I. Call to Order – 5:00 p.m.

The John F. Kennedy High School Robotics Team held a demonstration for the Board and audience.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

President Lester R. Woodward called the meeting to order at 5:23 p.m. The following Board of Education members were present: Ms. Elaine Gantz Berman, Rev. Lucia Guzman, Mr. Bruce Hoyt, Mrs. Michelle Moss, Mr. Kevin Patterson, Ms. Theresa Peña, and Mr. Lester Woodward.

C. Recognition of International Baccalaureate Teacher, Suzi Geimer, from George Washington High School

Mario Williams, Principal of George Washington High School introduced Suzi Geimer, Coordinator of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program. Ms. Geimer was named Regional Director of the Year, out of 400 regional IB schools in the world, by the International Baccalaureate Program of North America. She is the only sitting IB Coordinator to receive this distinguished honor.

II. Board Members Reports

Bruce Hoyt reported that the first meeting of the Denver Public Schools’ Task Force on School Readiness was held today. This task force was formed in recognition of the critical importance of early childhood education, promoting not only school readiness but long-term school success in public schools. The task force will explore ways that the district can best promote and interact with the early childhood education community in Denver in an effort to close the achievement gap.

Members of the task force include: George Brantley, Hope Center; Cecilia Broder, Mile High United Way; Dr. Jeff Brown, Denver Health CHS Pediatrics; Valin Brown, Colorado Bright Beginnings; Cheryl Caldwell, DPS Early Education Department; Dr. Robert Emde, Department of Psychiatry at UCHSC; Antonio Esquibel, Rocky Mountain SER Head Start; Kathryn Hammerbeck, Colorado Child Care Association; Anna Jo Haynes, Mile High Montessori; Robert Hill, Hill & Robbins, P.C.; Sue Kempton, Teacher, Harrington Elementary School; Jennifer Landrum; Colorado
Rev. Guzman reported that the Commission on High School Reform, which started work in May, recently had a day-and-a-half day retreat. Commissioners met with facilitators to begin to refine and define recommendations they will present to the Board of Education in January. Recommendations will include strategy, mapping, timeline prioritization, and recommendations which will move the district into a new era of high school reform. One hundred and seventy-five students from all district high and alternative schools will be attending a student forum at the Denver Convention Center tomorrow. A public forum will be held December 9th.

Ms. Gantz Berman reported that the Commission on School Nutrition and Physical Activity is in the final stages. A two-day retreat was held this past weekend for the Commission, which has been meeting for about six months to formulate the recommendations which they will present to the Board on December 16. One piece they took into consideration was a survey designed by district students. Almost 5,000 students in middle and high schools responded; it has some very interesting results.

She reported that Board member Lucia Guzman was honored by Family Star, an early childhood education Montessori program. Lucia received their annual award. Pat Salazar, Northwest Area Assistant Superintendent, received the Education Leadership Award from Escuela Tlatelolca, and Board member Bruce Hoyt was recognized as an Outstanding Manual alumni at a special ceremony.

III. Superintendent’s Reports

The Superintendent did not have anything to report at this time.

IV. Consent Agenda

Assistant Secretary Jacque Lucero read the agenda items by number and sequence, in accordance with Consent Agenda procedures, the following items were removed from the Consent Agenda and held for discussion:

IV-C-1 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended, June 30, 2004
IV-C-2 Single Audit Report for the Year Ended, June 30, 2004
Ms. Gantz Berman moved that all matters on the Consent Agenda not held be approved. Mr. Patterson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the following items were approved:

A. Gift Report – A copy is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, III-A.

A. Board of Education

1. Minutes of October 21, 2004 – A copy is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, IV-A-1.

2. Motion to Approve Grant Recipient Agreement with the State of Colorado – A copy of this motion, the Grant Recipient Agreement with the State of Colorado for Community Colleges and Occupational Education and DPS in the amount of $934,247.00, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, IV-A-2.

B. Administrative Services

1. Human Resources

   a. Motion to Approve Personnel Transaction Report – A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, IV-B-1a.

2. Facility Management

   a. Motion to Approve Land Donation at Balarat Outdoor Education Center - A copy of this motion is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, IV-B-2a.

   b. Motion to Approve Land Transfer and Easement at Omar D. Blair School - A copy of this motion is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, IV-B-2b.

   c. Motion to Approve Utility Easement at the Service Center - A copy of this motion is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, IV-B-2c.

D. Denver Public Schools Retirement System

1. Motion to Amend the Retirement and Benefit Plan of the Denver Public Schools Retirement System – A copy of this motion, amendments to the Retirement and Benefit Plan of the Denver Public Schools Retirement System, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, IV-D-1.
E. Policy Revisions

1. Delete Policy DG, Banking Services (and Deposit of Funds) – A copy of this policy is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, IV-E.1.

