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 5:20 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.

II. Board Member Reports

Mrs. Moss stated that the consulting firm the Board has hired to help in the process of the Superintendent Search will be holding community forums next week. These forums will help create a “Candidate Profile,” characteristics to look for in the next Superintendent. Community forums will be held in all areas of the city April 13-14. Anyone interested in participating is welcomed to attend any meeting. A survey is posted on the district’s web site. Board members encourage everyone to submit their input by attending a community meeting or filling out a survey.

III. Superintendent’s Report

There was none.

IV. Consent Agenda

Assistant Secretary Jacquie Lucero read the agenda items by number and sequence. In accordance with Consent Agenda procedures, the following item was removed from the Consent Agenda and held for discussion:

IV-C-2 Motion to Approve the Closure of Rosedale Elementary School, per Board Directive on February 23, 2005

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. Board of Education

1. Minutes of March 2, 2005 – A copy is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-A-1.

2. Finance and Audit Committee

   a. Motion to Approve the Construction Contract for the Ellis Elementary School Learning Landscape Project - A copy of this motion is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-A-2a.

   b. Motion to Approve the Construction Contract for the Kaiser, Knapp, and Traylor Elementary Schools Learning Landscape Projects - A copy of this motion is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-A-2b.

   c. Motion to Approve the Construction Contract for the McMeen Elementary School Learning Landscape Project - A copy of this motion is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-A-2c.

   d. Motion to Approve the Construction Contract for the Fallis Elementary School Learning Landscape Project - A copy of this motion is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-A-2d.

   e. Motion to Approve the Construction Contract for the Hallett, Teller, and Wyman Elementary Schools Learning Landscape Projects - A copy of this motion is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-A-2e.

   f. Motion to Approve the Construction Contract for the East High School Boiler and Temperature Controls Project - A copy of this motion is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-A-2f.

   g. Motion to Approve the Construction Contract for the Kaiser Elementary School and Place Middle School Renovation Projects - A copy of this motion is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-A-2g.

   h. Motion to Approve the Construction Contract for the Barrett, Bromwell, Holm, Lincoln, and Montclair Elementary Schools and George Washington High School Renovation Projects - A copy of this motion is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-A-2h.

   i. Motion to Approve the Construction Contract for the Elevator Renovation Projects at 42 schools - A copy of this motion is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-A-2i.
B. Administrative Services

1. Human Resources
   a. Motion to Approve the Personnel Transaction Report – A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-B-1a.

C. Educational Services

1. Motion to Approve the Closure of Baker Middle School, per Board Directive on February 23, 2005 – A copy of this motion, to approve the staff recommendation to close Baker Middle School, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-C-1.

D. Denver Public Schools Retirement System (DPSRS)

1. Motion to Amend Section 30.03(8) (a), Definition of Accredited Service, of the Retirement and Benefit Plan of the Denver Public Schools Retirement System – A copy of this motion, to approve an amendment to the Retirement and Benefit Plan of DPSRS to remove the unintended penalty in the accrual of the service requirement for purchase of service in the event of a break in service, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-D-1.

2. Motion to Amend Section 50.303, Unclaimed Monies, of the Retirement and Benefit Plan of the Denver Public Schools Retirement System – A copy of this motion, to approve an amendment to the Retirement and Benefit Plan of DPSRS to clarify the provisions regarding forfeiture of unclaimed monies, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-D-2.

3. Motion to Amend Section 70.88, Annual Retirement Allowance Adjustment; Section 70.102, Benefits; and Section 110.40, Benefits, of the Retirement and Benefit Plan of the Denver Public Schools Retirement System – A copy of this motion, to approve an amendment to the Retirement and Benefit Plan of DPSRS to reflect the changes in recently adopted Plan amendments, to be applicable to new hires and rehires on or after July 1, 2005, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-D-3.

Mr. Woodward clarified that the closure of Baker Middle School had been approved under the Consent Agenda, but the Board has not yet acted on the closure of Rosedale Elementary School. That item has been held until after the Public Comment Session, in order to receive public comment on the proposal. He added that the Board would recess shortly to go into a brief Executive Session on Legal Matters.

