I. Call to Order – 5:00 p.m.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

President Lester R. Woodward called the meeting to order at 5:10 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. Recognitions

Ms. Peña introduced Kathy Callum, Principal of East High School; Rudy Carey, Head Coach; Wesley Ashley, Athletic Director; and the following members of the East High School Colorado State 5A Boys’ Basketball Championship team: Aaron Baker, Bryan Bloodsaw, Ryan Buescher, Tyler Carroll, Pierre Curtis, Andre Hines, Ronnell Jackson-Harding, Izzy Jones, Raymond Jones, Charlie Mays, Avery Merriex, Sean Ogirri, Dereck Rorex, Melvin Sneed, James Stays, Frederick Thompson, Dazzmond Thornton.

II. Board Members Reports

Mr. Patterson reported that Omar Blair, former Board member and the first African-American Board of Education President, passed away March 25, 2004. He read Resolution 2884 honoring Mr. Blair’s accomplishments.

III. Superintendent’s Reports

Dr. Wartgow announced that Reverend Lucia Guzman and Dorothy Horrell, currently Executive Director of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation, with a long distinguished career in education at all levels, will be Co-Chairs of the Secondary Reform Commission.

This Commission will make recommendations for use of mill levy funds to reform middle and high schools. He said that this is an extremely important Commission with a complicated task—to improve the high school graduation rate and decrease the high school dropout rate, both of which are unacceptable.
Rev. Guzman said that it will be a great privilege to serve on this Commission, that for too long the graduation rate has been extremely low and the dropout rate has been too high. She said that the establishment of the Commission will give us a firm opportunity to work to increase the graduation rate to 95 percent by 2010.

IV. Consent Agenda

Assistant Secretary Jacquie 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-A-3 Resolution Designating the Members of the Commission on School Nutrition and Physical Activity

IV-C-1 Denver School of Science and Technology

Ms. Gantz Berman moved that all matters on the Consent Agenda, not held, be approved; Mr. Hoyt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the following items were approved:

A. Board of Education

1. Minutes of March 18, 2004 – A copy is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-11, IV-A-1.

2. Finance and Audit Committee

   a. Approval of One-Year Professional Services Agreement with Newton Learning Network Services – A copy of this report, to approve an agreement for an instructional program to tutor students in reading and/or mathematics in grades 2-8, to meet the requirements of the “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,” at Cheltenham, Cowell, Fairmont, Munroe, and Schenck Elementary Schools, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-11, IV-A-2a.

   b. Motion to Approve One-Year Professional Services Agreement with Sylvan Education Solutions – A copy of this report, to approve an agreement for an instructional program to tutor students in reading and/or mathematics in grades 1-12, to meet the requirements of the “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,” at Amesse, Barrett, Castro, College View, Del Pueblo, Ford, Goldrick, Hallett, Johnson, Knapp, Remington, and Stedman Elementary Schools; as well as Baker and Kepner Middle Schools, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-11, IV-A-2b.

   c. Approval of the firm Humphries Poli Architects, PC, in Association with Klipp, PC, as the Architect for the North High School, Valdez Elementary School, and MYEC Facility Upgrade and Master Planning Project – A copy of this report, a
GOB 2003-approved project, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-11, IV-A-2c.

d. Grant Authority to the Executive Director of Facility Management for the Purchase of Natural Gas – A copy of this report, to grant authority to the Executive Director of Facility Management to negotiate the purchase of Denver basis natural gas; to extend the existing transport gas contract with Kerr McGee, during the period of April 2, 2004, to June 30, 2005; and to determine and fix the nymex pricing with Kerr McGee during the period of April 2, 2004, through June 30, 2005, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-11, IV-A-2d.

4. Proclamation: East High School Boys’ Basketball Team has Distinguished itself by Winning the Colorado State 5A Boys’ Basketball Championship – A copy of this Proclamation is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-11, IV-A-4.

5. Resolution 2884 – Omar Blair - A copy of this Resolution is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-11, IV-A-5.

B. Administrative Services

1. Human Resources

a. Personnel Transaction Report – A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-11, IV-B-1a.

b. Motion to Approve the Denver Public Schools’ Credit Union as one of the District’s Approved TSA Vendors – A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-11, IV-B-1b.

c. Motion to Approve the Life Insurance, Medical, Dental, and Vision Rates Effective July 1, 2004, for both Active Employees and Retirees – A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-11, IV-B-1c.

