I. Call to Order – 5:00 PM

1. Performance

Cowell Elementary School’s orchestra, choir and band each performed a musical selection for the Board.

2. Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

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

4. Approve Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Patterson and seconded by Mr. Mejia to approve the agenda. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. Superintendent’s Reports
(Delivered out of order from Agenda)

Dr. Wartgow said that DPS had a record-setting week 2 weeks ago when schools were closed for 4 consecutive days due to snow, and noted that one of the reasons for the long agenda tonight is because the school board meeting 2 weeks ago (03-06) had to be cancelled. He commended staff, security personnel, custodial staff, information people, and the many others who made a remarkable effort as a part of the Snow Day, and said he received a number of e-mails and comments from parents who enjoyed an unanticipated 2 or 3 days off at home with their children. He clarified that the Colorado Department of Education requires a minimum of instructional hours, and while other school districts are making plans for an make-up day, the DPS will not need to schedule any make-up days.
because the Board of Directors adopted a calendar last year that included an extra 15 minutes per day.

Dr. Wartgow acknowledged that many members of the DPS are currently engaged in the Iraq War, including family members and friends serving in the military and the National Guard. He said thoughts and best wishes are with them and their families, and we hope for a speedy resolve to this conflict, and look forward to welcoming them back home safely.

Dr. Wartgow discussed security considerations, saying that with the war, security levels have been increased as the threat level has increased. He said he wants to assure everyone that DPS is fully engaged throughout this District in working with authorities and that we are in regular and extensive contacts with federal, state, and local law enforcement, and a District emergency template has been developed that can be used in all the schools, should it be needed. He emphasized that there is no higher priority for this Board, staff, and District than the safety and security of our students and our staff here at home, as well our concern for those who are serving overseas, and he is confident that our schools are safe and we are prepared in the event of any emergency.

Dr. Wartgow addressed the budget, saying that currently the world, the nation, the state, the city, and DPS are all faced with an economic and budgetary crisis. He noted that a month ago, DPS reduced its current year budget by $11.6 million, which was done without touching the classrooms or directly affecting instruction, and DPS is fully in balance with our current year budget. He said we’re now working on the 2003-2004 budget, and due to a variety of situations and circumstances, an adjustment of approximately $20-30 million in our base budget for 2003-2004 will have to be made. He said he believes a good process is under way which assumes a fluctuation in numbers, and the first thing that he has asked is for the District administration, and that means primarily 900 Grant, to present budgets which would represent a reduction from this year of 10% - 20%. He said this is a particularly tough burden on administration, especially since the earlier cuts, to balance this year’s budget, primarily came out of administration, and everyone is handling this very professionally, but it is going to impact programs and positions. The burden is first coming from administration and starting with the Superintendent’s office, through such adjustments as reducing staff, reassigning people, and reorganizing. Dr. Wartgow said that there is legislation pending, which has passed the Senate and is in the House, which would reduce our budget by $2.7 million for next year by not funding programs that have been funded in the past with Amendment 23 dollars. This includes program funding for distance education, funding for the full-day kindergarten program, and a reduction in the number of slots in the Colorado Preschool Program. He said a decision has been made to restructure summer school for the current year, and the Board has approved extending that to 2003-2004, capturing another $1 million in savings. Another proposal will be to delay for one year 50% of the planned Capital Reserve Fund Projects for such things as painting and repairs, representing a savings of $2 million. A very difficult proposal, which will be discussed later this evening, relates to Early Childhood Education (ECE), and we receive no funding from the state of Colorado for ECE and we’ve been providing it free, so we have developed a
plan which is designed to permit us to continue offering ECE funding, but to address the equity of who pays, so that we can continue to offer it. He said we will be working with our unions to see how we can balance this budget. He expects that we’ll come up with something that nobody likes but that everyone believes will have the least negative impact on our three goals of 1) setting high expectations, 2) improving the performance of all of our students, and 3) closing the gap between our better performing and poorer performing students.

He noted that although these are tough economic times, in many other ways, these are very positive times, citing the fact that almost all of the schools that were ranked “unsatisfactory” last year have moved off that list, which is evidence that teachers, principals, and central administrative staff are doing a wonderful job, and he has every confidence that we will get through this crisis as well. He thanked everyone for their understanding, patience, and cooperation. He added that the negotiations with the DCTA will include such topics of discussion as: increasing class size, at the high schools in particular; eliminating certain professional development, non-contact student days; and all of the negotiations around the general compensation package. He said it won’t be easy, but there is a very positive momentum and direction in this District, and we will be doing our best to make sure that we don’t lose that during the next couple of months and we get through this so we can go onward and upward into the next year.

Ms. Gantz Berman thanked Dr. Wartgow for his report.

II. Board Member Reports
(Delivered out of order from Agenda)

Ms. Gantz Berman announced that the Board has two resolutions.

A. Resolution #9, Series of 2003 was read by Mr. Mejia. It congratulates the Denver East High School Constitutional Scholars Team on winning the State Competition and being selected to represent the State of Colorado at the National Competition in Washington, D.C. April 27th and 28th. A copy is attached to these minutes.

Edna Sutton, a teacher from East High who is leading the Constitutional Scholars class, said they have been generously supported by the community, many lawyers, judges, former teachers and colleagues who have worked with the students, and it’s an honor and privilege to work in the DPS and with this children.

Ms. Gantz Berman announced that she will be going to Washington, D.C. to hear them compete.