V. Old Business

There was none.

VI. New Business

The following matters were presented for information:

A. Budget and Finance – Financial Services

1. Statement of Revenue Allocations, Appropriations, Commitments, and Expenditures for the period July 1, 2004, to October 31, 2004 – A copy of this status report of year-to-date revenues, expenditures, and inter-fund transfers for each fund as compared to the current-year budget and as compared to the year-to-date totals for the prior year, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, VI-A-1.

B. Student Services

1. Expelled Students Report - A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, VI-B-1.

C. Policy Review

1. Deletion of Policy GCCBG, Administrative Staff Restoration of Health Leave
   A copy of this policy is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, VI-C-1.

D. Educational Services

1. Expansion of Denver School of the Arts – A copy of this report, recommending the use of Byers facility to increase the number of students served by the Denver School of the Arts, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, VI-D-1.

2. Report Regarding New ECE-8 Schools – A copy of this report, recommending changing Columbine, Gilpin, Harrington, Mitchell, and Whittier Elementary Schools, serving grades ECE-5 to serving grades ECE-8, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, VI-D-2.
3. Report Recommending Sixth Grade at Westerly Creek Elementary School – A copy of this report, recommending that Westerly Creek Elementary School be allowed to serve students in sixth grade for the 2005-2006 school year only, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, VI-D-3.

4. Revitalization Plan for Brown Elementary School – A copy of this report, recommending that the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program be implemented at Brown Elementary School beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, VI-D-4.

5. 2005-2006 Denver Public Schools Calendar – A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, VI-D-5.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

IV-C-1 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended, June 30, 2004

IV-C-2 Single Audit Report for the Year Ended, June 30, 2004

Mr. Hoyt introduced Velma Rose, Chief Financial Officer, and Marjorie Uhlar, Director, General Accounting, to make some general remarks about the audits. Ms. Rose introduced Jeff Beldon, Director, from Deloitte and Touche LLP.

Mr. Beldon said that his firm, Deloitte and Touche, audited the district’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the year ended June 30, 2004. They issued their auditor’s opinion on November 9, 2004. In that opinion, they found that management’s preparation presentation was in conformity with general accepted accounting principles. Additionally, they also performed an audit of the expenditures of federal awards, also known as the Single Audit. That audit consists of various tests of compliance and internal controls over district expenditures of federal awards during the year under audit. They found that the district had adequate internal controls in place. The district is in compliance with the expenditure requirements under the Single Audit Act.

Ms. Rose said that the Comprehensive Annual Report is a state requirement. This report has to be prepared and presented to the Board of Education by the fifth month of the fiscal year, which is November. Ms. Rose and Ms. Uhlar presented a PowerPoint presentation on the major highlights of the audit. A copy of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Single Audit Report PowerPoint presentation is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, IV-C-3.

In response to Ms. Gantz Berman’s question about debt service, Ms. Rose said that the debt service is what the district pays for the Pension Certificates of Participation and the seven percent rate is what the district has paid since 1977 when the certificates were first issued.

Mr. Hoyt said that it is very unusual for auditors, when they do the scope of work which they did, to find no reportable items nor management report issues for an organization this size. He
congratulated Velma and Marjorie, and everyone involved in the financial part, for that great accomplishment.

Mr. Hoyt moved approval of both of the financial reports. Mr. Patterson seconded the motion. A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, IV-C-1 and IV-C-2.

Mrs. Moss introduced Evan Eskridge, Student Board member from East High School.

Expansion of Denver School of the Arts

Dr. Wartgow asked Wayne Eckerling, Assistant Superintendent, Research, Planning, and Special Programs, to report on the proposed expansion of the Denver School of the Arts.
Dr. Eckerling introduced Patti Bipus, Principal, and Rory Pullens and Scott Springer, Assistant Principals, Denver School of the Arts (DSA). A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, VI-D-1.

Dr. Eckerling said that as part of the 2003 General Obligation Bonds, the Board of Education approved approximately $10 million to renovate Byers. The proposal at that time was to use Byers to expand DSA. DSA has approximately nine hundred students, with a waiting list of one thousand. This recommendation reaffirms that decision. At this time, there are two key recommendations, one and three, that will move this proposal along in the planning process and ensure that renovation occurs. Other recommendations included in the proposal can be addressed at a later time.

The two key recommendations which staff would like the Board to take action on at their December 16, 2004, meeting are: Number one, affirm the earlier discussion and recommend that Byers be renovated for DSA. Recommendation number three is to relocate the Distance Learning program, currently located at Career Education Center (CEC), to Byers along with the online high school, to free up space at CEC for its expansion as a middle college. This is a creative idea that will combine these two programs in a single location. The kinds of labs that are associated with distance learning could have tremendous benefit for students at DSA and at the same time this would give the online high school space to grow.

