MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING (04-16) OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.1
IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER AND STATE OF COLORADO
HELD IN THE BOARD ROOM, 900 GRANT STREET
5:00 P.M., THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 2004

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 5:02 p.m. The following Board of Education members were present: Rev. Lucia Guzman, Mr. Bruce Hoyt, Mr. Kevin Patterson, Ms. Theresa Peña, and Mr. Lester Woodward. Ms. Elaine Gantz Berman and Mrs. Michelle Moss were absent and excused.

C. Resolution 2889 – Recognition of IMA of Colorado, Inc. – Mr. Patterson introduced Reggie Robinson, Principal of Maria Mitchell Elementary School. Mr. Robinson introduced Bob Rider, President of IMA of Colorado, Inc., and explained that the following Board resolution was prepared in recognition of their three years of unwavering support for Mitchell Elementary School.

Mr. Patterson 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 04-16, I-C.

D. Recognition of Middle School Athlete of the Year

Dr. Wartgow introduced Jonathan Wolfer of Athletics and Student Activities, who presented the IKON Student Athlete of the Year, Tonya Atencio, an eighth grade student from Kunsmiller Middle School.

II. Board Member Reports

Mr. Patterson reported that the African-American Educational Summit held last month, in conjunction with the Black Education Advisory, was a success. He commended the district’s Community Relations staff for the work they did to make it a great event.
III. Superintendent’s Reports

Dr. Wartgow said that several staff members participated in the Metropolitan Organization of People (MOP) Summit at Cole Middle School and that it was a wonderful turn out of parents and community people who support the Denver Public Schools. He said that Michael Simmons has been designated as liaison to work with this group.

IV. Consent Agenda

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

IV-C-1b Motion to Approve Letter of Credit, Reimbursement Agreement, and Lease Purchase Agreement with JP Morgan Chase Bank

IV-D-1 Motion to Approve Naming the New Green Valley Ranch K-8 School Facility

Mr. Hoyt 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 May 6, 2004 – A copy is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, IV-A-1.

2. Finance and Audit Committee

   a. Motion to Approve Award of Invitation to Bid #929 to Clark Security and Colorado Doorways, Inc. - A copy of this report, the solicitation requested by the Department of Facility Management to secure competitively-priced offers for door hardware, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, IV-A-2a.

   b. Motion to Approve Award of Invitation to Bid #972 to Boise Office Solutions, Northern Colorado Paper, Pyramid School Products, and Standard Stationery Supply - A copy of this report, the solicitation requested by the Warehouse to secure competitively-priced offers for paper, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, IV-A-2b.

   c. Motion to Approve Award of Invitation to Bid #976 to Columbine Paper and Maintenance Supply, L & N Supply Company, Northern Colorado Paper, Unisource, Universal Packaging Corporation, and Waxie Sanitary Supply - A
copy of this report, the solicitation requested by the Warehouse to secure competitively-priced offers for paper products, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, IV-A-2c.

d. Motion to Approve Award of Invitation to Bid #979 to Andrews Foodservice, Donsons Distributing, Front Range Distributing, KidSmart Foodservice, Opportunity Sales, Poppy Street Foods, Stillman Wholesale, Tools for Schools, and US Foodservice - A copy of this report, the solicitation requested by Food Services to secure competitively-priced offers for frozen and refrigerated products, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, IV-A-2d.

e. Motion to Approve Construction Contract - A copy of this report, the construction contract for the Cheltenham, Cowell, and Greenlee Elementary Schools, Skinner Middle School, West High School, and the Yuma Street Facility Remodeling Project, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, IV-A-2e.

f. Motion to Approve Construction Contract - A copy of this report, the construction contract for the Bryant-Webster Elementary School and the CLA Remodeling Project, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, IV-A-2f.

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 04-16, IV-B-1a.

b. Motion to Approve Tentative Agreement with the Denver Association of Educational Office Professionals (DAEOP) – A copy of the Tentative Agreement between Denver Public Schools and the DAEOP is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, IV-B-1b.

2. Facility Management

a. Motion to Approve Land Transfer – A copy of this report, a land transfer at George Washington High School, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, IV-B-2a.

b. Motion to Approve Construction Advisory Committee Final Report – A copy of this report, the Construction Advisory Committee’s Final Report for Gust Elementary School, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, IV-B-2b.
C. Budget and Finance

1. Financial Services

   a. Resolution to Approve Tuition Rates – A copy of this resolution, the 2004-2005 tuition rates for non-resident students, foreign students, and special education services, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, IV-C-1a.

D. Educational Services

2. Motion to Approve the Timeline for Considering Applications to Establish Charter Schools in the Denver Public Schools – A copy of this report, a recommendation to establish the timeline for charter school applications opening in school year 2005-2006, is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, IV-D-2.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

IV-C-1b Motion to Approve Letter of Credit, Reimbursement Agreement, and Lease Purchase Agreement with JP Morgan Chase Bank

Mr. Hoyt said that at the Finance Committee meeting today, questions had been raised regarding the letter of credit. Therefore, staff has been directed to do additional research on this issue.