B. Resolution #2819, concerning Initiative 100, was read by Mrs. Edwards.
She noted that it will be on the ballot May 6\textsuperscript{th} (a copy is attached to these minutes), and motioned that the Board declare its support for the passage of Initiative 100 by adopting the resolution. Mr. Mejia seconded the resolution.

A roll call vote was taken and the resolution passed unanimously. Ms. Gantz Berman said “Vote ‘yes’ on 100.”

**Reports to the Board**

Ms. Gantz Berman announced that, rather than doing the Consent Agenda next, the Board would hear four reports from groups present tonight.


John Leslie said the CDM Commission was a negotiated agreement with the DCTA and the DPS Board of Education, and has come up with a set of recommendations to make to the Board. A draft copy is attached to these minutes (Appendix 03-06, IV-A-1), and a copy of the draft report is on the DPS website. He introduced the members of the commission who are present this evening: Michelle Moss, Cathy Roper, Reina Gutierrez, Debb Mumford, and Lyman Ho, and he thanked Jenny Tice (?) and Rev. Erin Gray from the Department of Human Relations for their help. Deb Mumford spoke about the new proposed purpose for CDMs, saying they would like to see the CDMs focus on school improvement, student achievement improvement, and the school improvement plans, and remove from CDMs the everyday activities that take place in the school, such as scheduling, and staffing or personnel issues. Lymon Ho, a parent, said they tried to strengthen the role of the CIC, which is an oversight group, on all the CDMs in the District. Much of the public input when the commission was created was that people wanted to leave CDMs as they were, but the commission reached a slightly different conclusion, and has modified it so that the District will be entrusted with nurturing and helping the CSECs to grow and flourish.

Dr. Wartgow thanked the educational leaders, principals, teachers, parents, and community leaders who served on this commission, and said we’re looking forward to reviewing the report and implementing many recommendations.

Mrs. Moss expressed her appreciation for the work this commission did and said it was wonderful to be a participant on this commission and in the discussions about what these committees can do toward improving the academic achievement of the kids. She said it’s exciting to see where they’re going and that we’ll continue to have CDM, as well as input from all the constituent groups that make a difference in our kids’ lives.

Mr. Mejia thanked the members of the committee and Michelle Moss for all of their work and said he is heartened by the report.

Ms. Gantz Berman asked why they recommended that the CDMs be composed of four parents and four teachers, when in many schools it is very difficult to get four parents involved, for whatever reason, and asked if they would be opposed to just requiring that
there be a balance of teachers and parents on the committee, as opposed to locking it into a specific number.

Mr. Ho said that part of the logic was that everybody’s schedule is very busy, and if the bar were lowered, they were concerned that some portions of the constituency would be missing as conflicts came up. He said they have high expectations, but that they did leave an administrative “out”, which allows the CIC to change the composition if, after demonstrating their efforts to actually get four parents or four teachers, a school cannot get that many.

Ms. Gantz Berman said it was a good explanation but she wasn’t convinced by it.

Ms. Mumford added that they do not have to be the same four parents – that some schools could have parents who serve on a rotating basis, as long as you tried to have four different parents at a meeting.

Ms. Gantz Berman asked why they chose the consensus mode for the decision making process, when there are very few decision making bodies that exist on consensus.

Mr. Leslie said they broadened the definition of “consensus” somewhat, and adopted most of what was in the current language as regards consensus, so it’s really either unanimity or a decision that everyone really can live with, and they also included a clause that if consensus can’t be reached, then the principal is to make the decision. He said they think consensus has served the system and the city well, as regards CDMs, and they believe that as the CDMs move away from operational details and towards student achievement, that’s something in which everyone is so heavily invested that they know that they can come to consensus on some of the main points there.

Ms. Mumford (?) said they also talked about the CDM going towards the School Improvement Plan as being a strategic plan, with more philosophical things than voting type things that will be going on, so they felt consensus would work.

Rev. Guzman said she is very supportive of their description in terms of the role, one of the primary roles being support of the School Improvement Plan. She said it sounds as if the group will decide, in terms of the budget now, the budget will be aligned with the goals of the School Improvement Plan, which hopefully will include adequate or appropriate textbooks, but the School Improvement Plan has been there in the past, and is designed by the local (site?) but maybe not necessarily in all of our schools has played the same role. She asked them to elaborate a little bit on how they see this working, because it sounds like the CDMs will be doing some of the same work that the Board does at times, when they have to say “well we have this kind of dollars, but where do we need to spend it?”

Ms. Mumford said they look at the School Improvement Plan as a strategic plan, and CDMs are going to look at what a school is doing and how they’re doing it, and be involved in making sure that it gets done. She said that one of the purposes of the CDM is
to make sure that the District looks at how we’ve done school improvement plans, because a lot of them have been done and then put on a shelf, and we want these to be a living document in the building, so everyone knows what’s in a school’s improvement plan. And that’s a big job for the CDMs, which is why we really want them to focus on it.

Mr. Leslie said that gets to the heart of where they want CDMs to be, as regards the school improvement planning, and the training that’s going to need to occur, is going to mean for example the Chief Academic Officer, the Area Superintendents and their staffs, to help to re-orchestrate the thinking of CDMs in some cases, and really teach them and work with them and help them to understand the application of literacy within the buildings and how they can be supportive.

Mr. Ho said that the most successful schools have a focus, a dedicated principal who is aligned with the focus, and everybody in the building is organized around the focus and the mission, which is driven by the strategic plan or the school improvement plan.