Mrs. Moss stated that she had concerns regarding the budget enrollment data that uses out-of-district students to offset the cost of opening and operating a new school.

Dr. Eckerling said that they understand that there are many different issues to be discussed in these recommendations. If Byers is going to operate as a school, renovations need to be done as soon as possible and they would like the Board’s approval to move forward with that. All of the issues regarding out-of-district students and the budget become conjecture, but the bottom line is that when you operate a school there will be incremental costs. These issues can be discussed at a later time. The key issue they would like resolved at this time is the issue of moving forth with the construction, or this school will not open in fall of 2006.
Mrs. Moss agreed, in concept, to expanding DSA, but she does not support how we are going to get the money. She stated that part of her responsibility as a Board member is to understand how that operation will be funded, if we approve the construction of this building. To approve this, she has to understand where the money is going to come from to operate this on a year-to-year basis.

Mr. Woodward asked if they were assuming that there would be a continuing demand for an academic program with an emphasis on the arts that justifies expanding DSA by 400 students.

Dr. Eckerling said that last year 790 students auditioned for DSA, which would more than fill the 400 positions that would become available. Also, as the elementary music program expands, with new teachers, he thinks the district will not only get more applicants but better quality applicants.

Mr. Patterson said that as this proposal stands, we have to acknowledge that we do not know: if we are going to have more applications or fewer, the ratio of in-district/out-of-district students, and the economic makeup of potential students. We do know that when you open a school there are incremental and fixed costs. Also, this proposal does acknowledge the need for increasing the number of slots at DSA, which is a consideration that needs to be taken into account as this issue is debated. There is a demand for high quality, high achieving middle school options.

In response to Mr. Patterson’s question regarding the impact on CEC if Distance Learning moves, Dr. Eckerling said it would free up two classrooms and enable the middle college to expand. Also, without this move there would not be a facility to start the online high school. The online high school is a tremendous opportunity to expand the range of services available to a broad group of students and gives us the chance to bring all of this together at a single site.

In response to Ms. Gantz Berman’s question regarding incremental costs of operating this new school becoming revenue-neutral over time, based on increased enrollment, Dr. Eckerling agreed that increased student enrollment, from students who otherwise would not be in the district, would offset costs.

Ms. Peña said that Board members have spent considerable time talking about choice, minimizing impact on neighborhood schools, financial implications, community demand for successful programs, academic success, and commitment to Denver children. Clearly, DSA meets a lot of those criteria, but the challenge she has heard from parents has been, if 400 more slots open up, regardless how many are in-or out-of-district, they are going to be taking some of those kids from existing district middle schools. On one hand, while this proposal mitigates the financial impact with out-of-district students, it does some degree of harm to neighborhood schools. She said that Board members spent a long time talking about our commitment to Denver kids before passing our Choice Resolution. The real issue for Board members is to decide if we are really serious about choice.

In response to Mr. Hoyt’s question regarding the potential programmatic impact of this proposal, Ms. Bippus said that they had looked at a variety of configurations and they feel this is the most feasible plan.
Mrs. Moss said that she is very concerned with the line in this budget enrolling 104 out-of-district students to offset costs. She does not want to exclude Denver students to satisfy a budget concern. She proposed taking that line out of the budget and agree to fund DSA out of the general fund knowing that we may get some out-of-district students that might add to the budget. Take the whole line out and fund this through the general fund; if that means priorities have to be set this spring about how to spend money, then so be it. That is the Board’s job.

Dr. Wartgow agreed with Mrs. Moss. This school should be considered just like any other school and not be dependent upon any outside source of funds. The second part of this discussion can come as part of the operating budget and how these things are funded every year.

Report Regarding New ECE-8 Schools

Dr. Wartgow said the second report for discussion, a proposal to convert Cole Middle School’s feeder schools to K-8 schools, is driven by external timeframes not of our making and in response to the community. However, the K-8 proposal has many positive aspects as it relates to middle school students.

Dr. Wartgow introduced Sally Mentor Hay, Chief Academic Officer; Nan Baumbusch, Special Assistant to the Superintendent; Allen Balczarek, Associate Director of Research, Planning, and Special Programs; and Ethan Hemming, Manager, School of Choice Office, to present the report. A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, VI-D-2.

In response to Ms. Gantz Berman’s question regarding the recommended K-8’s for next year, Ms. Mentor Hay said that because of the vacuum that has been created by the Cole conversion, the first batch of K-8 schools they are recommending are for Cole feeder schools. They want to be able to assure families in the Cole neighborhood that they will have a DPS option for their students. In other parts of the city, there is some interest in K-8 and initial conversations are in progress, but they are on a slightly slower timeline.

