplish that. Peter Thomas, parent,
said having the program implemented at the school, coupled with their hearing disabled
program, would enhance Carson’s appeal as a neighborhood school and expand their
diversity. Jamie Sarche, Southmoor parent, said Southmoor was getting overcrowded with
students wanting to enroll in the HGT program, other sites were needed, and Carson would
be a good location. Andrew Kerr, Southmoor parent, expressed support for expansion of
the program.
Maureen Coll – Academia Ana Marie Sandoval – She said that the district might look at the architects of Sandoval because she felt there were fundamental flaws in the design of the building, especially in addressing the needs of special needs students. She described how the first and second floors worked and multi-age grouping. As a teacher, she had been under fire for the bad reputation of DPS and had tried to defend the district, but DPS needed to reconsider the promises they had made and fund existing programs.

John Goldin-Dubois, Wendy Steinway, Kim Allen, and Mary Lemieux – Northwest Parents for Excellent Schools – Mr. Goldin-Dubois said he was the parent co-chair for the newly formed Northwest Parents of Excellent Schools, with over 120 families and expanding rapidly. He said they were diverse but shared a deep commitment to sending their children to public schools and to the belief that all children deserve excellent schools in their own neighborhoods. He said parents should not have to decide between a failing school and an average school, but should make decisions based on curriculum, services, programs, staffing, and overall vision. He said they had been energized by the findings from Raleigh, North Carolina, which had successfully provided a wide range of choices that attracted diverse families and resulted in most children succeeding academically—they were closing the achievement gap. He said they believed similar results could be achieved in Northwest Denver. He described criteria that all schools in the community should meet. He said they understood there was a process that allowed for community input, but they did not feel the structure allowed for necessary parental involvement. He said reforming Northwest Denver schools should move quickly forward, and the community should play a decisive role in decisions about school program models and how to best use resources to improve existing schools. He urged the Board to establish a decision-making committee that relied strongly on the community to make decisions, not just making recommendations. He said that when the district considered making major changes in schools in Northwest Denver, the committee should play a crucial role.

Rev. Guzman commended the group and said she had met with some of their committee, knew that they would be meeting with Sally Mentor Hay, Chief Academic Officer, and she looked forward to finding what steps would be taken next.

Mr. Woodward expressed his appreciation for what they were doing, and said that having parents involved with the schools and programs might excite their kids. He said he hoped they would be there for the long haul and that the board would give them the support they needed.

Dr. Wartgow thanked the group and said it was a pleasure to see parents with commitment and willingness to work with the district and that by working as a team, they could accomplish what both wanted.

Jane Crystal – International Preparatory Magnet (IPM) Program at Smiley Middle School – She said Bromwell parents had heard the program was going to be initiated and were concerned. She said she was glad to have increased choices; however, parents of fifth graders started the process of looking for a middle school in September and put in the first
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Ms. Gantz Berman said she had received a number of calls expressing the same perspective. She asked Wayne Eckerling, Assistant Superintendent for Research, Planning and Special Programs, to respond. Dr. Eckerling said the program was presented as sixth graders being reassigned the next year, and if people felt that would not work as well, then implementation could be a year later. He said they would try to clarify the issue and see what the options would be.

Nate Howard, Smiley Principal, said they were not trying to make students go to Smiley but wanted to make sure the choice for IPM programs were extended in the DPS.

Paulette Cooper, Brian Weber, Dee Ealey, Natalie Howard, and Gary Brewer – IPM Program at Smiley Middle School – Paulette Cooper, Smiley teacher and CDM member, said she was proud to work for a district that recognized and accommodated the needs of students. She said there had been discussions about changes at Smiley and she shared some of the ideas. She said the addition of IPM program would accommodate the kinds of ideas that were generated. She said the faculty and staff had been informed about the program, the CDM had approved the program, changes had been made in the master schedule, and there had been the formation of a redesign committee that was facilitated by the Public Education Business Coalition, the Piton Foundation, and the Stapleton Foundation. She said the faculty felt the program was an exciting opportunity, and they were supportive and looking forward to the professional development that would come with the program.

Gary Brewer, Smiley parent, said his sixth grade daughter attended Hamilton for the IPM program and described problems that had arisen for her regarding early awakenings, long bus rides, and being away from her school community and friends. He spoke in support of having an IPM program at Smiley.

Dee Ealey, Smiley Community Liaison, said over the past year they had discussed changes that needed to take place for Smiley to become a more competitive and productive learning school for their children. She said they were very clear that they wanted an equality educational environment and that parents, community, school staff must make a collaborative effort so that it became a reality. She said a leader was needed who would have high expectations of all students, who would provide professional development and
training, and who would be innovative and not afraid to make changes. She said that leader was Nate Howard.

Natalie Howard, sophomore at George Washington’s IPM program, spoke on behalf of the adoption of the IPM program at Smiley. She said she felt that had there been an IB program in the northeast quadrant she would have been better prepared to transition into the George Washington IPM program.

Brian Weber, Stapleton Foundation, said there was a lot of support outside of Smiley for what was happening at Smiley. He said part of the development plan for Stapleton called for the benefits of Stapleton to go beyond the borders of the old airport. One way that was done was by helping schools in their efforts to improve themselves. He said that in addition to Stapleton, the Public Education Business Coalition and the Piton Foundation were bringing financial and other resources to the effort, and it was a long term commitment for all three of the groups. He said they were interested in the IPM program at Smiley, but were also interested in the school as a whole.