Mr. Patterson asked if only middle school students, and not high school students, are to serve ex officio.

Someone said that’s correct.

Mr. Patterson asked why the language in their report says that this can be considered part of staff’s normal working day.

Ms. Mumford said it was there in order to make sure minutes are being taken, and that could mean a secretary at the school who may not even be on the CDM, but types up the minutes.

Ms. Gantz Berman thanked them for their hard work, and said that it was good to have this CDM commission ten years after CDMs began. She said they would discuss it further and plan on voting at the last Board meeting in April.

B. School Climate Task Force Report (VI-C-1b)

Andre Pettigrew noted that the Board received a report from the Task Force on School and District Climate and Teacher Morale (Appendix 03-06, VI-C-1b). He said the Task Force came about as a part of a joint partnership between the DCTA and the District, and the purpose was to analyze the factors that influence and impact school climate, and the effect that school climate and teacher morale has on student achievement. He introduced Ann Bailey and Jack O’Neill to make the presentation. Ms. Bailey said that the things covered in this report are the result of several points which came up during negotiations last year which didn’t really fit anywhere, and the realization that they were all connected to climate conditions. She noted that of the nine areas in Article 29 which are supposed to be studied by the Climate Commission, only three have been done so far, and therefore
this is a progress report. Mr. O’Neill introduced the members of the Task Force who were present this evening: Ann Bailey, George Brantley, Dave Debus, and Darlene LeDoux. All of the members are listed in the report. They said the aim of this task force was to restore pride, trust, and respect for everyone: teachers, administrators, and staff, and to achieve the best learning environment possible for our children. Part of their report revolves around a “star”, with five essential elements for a good climate: Respect, Response, Recognition, Relations, and Rites & Responsibilities, with the ultimate goal being Student Achievement. They asked that the Board consider adopting these core values in the District, and communicating them effectively. They recommended getting everyone together for a district-wide kick-off at the beginning of the year to promote unity and partnership, such as a trip to the Zoo. They noted that the principal is the key person in a school, and they came up with a set of attributes which foster a positive school climate. In all, they outlined the sixteen recommendations in this report which they are bringing before the Board, and said they will continue their work and bring more recommendations before the Board as the study develops. They concluded by saying that improving school climate in the District will require commitment from everyone.

Mrs. Edwards thanked them for tackling this challenging and sometimes hard to define subject. She said she thinks that the Zoo event is a wonderful, positive way to start off the school year, and she thanked Dr. Wartgow and the funders who helped provide that. Ms. Bailey said they don’t want to take the place of what the Zoo represents, the “welcome back”, but they want the employees in the district to recognize the importance of school climate, so whatever the event is, it should focus on positive school climate.

Mr. Patterson said he really likes the star, because it allows us to talk about it in terms we understand. He also likes the fact that, in their recommendation, it gives staff a chance to have some input, because it affects what they do every day. He said the principal attributes are another important point to help support principals in being successful, and help create a new level of accountability throughout the District. He said the Board needs to make sure that this is discussed, and approached in a focused way, much like we dealt with the literacy plan.

Mrs. Moss asked how they see being able to implement this and make sure that each building is on board and that we’re going forward with it.

Mr. Pettigrew said that implementing this throughout the District will be a challenge, but the first phase will require the Human Resources office and the Public Information office to play a role in terms of developing a communications plan and developing some of the recognition programs. He said that teacher morale and school climate are continually discussed as a part of the DCTA relationship with the District, and that what needs to be done at the District level is move it down to the school building level, where principals and representatives of the DCTA can begin to come together and talk about the subject. He said it will be a process, and will require resolve and commitment to make it work over time.
Mrs. Moss asked whether they discussed and what they role the other members of the community will have in creating positive school climate.

Mr. Pettigrew said that the citizen and parent representatives on the committee provided a lot of leadership in terms of defining the expectations of parents and other members of the community, but that this initial report focused in on the core relationships between the District, principals, and teachers.

Dr. Wartgow said the District and the DCTA will be working with the committee as it unfolds on implementation of these recommendations jointly, and will keep the Board apprised. He thanked the members of the committee.

Ms. Gantz Berman said this is very important work, and thanked them for this report.


Keith Lucero, Chair of the Gay and Lesbian Educational Advisory Council for the District, thanked the Board for the opportunity to share GLEAC’s accomplishments, concerns, and recommendations. He acknowledged the work of the GLEAC committee, and mentioned Kathy Bougher, Julie Boyles, Zia Klamm, Sarah Winter. He acknowledged the help the GLEAC receive from the District. He said their report notes four incidents of harassment that have occurred in the District, but there are certainly many more. They are concerned about making all schools safe for all people. He reminded the Board of GLEAC’s mission, and noted that they try to make sure that their mission matches the mission of the DPS. Kathy Bougher said they’re ultimate goal is to see every person in the District participate in some kind of training in order to raise the level of awareness, and so far they’ve trained Safe School Advocates to be able to offer confidential and non-judgmental support and referrals to students or staff. She said that many people in the District do not yet realize that such things as anti-gay slurs are against Board policy. The Board was asked to increase the safety, security, and protection of all students.