Dr. Wartgow said closing schools is a very difficult decision. He extended his thanks to Linda Torres, Principal of Baker Middle School, for her leadership. He suggested, in light of the
time, that they delay the update on the Mitchell Elementary School Proposal until after the Public Comment Session.

Ms. Gantz Berman moved that the Board recess for an Executive Session. Mrs. Moss seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved. The Board recessed at 5:25 p.m.

Mr. Woodward reconvened the meeting at 6:05 p.m. He introduced two members of the Student Board: Evan Bridges from East High School and Tim Maples from Thomas Jefferson High School.

Public Comment Session (first Thursday of Each Month)*

Boundary Change for Manual High School

Student Zerina Flores, Manual High School, said that she had come on behalf of Manual Leadership High School students to propose a boundary change. The proposed map shows the current and proposed boundary change. They feel they have a legal right to propose a boundary change based on Policy JC. This change would give Manual economic integration. Currently, Manual has an 85 to 90 percent free-or reduced-lunch rate. A copy of the proposed map is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, VIII-I.

Student Julio Briones said that they had done considerable research on economic integration. Struggling or failing schools usually have a forty-percent or more poverty rate. Schools with less than forty percent low-income students usually have better academic performance. Low-income and high-income students’ grades improve, but the improvement is more significant in low-income students.

Student Jennifer Mitchell said that ten years ago, when busing ended, people were concerned that Manual would become a segregated, low-income high school; this is what has happened. At that time, former Board member J.P. Hemming proposed a boundary change but it was denied. They feel it was denied because it was too controversial and they did not want to touch East High School’s community. They are asking that the Board rectify the wrong done at that time.

Student Ashia Taylor said that these boundary changes should be considered in light of all the changes in the schools in the northeast quadrant. Major feeder schools to Manual—Mitchell and Whittier Elementary Schools, and Cole and Bruce Randolph Middle Schools—have either been converted to a charter school or redesigned. Now is the time to consider this boundary change.

Student Ashley Leaka said that this proposal is a first step. The three small schools at Manual have been the most successful. Research has shown that small schools attract people. They emphasize that Manual was most successful during busing when they had economic integration in the school.

*Agenda item taken out of sequence
Mr. Hoyt said, as a Manual graduate, he is proud of the job they did tonight. It was a very concise, factual, and professional presentation.

In response to Mr. Hoyt’s question regarding potential impact, Ms. Leaka said that the change could result in an increase of 400 students. Manual’s capacity is 1200 students, so they would meet their capacity.

Mr. Patterson congratulated them for their presentation. He said that because of open enrollment the boundary change itself would not bring people back. He said they must be willing to talk about what other things need to happen in conjunction with this proposal because by itself it won’t do enough for Manual.

Rev. Guzman thanked the students for their report. She noted that Manual High School was once a diverse school because of busing and busing came about because of injustices. These students have reminded us of history and have challenged us to look at the district, at the quadrants, to see that some injustices are still there.

**Closure of Rosedale Elementary School**

Jack Unruh with the Overland Neighborhood Association said that Overland is a challenged area. There are very few community amenities in the area, only the school and church. Rosedale adapted beautifully to compensatory learning, they received an award from the state for beating the odds. He said it is a wonderful institution and he would love to see it stay. It is extremely important to the neighborhood.

Travis Reed, parent, feels that the district should take a stand, especially in the south area. He is aware that many students in the south area opt out of Denver schools. If the district would start marketing programs in south area schools, that would increase enrollment. He said if Rosedale is allowed to stay open it would show that the district is prepared to take the step to promote the area schools.

Karen Staffers, Pastor of John Collins United Methodist Church, said that to close this school would be a great disservice and injustice to the children who are struggling against terrific odds. She asked the Board to consider giving Rosedale one more year to show what they can do to increase attendance and test scores.