Mr. Woodward said it had been an interesting evening for him with groups of people talking about change and improvement, and he commended them all. He said that those types of collaborative efforts between the district, parents, and community could make a difference for all district schools.

Mr. Patterson said one of the first things he heard when he became involved with the schools was that something had to be done about Smiley. He said it was heartening to see the involvement and commitment of the parents, the leadership, and the staff in the building.

Carlos Tamayo – School Improvement – Mr. Tamayo said that as a parent he had heard much about the lack of parent involvement in decision making for all the schools in Denver. He said he believed that the success of any school resides with the parents. He said that with the wonderful staff at Sandoval and the level of parent involvement, they wanted to make it a blue ribbon school and they needed the commitment, participation, and vision of the Board to make that happen.

Becky Wissink – Vouchers – Ms. Wissink introduced herself as a teacher and President of the Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA). She said they wanted every public school to be as good as the best public school. She said the Board, teachers, and community could make schools better. She said they needed to have the courage to do what it took to ensure that every child had access to their civil right—a free, quality, public education. She discussed reasons why the Association opposed alternatives, like vouchers, that diverted attention, energy, and resources for public schools. She said vouchers would cost the district a great deal of money, and she asked how that could be fair to children who stay in DPS and taxpayers who live in Denver and give their taxes to DPS to support public education. She described a bill regarding vouchers that was introduced by a non-Denver legislator and targeted at Denver. She asked that the district join DCTA in actively
opposing voucher legislation, and said that to do less was sending a message to the community that it was okay to abandon the public school system.

Ms. Gantz Berman said the Board appreciated their relationship with DCTA and took their views on important issues very seriously. She said that it had been distressing that issues, such as Amendment 31, took so much time and energy on the part of the Board and Superintendent, and that it was time and energy that wasn’t being spent on the everyday work of the district. She said the voucher discussion would be the same, and that after the recent Supreme Court ruling, they were anticipating five different voucher bills to be introduced during the session, and the belief was that one would be passed. She said the Board had challenging discussions about the role they should or should not play in the voucher discussion. She said that everyone on the Board felt strongly that accountability, equity, non-discrimination, and financial impact were important considerations. She said she was sure there would be many more discussions and that the Board had not reached any conclusive decision on their role.

Rev. Guzman said she recently visited the Milwaukee schools area where the voucher program had been in effect for several years. One of the things she found gave her reason to totally, emphatically reject the idea of vouchers. She said she believed it was the beginning of the privatization of the public school system in America. She said it was a system that allowed schools to be unaccountable and to discriminate against homosexuals, disabled kids, and against people who were different. She said she believed it was one of the most un-American movements the country had seen since the civil rights issues. She said that as an individual she would speak against vouchers, but would abide by the decision of the Board.

Mr. Woodward said he could not think of any way a voucher system would be beneficial to the DPS. He said there were a number of provisions in some of the bills that would be potentially damaging to DPS, and he would speak out against them.

Mrs. Moss said voucher bills sent the wrong message about DPS to teachers, the community, and to the rest of the people in the state and country. She said she saw voucher bills as the wrong statement about what the Board, Superintendent and staff had worked so hard to do over the last year, and that was to guarantee that every child in the district received a quality education. Voucher bills say that couldn’t be done, and if that were true, she would have to resign from the Board. She said vouchers were the wrong answer because they didn’t solve the problems they pretended to solve, such as transportation to private schools and money for uniforms or extras required by private schools. She said she would fight against voucher bills.

Mrs. Edwards said that as an elected public official she had a sacred responsibility to represent those who elected her, and she said legislators had a like responsibility. She said voters of the state had spoken again and again against vouchers, and if elected officials were there to represent them, those officials should get the message. She said the Board was in a difficult situation because there was a likelihood that some sort of voucher bill would pass, and the Board would have to deal with that.
Mr. Patterson said he had an opportunity to meet with board members from many cities and that had made him value the district’s relationship with the DCTA, and he appreciated their position on this issue. He said the district must hear from people on their feelings about the issue.

Macharia Nyahuma – Follow-up on Hallet Elementary School – He said that he attended a previous Board meeting regarding his concerns about children at Hallet being outside in the cold. He said Mr. Patterson and others promised they would get back to him, and that had not happened.

Mr. Patterson said he believed there had been attempts to schedule a meeting with the principal at Hallet, and asked staff if that had been done. The response was that there had been a meeting with the principal and there had been resolution to Mr. Nyahuma’s concerns.

Ms. Gantz Berman suggested that Mr. Patterson and staff meet with Mr. Nyahuma following adjournment of the meeting

David Segal – Denver Association for Gifted and Talented (DAGT) – Mr. Segal said DAGT had decided to work more closely with DPS, and he was their liaison. He said he would address curriculum standardization, and that the issue had come to the advisory council’s attention for a number of reasons. He said it was obvious that bringing kids who were below grade level up to grade level was a top priority. He said their concern was that “No Child Left Behind” should not mean that any child should be held down to grade level and not be allowed to forge ahead when they were performing above grade level. He said the curriculum department met with their advisory council and were responsive to their concerns, and he thought everything would be resolved.

b. **Adjournment**

Ms. Gantz Berman adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.