Mr. Mejia thanked the committee for all their work, and for bringing these important issues before the Board, and said that the DPS schools need to be for everyone. The issues brought forward with regard to enforcing District policies, so that everyone in our schools is safe and can be who they are and receive their education. One of the most important strengths of the School District is the ability to educate children in a very diverse environment, and this adds to that diversity. We are teaching not only math and science, but how to get along with all kinds of different people. He suggested that the Board needs to take up some of these issues in the near future, especially issues with regard to transgender and gender identity.

Rev. Guzman thanked them for their work and their courage and their continued support of all of our students, and hopes that the Board will take up their recommendations and deliberate upon them. She was especially interested in the third recommendation.
(Appendix 03-06, VI-A-1a, point D.3.) She said the Board needs to discuss this, because she thought that some of this was already in Board policies, in terms of disciplinary and suspension.

Dr. Wartgow thanked them for their continual work in making our schools safer for the training, for the Safe School Advocates, and just reminded everyone that character education is an important part of the goals in this District, and that this kind of harassment and bullying is totally unacceptable for any students, and this needs to continue to be addressed, along with our overall approach to having people treat each other with respect and understanding and support diversity.

Ms. Gantz Berman said that they will ask the Attorney, Mary Ellen McEldowney, to pull out the policy that was passed not too long ago, maybe four years ago, and examine it. She said that at the time the term “transgender” was not included in it, but there was a healthy debate about it. She asked if the term “gender variance”, means the same thing as “transgender”.

The term “transgender” covers a spectrum of people whose expression of their gender varies from the general norm of male or female, although they may not identify themselves as transgender. She said some of the students who are being harassed are not transgender, they may be just gay, or they may even be straight students, and according to a report by “Hatred in the Hallways”, 70% of the students who are harassed for their gender are actually heterosexual students, who just do not present in the normal ways that people expect.

Ms. Gantz Berman said the Board will examine the policy, and look also at the policy that the City of Denver has passed to see where improvements on our current policy need to be made.

D. School-Based Health Centers Report (VI-D-1)

John Leslie introduced Dr. Paul Melinkovich, Chair of the School-Based Health Center Services Council. Dr. Melinkovich said he sent out with the mailing some information about the School-Based Health Centers, and tonight he would be highlighting some of the major points. He gave copies of their annual report to the Board. A copy of the annual report is included within the agenda materials. He said it’s been over 15 years since the School Board passed a resolution that allowing outside organizations to come into the schools and provide services under the umbrella of the School-Based Health Centers, and this is possibly the first formal presentation to be made to the Board since that time. He noted that February was declared National School-Based Health Centers Month, and said the main goal of the School-Based Health Centers is to provide access to a comprehensive set of health services for kids, to allow them to learn, including mental health, substance abuse, and physical health services in the schools. He works at Denver Health, and they have provided leadership in keeping and growing School-Based Health Centers, but it’s important that they have partners, and he believes the most important
partner is the District. He said this program couldn’t be done without the schools to work in. He thanked John Leslie, and said they work very closely with the district’s nurses, social workers, and psychologists. Irma Anthony is here, she’s the only one who made it long enough as part of our team.

Rev. Guzman asked what happened to the health clinic at Knapp which they talked about a few years ago.

Someone said it’s not finished yet.

Dr. Melinkovich said the health clinic, the Westwood Community Health Center, is being built and should be opening this spring, and it’s on the Knapp campus. He said it’s an interesting model, and it’s different than the School-Based Health Centers, but it’s going to be a very interesting model.

Mrs. Edwards asked if there are any plans for expansion of the school-based health clinics.

Dr. Melinkovich said there are some plans, and they’ve targeted six middle schools that are highly impacted from a poverty standpoint and have a large number of kids, but they can’t open without additional funding and they’re really looking at federal sources of funding. He said they’re currently in the process of applying for a grant at Kepner Middle School to see if they can open there, and this year they will move a clinic into Rachel B. Noel, which was built with a clinic in mind, and Bruce Randolph is another school that is designed very well for a clinic. He said they’re hoping that maybe in the next year some federal funding will be available for school-based health centers, but it’s a challenge because everyone else in the country is hoping to get it as well.

Mrs. Edwards asked what the typical annual costs are.

Dr. Melinkovich said about $250,000 a year per school, just for staff and equipment.

Ms. Gantz Berman asked how all of the current budget cuts and the shortfall at Denver Health are going to impact the school-based clinics.

Dr. Melinkovich said that currently the school-based health centers are subsidized somewhere around $700,000 a year by Denver Health, and they shift funding from their community health center program, and from revenue at the hospital, but if they have a financial shortfall during the year, which he does anticipate, their ability to continue with in kind support the school-based health centers might decrease. He said the same could be said for the Mental Health Corporation of Denver, for Children’s Hospital, and for St. Anthony’s, because as all those institutions get pressed more financially, they may decide that if they have to make cuts next year the best place to do it is at those sites. He said he can’t say that for certain, but he thinks we’re at risk.
Ms. Gantz Berman said we all have to work with the legislature to do what we can to maintain the funding that we have. She thanked Dr. Melinkovich and Mr. Leslie for their leadership and the results that their strong partnership over the years has achieved.

15-minute Recess

VII. Public Hearing
(Occurred out of order from Agenda)

Speaking about the concrete blocks on the playground at Garden Place Elementary School

Celo Valdez read a letter from a 5th grader concerning barricades on the field, and said she has many more letters on this subject from students. She said she agrees that it’s really important that we save the field, but it really worries her to have the barricades there because kids climb on them and fall off of them, so it’s more dangerous for them, especially after school when no one is there to supervise them. She said there must be a better way to protect the field without barricades.