Deb Sanchez, parent, said that their neighborhood is committed to finding resources to keep Rosedale open. She asked that they be given the time to work with this process and find the resources they need.

Steve Walsh, teacher, thanked the Board for considering their proposal. Rosedale parents, staff, and community have exerted extraordinary efforts to keep this school open, as attested to by the avalanche of emails, letters, telephone calls, and FAXs the Board received. Rosedale is an attractive place and their job is to let more people know how good a place it is, educationally and socially.
Ellen Kern, contact person for the Colorado International Community School, confirmed that she had delivered a letter of intent to enter into a lease agreement for use of facilities at Rosedale. A copy is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, VIII-II.

In response to Ms. Gantz Berman’s question about their status, Ms. Kern said that they are a community school with a grass-roots effort to charter. They will be submitting their application to the Denver Public Schools for chartering in the fall of 2006.

In response to Rev. Guzman’s question whether part of their reform plan included this potential charter, Mr. Walsh said that it is included as a small part of their plan, but they have other proposals that they have shown the Board—an English-As-A-Second-Language (ELA)/Gifted/Talented innovation and the Head Start Program.

In response to Rev. Guzman’s question regarding academic achievement, Mr. Walsh said that they have had two years of increasing test scores. The ELA/GT innovation would serve the diversity of the community. They have received a lot of positive support from the administration for the programs they provide and the education they are giving their students.

**Mitchell Restructure**

Tonya Hope, parent and member of the Metropolitan Organization for People (MOP), said that they had collaborated in putting the Mitchell community meeting together because community input is important. They are requesting that the district postpone the decision on the proposals. They believe that none of the proposals can be chosen based on what has been presented at this point. They would like to see another choice offered, something that would address the needs of the community.

Ms. Peña thanked them for their collaboration with the community meeting. It was very helpful to hear the questions put to the presenters and she has shared her observations with her colleagues on the Board. The Board will take into consideration the feedback they received from the community.

Leticia Vega Cordova, from the Alliance for Universal Education, said she responded to the Request for Proposals because she is interested in Mitchell as a low-income, Hispanic school. All four proposals are excellent. She does not see this as a competition. At the Alliance for Universal Education they are wholly committed to educating children.

Jane Urlick, perspective principal for Mitchell Village Academy which would be under of the auspices of the Alliance for Universal Education, said that she has been a principal and administrator for bilingual schools for many years. This is something close to her heart. An equitable education was the theme of her dissertation. She feels very confident that Mitchell can be completely turned around.
**Revitalization/At-Will Employment**

Steven Wells, President of the Association of Building, Grounds, and Warehouse, said that members of his employee group are concerned about at-will employment. Colorado has always been an at-will state, so they are confused why there is a strong push to publish at-will termination procedures and language in the current proposed employee handbook. They are also concerned about the mandatory three-day personal leave proposal. This proposal would reduce salaries. Their department has constantly been cut. They lost five full-time allocations in the previous budget year and fourteen full-time allocations the budget year prior to that. They have a lot of pride in district buildings and try to do the best they can to make sure that students have a positive learning environment. Some employment compensation packages in the past have seemed unfair with minimal cost-of-living increases placing more burdens on employees. They are valuable classified employees, who have always been here for the district.

Dr. Wartgow expressed his appreciation for the work that their group has been doing over the years. Their sense of pride in keeping the buildings safe and clean contributes to increased enrollment.

**Custodial Staff Allocation/FM Re-Interviewing at Redesigned School/At-Will Employment/Employee Compensation**

Rich Archuleta, President of the Facility Managers Association, said that in 1997 principals became responsible for the school custodial operations budget and staffing allocations. The first few years of this transition was moderately stable, in part due to the fact that the need for cuts was not urgent at the time. In May 2003, the Board requested an $870,000 reduction in custodial staffing. It was decided that the Department of Facility Management would decide where the reductions would occur. For the first time in six years, their department had the responsibility for custodial allocations at each school. Prior to that year’s reductions, each secondary school custodial staff was only able to complete, on average, 64 to 66 percent of the cleaning and operational needs of each secondary building; elementary school custodial staffs were only able to meet about 55 percent. That year, both the association and the union, worked tirelessly to make the cuts required. Because of their commitment to the district, the sense of ownership they have in their assigned buildings, and concern for their co-workers, members returned their cost-of-living increases to the district to offset the $870,000 in cuts. They were able to save jobs, make the required reductions, and reach their department’s goal at the same time, which was to have no elementary school with lower than 50 percent custodial staffing and no high school with less than 58 percent custodial staffing.