C. Educational Services

2. KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy - Approve lease agreement and second charter amendment; these documents allow for the disbursement of DPS General Obligation Bond funds to KIPP under certain conditions. The report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-11, IV-C-2.

3. AVID – Approve expansion of the program. A copy of this report, the staff recommendation to expand the AVID Program at district middle and high schools and to allocate 2003 Mill Levy funds for this purpose, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-11, IV-C-3.
DISCUSSION AGENDA

IV-A-3 Resolution 2883 - Designating the Members of the Commission on School Nutrition and Physical Activity

Ms. Gantz Berman said that the Commission had its first meeting this past Tuesday. Since the meetings will be held at 7:30 a.m., Dr. Washington, Co-Chair, requested that we provide for the Commission members the same breakfast that we provide for district students, which proved to be quite educational.

Ms. Gantz Berman moved adoption of the Resolution; Mr. Hoyt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. A copy of this Resolution is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-11, IV-A-3.

IV-C-1 Denver School of Science and Technology

Dr. Wartgow requested that this report be tabled. Mr. Hoyt moved that the report be tabled; Mr. Patterson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Old Business

There was none

VI. New Business

Dr. Wartgow reported that the district received a significant grant, in the amount of $206,000.00, from the Daniels Fund which will allow us to fund the participation of 8,500 seventh graders in the Young American Center for Financial Education International Center, and 3,000 fifth graders in the Young American Program.

The Board recessed at approximately 5:46 p.m., for dinner and further Work Session. The Board reconvened at approximately 7:12 p.m.

VII. Public Comment (First Thursday of Each Month)

Virginia Wielgot – Ms. Wielgot said that her granddaughter is failing first grade because her first grade classroom has 26 students, a situation in which it is impossible to receive individual attention. Her granddaughter’s mother is gone, her father does not read or write English and speaks the language with difficulty, and there are no siblings at home to help her. She said that she knows money is tight, but small class sizes for first graders should be a top priority for the district.

Ms. Peña assured Ms. Wielgot that her concern is shared by the Board, they are very aware that class size impacts academic achievement. She said that the average class size, across the district, for kindergarten through second grade is 23; kindergarten average is 22.9 and first grade is 21.7. Hopefully, state legislators will work with the
district to fund at the level needed for K-2 small class size, but also for certified paraprofessionals to assist in classrooms.

Jesica McCue – Representing the Northeast Parents for Quality Education. Spoke on the revitalization process. A copy of her letter is appended to the minutes of this meeting and marked as Appendix 04-11, VII.

Ms. Gantz Berman said that the Revitalization Committee was a challenge and that she appreciated Ms. McCue suggestions. Mr. Hoyt also expressed his appreciation for her constructive suggestions.

Becky Wissink, President, Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA) – She said that teachers in the district made history when they ratified ProComp, that ProComp is not the end of our collaboration in continuing to work together on behalf of teachers and students. Employee morale has just as much an effect on student success as does the instructional program, and that a negotiated adjustment to the current salary structure is needed. The work that teachers do on a daily basis should be compensated accordingly, they deserve a system that is viable and competitive.

Justin Wecks – Mr. Wecks, a teacher, said that his enthusiasm for teaching and great concern for Denver’s diverse students remains unabated. In the past year, the demands placed on him have been excessive, his workload dramatically increased, his educational autonomy severely limited, his financial compensation frozen, and that he is beaten down and frustrated. Money is extremely tight and as a beginning teacher he cannot earn enough to support his family, and that he works extremely long hours, sixty hours or more every week. He said he is a good teacher that makes a difference in his student’s lives every day, that he works in a good school with other good teachers, but they are approaching their breaking point. He asked the Board to respect teachers’ unique situation, pay teachers what they are worth, trust their professional judgment, and give teachers back time to spend with their own children.

Erin Osterhaus – Ms. Osterhaus, a teacher, said that Mr. Wecks expressed her concerns and frustrations very eloquently. She recognizes that the Board has a huge task in balancing the budget. Money is being seen as the grand motivator for better teaching but you can’t buy dedication. Teachers are worried, they need to know that their benefits are being protected, and that they can fiscally support their families.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Woodward adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Michelle Moss, Secretary
Board of Education