John Zapien said he believes the Board acted in good faith in concern for the grassed area, but recommended that the Board follow the lead of the Department of Parks and Recreation in opening up the golf courses and playground areas. He feels that the barriers constitute an attractive nuisance and there are accidents waiting to happen, and the Board should be concerned with liability issues that may arise. He said that people in the community feel insulted that a sign on the fenced area implicates prosecution, and he feels that it’s insensitive.

Mr. Mejia addressed field closure in reference to Parks and Recreation, saying the School District and Parks and Rec have collaborated on how and when to close fields all over the city, trying to keep as many open as possible in all parts of the city. He said field closures are critical for maintaining the turf for future years, and the cost of not closing the fields is literally hundreds of thousands of dollars the following year. He noted that fields all over the state have been closed using different methods, and Parks and Rec have chosen to fence the fields, which has had mixed results. They also looked at what DPS did in putting jersey barriers on the field, and thought that was a very effective way of keeping people off the field. He said the only way to continue to have good fields in future years is to close the fields and try to figure out the best way to keep people off the fields, which is not something they wanted to do, it’s something they had to do. He said they’re currently coordinating in all parts of the city where they can open fields and where they can’t. With regard to Parks and Rec, some fields will not be open, so they’re looking at the condition of the fields and opening only those that are playable right now. There are many in the system that will have to be reconditioned for an entire year before they can be reopened. This is due to drought conditions, and everywhere in the state we need to be
wiser about how we use this precious resource. How much water is allowed to be put
down is determined by Denver Water, and Parks and Rec and DPS are two of the largest
users for Denver Water. He said a water budget will be allocated this year, and then we
will find out how much water we’re allowed to put down between April 15th and the end
of the month, and hopefully after that the fields can be opened.

Mr. Zapien said they didn’t question the reasons for the placement, but that because kids
are still playing on that field, the blocks are ineffective for their intended purpose. He
wants to call on the citizens of that community to each bring a gallon of water a day and
water that ground if it’s necessary.

Mr. Mejia said that all of the water comes from Denver Water.

Mr. Zapien maintained that the blocks are a tragic accident waiting to happen.

Mr. Mejia said that issue is should we have people on the fields or not, and maintained in
order to have the fields in future years, people need to stay off the fields this year.

Mr. Zapien said that as taxpayers, people pay for services and goods rendered, and their
community feels they’re being deprived.

Rev. Guzman thanked them both for speaking this evening. She said she appreciated their
calling her to see first hand what they were complaining about, and that they said they
understand what had to be done, but that it infringes upon several things. She said she
does agree with her colleagues and the policy and the decision that the fields have to be
saved so the kids can have a better opportunity to play, but she hopes that a more
acceptable way of dealing with the situation can be found for everyone involved.

Ms. Valdez said it should all be about the kids, who are being threatened with
prosecution for going on their own school playground, and that’s the only park those kids
have.

Mrs. Edwards said that this decision was not made lightly, and the staff of facility
management, in partnership with the City and in partnership with Denver Water, went out
and assessed every single field in the School District, to determine which were usable,
because they want the fields to be usable for kids, and it is about kids. However, due to
the current conditions with the drought, there is an obligation to be good stewards of the
resources. She said the signs that were put up at Garden Place are identical to the signs
that were put up in all the fields that were given a similar evaluation by facility
management, so it’s not something against the Globeville community, or the Steele
Elementary School community, or whatever the site is, but that it was necessary, in order
to save the field, to put up those barriers.

Dr. Wartgow said that the recent snowfall was a blessing and things are changing, and
hopefully the District’s water budget will increase, and the fields can be reevaluated.
Mr. Zapien said that if Dr. Wartgow and the Board order those blocks removed, he will guarantee a rally, especially the people in the immediate area around the school, to keep a watchful eye, and they would do everything they could to assist in keeping intruders off the area.

Dr. Wartgow said “We’ll see what we can work with you on that, and hopefully we’ll have good news after the Water Board’s meeting on the 15th to reevaluate all our fields”.

Mr. Zapien said “Thank you but we would like to have those blocks removed”.

Ms. Valdez asked if there’s a way the Board could let the community know when that would happen.

Ms. Gantz Berman said they would let them know.

CDM Commission Report

Bill Johnston said Cheltenham Elementary School was the pilot school for the implementation of CDMs in Denver, and he is presently serving his 10th year with the CDM. He noted that the CDM Commission recommends retention of a school-based committee to engage the school community in collaborative efforts that support school and district goals, and that such a committee be required in every school. He said that, in considering the recommendations of the CDM commission, the Board should realize that a collaborative school committee will not enhance student achievement, and there is no empirical evidence that CDMs have been held accountable for student achievement, or that student achievement has been improved by CDMs. However, he believes the adoption of the Commission’s recommendations would provide the opportunity for participation and collaboration by the school community in the school improvement planning process, and therefore he urged the adoption of the CDM Commission’s recommendation by the Board.

Mrs. Moss thanked him, and the others who were not commission members, but who nevertheless contributed to the CDM Commission’s work.

Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Ms. Gantz Berman noted that several people signed up to speak on the ECE Tuition Proposal, and said the Board would now take a few minutes to describe the revised proposal that will be voted on after they hear from the speakers. She said Dr. Wayne Eckerling and Cheryl Caldwell would be speaking on ECE, and that it is a very highly valued program in the DPS. We have been the only school district in the state of Colorado to provide every school, with the exception of two, because they don’t have space, with at least one classroom for 4-year-olds, and we have provided it free to this date. The Board has really been grappling and struggling with coming up with some kind
of proposal which we believe is fair to our families, and at the same time takes into consideration our budget situation that we’re in right now, as well as the fact that the state legislature, as of today, is planning on cutting 2000 slots for the Colorado Preschool Project statewide, which will probably amount somewhere to about 300 slots for DPS. So this is not an issue that this Board has taken lightly, we just had a 2-hour discussion upstairs, just going through every detail of this proposal, trying to come up with something that we feel that we could live with.

Dr. Eckerling: currently the District provides free ECE in every school in the District and at least $1.3 million of General Fund money is used to supplement other sources in order to do this. Denver is the only school district in the state that is currently providing free ECE across the board in every school, so if you look at the surrounding schools, all charge, many have four day a week programs, many use non-licensed teachers to keep their costs down, we’re offering a five day a week program, we offer fully licensed teachers, we believe we have a model program, and at this point, given the budget, and our budget, and our proposal has always assumed no reductions in current state funding levels, so what we originally proposed will probably have to revised further if state budget cuts are forthcoming. From the original proposal, we’ve reduced tuition to $185 a month, we now will say across the board that any parent who doesn’t meet the free reduced price lunch criteria or some very close criteria will have to pay for the service, pay for ECE, regardless of the school area that they’re living in. And that’s to provide equity across the District. The Board has set aside $300,000 to keep that tuition rate low, and to fund scholarships. We’ve moved to a more general proposal, partly because of the state legislature’s impending cuts, and also we would like to go back and after listening to the conversations with the Board of Education, look at some alternatives that would provide more flexibility in scholarships across schools, and how we can best accommodate the needs of students., but within the context that anyone who doesn’t meet an income eligibility requirement will have to pay for ECE, and that’s consistent with what surrounding districts are doing. We would, for free slots, select students by lottery, and there are criteria independent of random selection that we have to look at, so we have to look at how our selection processes fit with the requirements of each funding source. So that’s the gist of our proposal, to reduce the budget from $1.3 million to $300,000 and to charge tuition for families that don’t meet free or reduced price lunch criteria eligibility or something similar, and also we’re going to try to look at how we’re spreading our allocated resources and whether there might be some more equitable ways to do that, based on demographics, student enrollment levels, and things like that.

Mrs. Edwards: just a clarification – so our goal would be to be able to continue to offer ECE in each of our schools, but the funding sources would be a combination of Colorado Preschool Project, Title One, Tuition, and $300,000 of General Fund money?

Dr. Eckerling: Yes, it’s a goal. But we have a budgeted criteria of $300,000 that we have to find a way to stay within. And we fully appreciate the frustration that comes from people above a line and below a line, and that’s gonna change year in year out, and it’s just the nature of the proposal when you do it this way.
Mrs. Edwards: and do you know what the current advocacy level will be from the legislature? The money for ECE comes basically from the federal government and Title One, and from the state under the Colorado preschool project. That’s where we get the money to offer ECE now. We can’t, we shouldn’t, I think, take money from k-12 education to fund a program that we’re not funded for, so we need to advocate… do you know of advocacy efforts going on at the legislature?

Ms. Caldwell: absolutely. And I know that there was one version of cuts that went through the Senate, there will be another that will go through the house that will probably not be the same, and there will probably be a conference committee to work it all out. But the advocates are fighting very hard to not lose the 2000 slots statewide.

Dr. Wartgow: I just want to expand upon that. Yes, many of us are working very hard. My understanding is that there is a sponsor, Representative Hefley, who will be introducing a bill to restore this in the house. But this is one of the realities, the legislature is in a position of balancing a budget, you can’t cut budgets, and not have an impact on programs. And that’s what’s happening here. The demand for these programs far exceeds the supply. This proposal is trying to be sure that the limited resources available go first to the most needy families, and there is a means test, and that way we can save the program. And if there are people who want the program and have better means to pay for it than the most needy, then we make that option available as well. But it’s an equity issue. As the only district in the state that provides this free for everyone, it’s ironic that the board, still subsidizing it by $300,000, happens to be the one that’s criticized. There is not a single other school district in the state that provides free ECE for everybody. We’re trying to preserve it for many of our people, but it is difficult to do it for everyone within the concurrent budget constraints.

Ms. Gantz Berman: the proposal stipulates $185 a month, and that comes to less than $4 an hour. Also, the district has had a tuition-based kindergarten program for several years now, and it’s been a very successful program. So we do have a history of charging tuition for the second half of kindergarten. Lastly, another reason we considered a proposal like this was to try to encourage more families to take advantage of ECE, and at least 25 of our schools have the capacity to add additional ECE classrooms. So there is the potential that, rather than decreasing the number of people served, we will considerably increase the number of people served.

Ms. Gantz Berman invited the speakers to comment.

Barbara Loveless, an ECE teacher at Sabin, asked for clarification, of the new proposal.

Dr. Eckerling clarified the proposal. If there are more demands than we have funded spaces, we of course would not be able to provide more. But we will say that parents who have an income higher than the income levels that we set will have to pay tuition based district-wide.