Last year, school custodial RAMS were turned back over to the principals. The process for approving custodial allocations reductions begins with the principal submitting a conversion plan to the Area Superintendent; the Area Superintendent then confers with the executive director of facility management. Regardless of what the executive director’s recommendation were or whether the needs could be completed, all conversion plans were approved. He said they are asking the Board to return the custodial budgets and allocation control to the Department of Facility Management. They are a specialized service. School principals cannot focus on...
education issues when they are consumed by issues that should be handled by those who are more capable in those areas.

He said another area of concern is redesigned schools. It has been mandated by Dr. Wartgow that all classified staffs in redesigned schools be re-interviewed by the newly appointed or re-appointed principal. Facility managers have no control over their resources, staffing, supply, and overtime allotments but they are being held accountable for school test scores. Although they provide support for education, they do not directly participate in a student’s education. They do not understand the need for facility managers and other classified staff to re-interview. In discussions about redesign with numerous district administrators, they have referred to the Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA) contract to justify classified staffs re-interviewing in redesigned schools. One employee group contract cannot govern another employee group. Their contract specifies that they have continuing service without the need for reoccurring annual appointment.

Dr. Wartgow said that there are many difficult issues. What makes it so difficult is strong competing interests. There is powerful testimony and recommendations from the Secondary Reform Commission for decentralization. He said they would continue to work to try to find an appropriate balance.

Mr. Hoyt commended them for their great professionalism over these last few years by recognizing the difficult budget times and by helping balance the budget. Mr. Hoyt said that his comments make sense on many levels. Decentralization on educational decisions is needed. The principal is the instructional and educational leader of a school, but they may not know the ins-and-outs of how to maintain a boiler or how to keep classrooms clean.

Mrs. Moss said that she shared Mr. Hoyt’s concerns. She feels that the whole conversion process needs to be examined. She has received many calls from community members complaining about buildings that aren’t clean. In every case, when she has called Mr. Langley to ask, it has involved schools where conversions have taken place.

Classified Employees

Marlene Jimenez, vice president of Communication Workers of America (CWA), voiced concern about parity, i.e., the district using state funds so teachers do not strike, and yet asks all other bargaining groups to give up three-days’ pay. Two years ago, CWA and FMA gave up their raises to save jobs and help the district in their budget crisis. Support professionals are important. They have been willing to help the district anyway they could, but enough is enough. They are not willing to give up three days. Classified staff cannot continue to take cuts every time the district has a shortfall. She said they would like to meet with the Board to discuss these issues.

ATU

Bill Moland, President of the School Bus Drivers Union, ATU Local 1563 said that the transportation department wastes more money every year. Each year there is a large turnover of
drivers. DPS is the only district in the metropolitan area with less than 50 percent of full-time drivers. There are 500 drivers; 56 of them are full-time and the rest are part-time. He said that he has been with the district 17 years and is still a part-time driver and is still 25 down on the list to move into a full-time position. Other people who find themselves in that kind of dead-end situation do not stay.

Three-Day Personal Leave Without Pay

Mona Romero, President of the Denver Association of Educational Office Professionals (DAEOP), said that DAEOP members are loyal employees with a variety of skills who keep things running smoothly on a daily basis. Members are concerned about redesigned schools and revitalization. Members do not have any input in the decision-making process but are being held accountable for test scores and leadership errors. The district proposal for three-days of personal leave without pay is a major concern to clerical employees. The Board should realize that these three days can mean a car payment, day-care costs, or health benefits for a family. It is time for the district to recognize and value its employees, and to motivate employees through less threatening avenues and more valued compensation.