Ms. Peña expressed concern that the proposed budget for these K-8 schools does not show additional costs to renovate or upgrade or expand science labs, libraries, or gyms. She said she is worried about the science program. She wants to make sure that the district has a robust science program.

Ms. Mentor Hay said that the budget presented to them is a draft budget, appropriate for this stage of planning. They have asked each principal to begin to plan a specific program, estimate the number of students, and build a master schedule to figure out where they would assign classes and teachers within their school facility, how they would use their plant, and then develop a proposal. She said they were not asking the Board to approve a fixed budget. They are simply sharing everything they know to-date and want your permission to proceed in order to do more comprehensive planning.
In response to Mrs. Moss’ question regarding research done on the academic achievement of K-8 schools, if it is grade configuration or a particular model that resulted in the achievement, Ms. Baumbusch said that they found it was necessary to have a strong academic model in place, not just a structure.

In response to Mrs. Moss’s question whether they are developing a concrete model, Ms. Mentor Hay said that they are working to define a K-8 model with parameters for every K-8 school. They have generated a set of guiding principles and have asked the principals of the Cole neighborhood schools to begin to plan a program that would be consistent with those principles, but unique to their circumstances, and to engage their teachers, their parents, and their community members in figuring out how it could work for them.

In response to Mr. Hoyt’s question regarding staffing, Ms. Mentor Hay said that staffing is an important issue, but they do not have definitive answers as yet. The principals have been talking about how they might share staff. With good planning and cooperation, rich programs with the kind of elective offerings that parents will want for their students can be created.

In response to Mr. Hoyt’s question regarding the start of middle schools, Ms. Baumbusch said that K-8 schools originally were abandoned for junior highs and junior highs led to middle schools, and that the initial transition occurred because people thought that adolescences were a unique group with unique social challenges and different learning needs.

Mr. Patterson said that the key components of K-8s have been improved achievement and improved retention of students as they move from a K-5 configuration because they are able to stay within that same school. He is encouraged that we are looking at implications that cross attendance zones. He thinks that K-8 schools provide an important choice option for near northeast neighborhoods.

In response to Ms. Gantz Berman’s question regarding when this plan would be presented to the Board for a vote, Ms. Mentor Hay said they plan to have the public hearings at the Board’s December meeting in order to give these schools time to work with their local communities and get their specific plans in place. The final report could come to the Board the first meeting in January.

Ms. Mentor Hay introduced team members, in attendance: Sally Edwards, Principal, and Cindy Harrison, Assistant Principal, Harrington Elementary School; Jay Palmer, Principal, Whittier Elementary School; Steve Weir, Acting Principal, Columbine Elementary School; and Nicole Veltze, Northeast Area Assistant Superintendent.

Mrs. Moss said several things need to be considered. One, the Resource Allocation Methodology (RAM) needs to be reexamined. There is a need for a differentiated RAM for small K-8 schools versus K-8 schools that have 275 or more children. The second thing is that some contract negotiations need to be worked out for planning times for middle school teachers as opposed to elementary school teachers.
Report Recommending Sixth Grade at Westerly Creek Elementary School

Dr. Wartgow introduced Richard Smith, Northeast Area Assistant Superintendent; Patricia Lea, Principal, Westerly Creek Elementary School; and Allen Balczarek, to discuss the report recommending Sixth Grade at Westerly Creek Elementary School. A copy of that report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, IV-D-3.

Revitalization Plan for Brown Elementary School

Dr. Wartgow introduced Pat Salazar, Northwest Area Assistant Superintendent; Mary Ann Baca, Principal, Brown Elementary School; and Hatton Littman, community member and spokesperson for the Brown Revitalization Committee, to discuss Brown Elementary School’s Revitalization Plan recommending the International Baccalaureate Primary Program be implemented. A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, IV-D-4.

In response to Mr. Hoyt’s question regarding the budget, Ms. Littman said that if the school is fully enrolled, the program will be cost-sustaining in three years.

2005-2006 Denver Public Schools Calendar

Dr. Wartgow introduced Joe Sandoval, Southwest Area Superintendent, and Kathleen Masteller, Manager, Payroll Department, to discuss the 2005-2006 calendar. A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-26, IV-D-5.

Mr. Slandoval said that the 2005-2006 school calendar will be posted on the district’s website. Basically, next year’s calendar would be the same as this year with school starting August 15, 2005.

Ms. Masteller said that the proposal to eliminate Colorado Day could be accomplished by exchanging Colorado Day for any other payday within the 2004-2005 work schedule. Therefore, Colorado Day can be exchanged for another day observed during winter intermission or spring break of this year. Next year and thereafter, the 2005-2006 Colorado Day exchange will be for the Wednesday of Thanksgiving for year-round employees.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Woodward adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Michelle Moss, Secretary
Board of Education