ECE Tuition Proposal
Linda Miller, from Sabin Elementary School, is a parent and also an ESL teacher at Sabin. She spoke of the benefits children receive through ECE and noted that many of the children at Sabin are introduced to the English language in ECE. She expressed concern that many of the families whose children benefit most from this program may not have the language skills to fill out the applications for scholarships. She also said that if students are going to be expected to exit bilingual programs after three years, the ECE programs can only benefit that process, as well as better prepare non-English speaking children for kindergarten. She asked that the Board consider removing Sabin from the group of schools proposed for tuition.

Lorinda Rodriguez is a parent from Sabin. Hers is a one-income family who cannot afford to pay for the program, and said that if she had the extra money, she would send her kids to a private school, and she’s not going to pay for a public school. She said that removing the funding for this program will also have a negative effect on the CSAP scores. She suggested that it would be more equitable to charge everyone for ECE and lower the price so people can afford it, and thinks that upper management salaries should be cut.

Ms. Gantz Berman clarified that some of things which Ms. Rodriguez addressed have been changed.

Tamara Ross, a parent at Sabin, believes that the proposed tuition of $185 a month would cause a real hardship for many families, and that others, who could afford the tuition, might look for a better deal elsewhere, and some of them might not come back to DPS.

Julie Funk said her kids have benefited from ECE, and she’s worried that the methods for determining who should pay tuition do not include the whole picture, and said that when she receives the applications for reduced and free lunches she thinks she couldn’t do that, and wonders if other parents are questioning that too. She said the website indicated there will be a limited number of scholarships for every school.

Ms. Gantz Berman explained that the Board is looking at how to distribute the scholarships in the most equitable manner possible.

Ms. Funk asked if the qualifications for ECE only be based on their income level?

Ms. Gantz Berman said for the scholarships they will be.

Ms. Funk: so otherwise, it’s as the website states, it will be based on need.

Mrs. Edwards: the current proposal says that if the family qualifies for free or reduced lunch, income-level wise, which are pretty objective, measurable, well-accepted standards, that those children would have the opportunity, based on the resources available, to access ECE. Families that make more than the free or reduced lunch level would have to pay tuition for ECE, no matter what school or where in the district they
live. We put every cent we get for ECE into those programs, and we’re not given any more money for ECE, every other cent we put in historically comes from other kids, so we’re taking money away from your 5th grader, 4th grader, 7th grader, to fund ECE now, and where the budget is right now we really can’t continue to do that.

Ms. Funk: are there other qualifications besides that? There are kids who need to be in ECE just to get prepared for kindergarten.

Mr. Mejia: if there was a larger budget you could make other determinations, if there was more money to allocate.

Staff (female): the Colorado Preschool Project looks at other at-risk factors in order to qualify for the program for that, but income is one of the primary determiners.

Chris Hernon is a parent at Sabin, and he thanked the Board for not canceling the ECE program. He said he can afford to pay the tuition for his son, but asked if there is a chance that his son might get bumped off the list to bring in a scholarship student?

Ms. Gantz Berman: no, absolutely not. If you qualify for the scholarship, those children get first priority.

Mr. Hernon: that’s what I’m saying.

Ms. Gantz Berman: oh I’m sorry I thought you were saying the opposite. Then it’s possible we can add another classroom if we have more people like you.

Mr. Hernon: if there are a lot of people that can pay and a lot who can’t, will they still allow the same amount of students that are currently going, or be able to add more?

Ms. Gantz Berman: yes.

Mr. Woodward: I just want to say to all of the parents here, that we believe and know that ECE is important for your children and all the children in the district. It is not critical that that ECE be provided in the DPS. It didn’t exist when my kids went to school. What we need to do first and foremost is make sure that those families who are least likely to have the resources can get the ECE that they need. The state has helped us with that, but we’re looking at less money from the state this year, and less money generally. We have to make trade offs. I urge you as parents to try to get ECE for your children, whether that be in the DPS or elsewhere.

A parent asked whether there will be another type of threshold where they might pay half of that tuition base?

Ms. Gantz Berman: we are looking at all those different options, cause we’ve heard your comments and many other comments as well.
Mr. Patterson: I want to thank all of the parents we’ve heard from over the past few weeks, and I think we have a much-improved proposal here as a result of your input, and we’re trying to be as responsive as we can. We all know that ECE is a great program, but I’m gonna remind you that we don’t receive any state funding for this program, and so as we cut in other areas, we are forced to make some tough choices to address the financial stability of this district for the long term in a way that keeps the public integrity. As stewards of the public funds, we have to be responsible, responsive and respectful of everything the people of Denver are expecting of us. We have to be stewards of taxpayer money, and if taxpayers are funding k-12, we have to look at how we preserve k-12. And a benefit of this proposal does allow flexibility, and we’re at least able to provide more opportunity for parents that can afford to pay, and perhaps expand a program to include additional slots.

Mrs. Edwards: just a quick clarification to make sure no one’s confused: we do receive state money for ECE through the Colorado Preschool Project, and that’s a limited number of slots, 1702 slots. There’s a proposal to cut that amount. And they have to qualify, which has risk factors such as income.

Mr. Patterson: I’m sorry, I meant a means tested, yeah that’s a means test, but we don’t have anything that’s not means test.

Mrs. Edwards: we get no money for non-means-tested ECE from the state.

Ms. Gantz Berman: that concludes our public hearing. We are going to read the consent agenda now, and we are going to be voting on the ECE proposal, and I anticipate that the proposal is going to pass when we vote on it, and I just want to say that this has been one of the most difficult conversations and decisions that this board has grappled with. We believe very strongly in ECE, and our hope is that in years to come we can expand the program.