Mile High Teachers

Margaret Bobb, Horace Mann Middle School teacher, said she is speaking on behalf of 65 of the Mile High Teachers that were honored a month ago. A copy of her letter is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, VIII-III.

Ms. Berman said she is aware that Ms. Bobb is an excellent teacher. Teachers honored by Mile High Scholars are stellar teachers. We do not want to lose any teacher; we certainly do not want to lose stellar teachers. Ms. Berman said she wanted to give Ms. Bobb a slightly different take on some of the information that she presented. She hears over and over that the district is top heavy. It is absolutely not true. For the past three or four years, millions and millions of dollars have been cut from administration. The district is leaner and meaner than ever; we cannot cut anymore. We have other options. We can increase class size, which we have chosen not to do. We are closing some schools and the pain that comes with closing schools is very evident. She said the day that the market compensation task force report came out, the very first thing the Superintendent said was that we were going to honor those recommendations. The Board has said we will honor those recommendations. We are more than happy to talk, but let’s talk with the same facts and be on the same page.

Secondary School Reform Report

Dr. Oliveann Slotta, mathematics teacher at Millennium Quest High School at the Manual Complex, commended the decision on the part of the Superintendent and the Board to actively move on the Secondary School Reform report. She said that the Secondary School Reform report was excellent. It went way beyond her expectations. It was thorough and revelant. She commended Commission members for the report. She expressed concern regarding evaluations of the Manual Complex. She thinks that the district has to recognize that there is a lot going on at Manual and it is not the time to evaluate it. It is changing all the time.
DISCUSSION OF HELD AGENDA ITEMS

IV-C-2  Motion to Approve the Closure of Rosedale Elementary School

Dr. Wayne Eckerling, Assistant Superintendent of Research, Planning, and Special Programs, presented the report.

In response to Ms. Berman’s question regarding the primary factor for closing Rosedale, Dr. Eckerling replied that it was the fact that it is the smallest school. In addition, staff thought that reassignment to higher achieving schools could easily be done.

Ms. Berman asked the Superintendent to address the issue of closing schools. Is the district planning to assess all our facilities so we have some plan about how we approach closing schools?

Dr. Wartgow said that before the Board directed staff to identify schools to close, approximately a month ago, they did not have a strategic plan for school closure. With respect to Rosedale, it clearly was not part of a larger strategic plan because one does not exist. Knowing school closure would be difficult, staff looked at the smallest capacity school to be reassigned to higher performing schools.

Ms. Peña noted that the decision to close Baker this year rather than next year and the decision to close Rosedale now were financial decisions. She said that that causes her great pain because ultimately our core competency is to educate children. Unfortunately, we live in a world where finances don’t always facilitate our ability to do that. The Board did give direction to staff to more effectively utilize many of our empty buildings. We have a great number of buildings that are not being fully utilized. As responsible stewards of taxpayer money, that is not an acceptable way to continue to operate.

Ms. Peña said she did not sign up to be on the Board to close schools. She and Mr. Patterson had discussed this issue earlier and, as Mr. Patterson said, this is a choice between two evils, with this being the lesser of two evils; it least compromises academic achievement.

In response to Ms. Peña’s request to review the criteria used to make this decision, Dr. Eckerling said the guidelines used were to look at school membership, kindergarten through grade five, with: fewer than 75 students residing in the area and attending the school; little likelihood that the school in its current form will attract additional students from district schools or private schools; space available and assignment options reasonable; and reasonable potential opportunities for reuse of the school once attendance areas have been changed. Rosedale met four out of five.