Mrs. Moss: I want to reiterate what I said at Grant Ranch, that we really need to make sure that the state legislators understand the impact of the cuts in the Colorado Preschool numbers. They are proposing to cut another 1000 slots in the state of Colorado, and 18.5% of those are Denver’s, which means another 185 slots will be cut from DPS if that proposal goes through. We have to strike a balance between cuts in other k-12 grades and the ECE.
She encouraged everyone to continue to advocate for ECE, and the most important place to do that is in the State Legislature.

Rev. Guzman: this issue is very important, and the early years are the most important time to educate kids, it seems so much more important to put money at the beginning, and yet how can we say it’s not that important to put money in middle school and high school? I really resonate with those of you who talked about the working families, who are not necessarily the families who are free lunch, but the families who, like many of us, are the recipients of the hard economic times. …the best thing to do for our own situation here at DPS, we are the recipients of legislative decisions that have gone on for
several years, I guess… I’m not sure if I’m going to vote for this or not, and if I don’t, it isn’t because I don’t support my colleagues, or the superintendent and the staff, or the school district. If I vote no, it’s because I truly do believe that education should be the priority, not only in this community but in this state and in this nation. And that all children should have the same opportunity to begin early, and to begin with the sufficient opportunity to build the kinds of skills that are essential for academic scholarship. So I guess I’ve made my decision, I will be voting no on this tonight.

**Consent Agenda**
*(Delivered out of order from Agenda)*

Assistant Secretary Jacquie Lucero read the Consent Agenda:

A. Board of Education


B. Superintendent’s Office

1. Gift Report (IV-B-1) – This report details the public gifts received by the schools with a value of $500 or more.

C. Administrative Services

1. Human Resources
   a. Personnel Transaction Report (IV-C-1a) – This report contains information regarding Employee activity such as appointments, resignations and transfers. This report reflects the period of February 27th through March 12th.
   
   b. School Climate Task Force (IV-C-1b) – This report is an update on the work of the task force and some preliminary recommendations relating to the roles that the district as a whole can do to improve school climates.
   
   c. Personnel Transaction Report (IV-C-1c) – This report contains information regarding Employee activity such as appointments, resignations and transfers. This report reflects the period of March 13th through March 25th.

2. Facility Management
a. Final Settlements for Contracted Services (IV-C-2a) – These settlements close a specific contract such as closing out a building addition.

b. (Item Deleted)

c. Final Settlements for Contracted Services (IV-C-2c) – These settlements close a specific contract such as closing out a building addition.

d. Architect Selection (IV-C-2d) – The Board of Education will be asked to approve the architect for the new Stapleton II K-8 school.

D. Budget and Finance

1. Financial Services

a. State of Revenue Allocations, Appropriations, Commitments and Expenditures for the period July 1, 2002, to February 28, 2003. (IV-D-1a) – This report provides a status report of year-to-date revenues, expenditures and interfund transfers for each fund as compared to the current year budget and as compared to the year to date for the prior year.

b. Resolution – Designating Eligible Public Depositories (IV-D-1b) - This is an update of the list of eligible banks and savings institutions, as determined by the State Division of Banking and State Division of Financial Services, that the school district and schools can deposit their funds in.

c. Appointment of External Auditors for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2003. (IV-D-1c) – This is the third of four renewable terms for the firm of Deloitte & Touche to perform the independent audit of the District’s financial statements and of the District’s federal grants.

E. Educational Services

1. ECE Tuition (IV-E-1)-This is a motion to consider a tuition-based Early Childhood Education in elementary schools detailed in this report.

2. School Improvement Plans (IV-E-2) – State statute requires that the district submit school improvement plans for schools rated unsatisfactory based on December 2002 School Accountability Rating. Schools include Fairview, Smedley, Ford, Smith, ACE Community
Challenge, Emerson Street, CLA Middle and High School, and DPS Night School.

3. Life Skills Charter School Contract (IV-E-3) – This item approves the contract for this charter school whose application was approved in December 2002.

4. Northeast Academy Charter School (IV-E-4) – This item approves the contract for the charter school whose application was approved in December 2002.

VI. New Business

C. Policies and Procedures

1. Policy Revision – GBK – Staff Concerns/Complaints/Grievances (VI-C-1) – This policy would repeal and re-enact the employee grievance procedures which includes guidelines for employees to follow.

Board members requested that the following item be held for discussion:

IV-E-1 ECE Tuition

Mr. Mejia made a motion that the Consent Agenda be accepted, seconded by Mr. Patterson. Ms. Gantz Berman clarified that the Board is voting on everything but ECE right now.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Held Item: ECE Tuition  (VI-C-1)
Mr. Woodward read the motion (Appendix 03-07, IV-E-1). Mr. Patterson seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken with the following members voting “aye”: Ms. Gantz Berman, Mrs. Edwards, Mr. Mejia, Mr. Patterson, and Mr. Woodward. Voting “No” were Rev. Guzman and Mrs. Moss.

Ms. Gantz Berman announced that the proposal passes, 5 to 2.

V. Old Business

There was none.

VI. New Business
For information only, a report containing information regarding student expulsions for the month (VI-B-1) was distributed to the board.

**VIII. Adjournment**

Ms. Gantz Berman adjourned the meeting at 8:47 PM.

Susan G. Edwards, Secretary
Board of Education