Rev. Guzman agreed with her colleagues that this is very difficult decision. She said her concern about closing Rosedale, of the three schools, is that it clearly has the largest percentage of Hispanic and poor students. Although it is a low-performing school, it is not an unsatisfactory school. She is aware that the Board, in our struggle to support the salary package for teachers, which very important, did say to close schools. Other schools have been closed, but Rosedale is
the only school whose community responded, not just parents and staff, but business people, clergy, and everybody who is a stakeholder in that community. The cost to support a school with less than one hundred students is very high. However, she cannot with a sense of integrity vote to close a school that has 60 percent Latino children who need a major opportunity to move forward.

Mr. Hoyt said that he obviously has been thinking about this situation for weeks on end. He appreciates the passion of the parents of the Rosedale community and the caring of the staff. For staff to take the extraordinary measures they have, shows that they truly care for their kids and the strong leadership of Mr. Nguyen. It has been very inspirational to see people who care so much about their school. Given that, clearly from a heart perspective, his heart says keep Rosedale open. However, he then turns to the difficult facts regarding Rosedale. It is the smallest DPS school, K-5 enrollment has declined 25 percent over the last three years. The district spends $1,500 per pupil more on Rosedale students than any other school with comparable free-and reduced-lunch and ELA population; 34 percent of Rosedale’s kids do not attend Rosedale. We have a budget that says we need to cut $11.6 million. The cuts we have had to make are painful to everybody. We hate making them. One of the things we are trying to do is keep cuts away from classrooms. Again, these are terrible decisions to have to make, but we have to manage this district with our minds and not just our hearts. Therefore, he will support the motion as stated.

Mr. Patterson moved approval of the motion. Ms. Peña seconded the motion. The motion passed five to one. Members voting “aye:” Mr. Hoyt, Mrs. Moss, Mr. Patterson, Ms. Pena, and Mr. Woodward. Rev. Guzman voted “no.” Ms. Gantz Berman abstained. A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, IV-C-2.

V. Old Business

A. Motion to Approve Lease of Cole Middle School Building to Community College of Denver - A copy of this motion, to approve the lease of the first floor of the Cole Middle School building to the Community College of Denver, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, V-A-1.

B. Update on the Mitchell Elementary School Request for Proposal - A copy of this motion is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 05-09, V-B-1.

VI. New Business

There was none.
DISCUSSION AGENDA

Update on the Mitchell Elementary School Request for Proposal

Dr. Eckerling; Carla Santorno, Northeast Area Superintendent; and Nicole Veltze, Northeast Area Assistant Superintendent; presented the report.

Dr. Wartgow said that they had received several good proposals. Staff recommendation is to go forward with the PACE proposal. Unfortunately, the decision is complicated by awkward timing. They could wait two weeks to make the decision and come back with a package, but in that case Mitchell teachers would miss the first round of teacher interviews, if there are teachers who do not want to stay at Mitchell and want to apply somewhere else. He suggested that they proceed quickly and begin developing the PACE proposal. In order to do that and under the terms of the redesign contract, the Superintendent has the authority to appoint the principal. He could appoint a principal this weekend and that principal can begin interviewing staff at Mitchell on Monday morning.

Mr. Patterson voiced concern about that time frame because all Board members have not had a chance to even discuss the proposal. To move at that speed concerns him deeply. Without the benefit of that discussion, he is not comfortable making that kind of decision by this weekend.

Dr. Wartgow said that that is a legitimate concern, but to clarify, it does put Mitchell teachers in limbo. They can still apply, but they will not be able to interview for jobs at Mitchell until a decision is made.

Mr. Woodward said that he and Ms. Peña were at the community meeting when they presented the proposals. They were all excellent presentations. Presentations were a half hour long, including answering questions. Only two Board members heard those presentation, so it strikes him that with that kind of situation it is asking a lot to expect this Board to say, let’s go with it.

Rev. Guzman supported Mr. Patterson’s opinion. She said Board members need time to consider all of the applications in order to make a decision.

Mr. Patterson said that a more in-depth discussion on the proposals can be done in a work session. Otherwise, he feels he is abdicating his responsibility as a Board member by just agreeing to whatever happened at the meeting.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Woodward adjourned the Regular Meeting at 7:44 p.m.

Michelle Moss, Secretary
Board of Education