Mr. Hoyt moved to table this motion. Mr. Patterson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, IV-C-1b.

IV-D-1 Motion to Approve Naming the New Green Valley Ranch K-8 School Facility

Mr. Patterson said that this motion is to approve the naming of the new Green Valley Ranch school the Omar D. Blair School. He introduced Deborah Blair, daughter of the late Omar D. Blair, former Board president and member.

Ms. Blair said that the decision to name a school in honor of her father is probably the one honor or recognition to which her father really looked forward. She said that her father was very much involved in the Denver Public Schools; he was a supporter and a champion for the school district. He believed in excellence and high standards, not only for his own children and grandchildren, but for all children. She said that her family hopes that the building that will be dedicated sometime this fall will become a symbol of what her father stood for—excellence in education and accessible education for all.

Mr. Woodward said that it is an honor to sit in the seat that Omar Blair sat in so proudly, and that Omar was a strong leader during a turbulent time.
Rev. Guzman said that naming a school is very important and that names have a long history that connects us to our ancestry and the past. It is something that lasts forever. In the past, district schools have been named for historic people; they are now being named for contemporaries, like Ana Marie Sandoval and Rachel B. Noel. It is our privilege to name this new school in honor of Omar Blair.

Dr. Wartgow said that he did not have the opportunity to serve as superintendent with Omar Blair, but he had had the opportunity to meet with him. It is a fitting honor to name this school for Mr. Blair.

Mr. Patterson said that Omar Blair was known for his mandate to keep the focus on students and for his innovative and courageous solutions to Denver’s educational problems. It is very appropriate that this school is in the Montbello neighborhood because Omar fought very hard to make sure that Montbello had a neighborhood high school. The ceremony to name this school will be held September 10, 2004, at 9:00 a.m.

Mr. Patterson moved adoption of this motion. Rev. Guzman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. A copy of this report is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, IV-D-1.

V. Old Business

There was none

VI. New Business

A. Policy Review

1. New Policy: ACD, Commitment to Religious Neutrality – A copy of this policy is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, VI-A-1.

2. Repeal of Policy: IHAL, Teaching about Religion – A copy of this policy is appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, VI-A-2.

The Board recessed at approximately 5:31 p.m., for dinner and further Work Session. The Board reconvened at approximately 7:10 p.m.

VII. Public Comment (First Thursday of Each Month)

Truancy Reduction Project

Steven Nederveld, from Social Work Services, spoke on the Truancy Reduction Project. He said that according to the U.S. Department of Education, truancy is the first sign of trouble, the first indicator that a young person is giving up and losing his or her way, and that truancy is the most powerful predicator of juvenile delinquent behavior. He said that
the district’s Truancy Reduction Project is a successful program that has been designed to meet specific individual needs of all chronically truant students. The project has a continuum of services, staffed by attendance officers, school social workers, truant officers, catch-up classroom paraprofessionals, student attendance review boards, a truancy court, and the Geraldine Thompson Committee.

Beverly Wright, a parent, said that her son has been helped by the Truancy Reduction Project and that truant officers are very important for students.

Erica Townson, a Cole Middle School student, said that two very important people in her life have been her teacher and the truant officer at Cole. She said that her teacher has been a great inspiration to her and that he is the reason she is still in school and receiving good grades. He has encouraged her to stay in school, do her homework even when she has lots of it, and that he talks to her, and listens and encourages her to improve her grades. She said that the truant officer at Cole cares about the students and patrols the parks and streets to make sure that all students are in class and are learning, and that it would be a crime to lose someone like that.

Rich Roybal, truant officer, said that truant officers are a resource that helps schools enforce the state’s school attendance laws. During the 2003-2004 school year truant officers served 2100 students, made 2900 home visits, and transported 552 kids to middle schools, and that between August and October they located missing students for the student count. Truant officers all have a sincere passion for the job and are all members of the student attendance review board. He said that there are a variety of reasons why students do not go to school. Some include broken families, lack of money, babysitting duties, transportation, lack of funds for a school bus pass, peer pressure, and some are caught in a family cycle from past generations.

Jan Morrells, Truancy Reduction Program from Rishel Middle School, said that she has worked in the program since its inception in 1995, and believes that there has not been a year it has not made a difference with the students they work with. This program is needed to really give these kids a chance.

Doris Goodteacher, a middle school social worker with the Truancy Reduction Project, said that they recognized the Board’s commitment to this project and sincerely appreciate the resources which the project has received. They are aware of the serious budget concerns facing the district, and they felt they should remind everyone that data from past evaluations indicates that the Truancy Reduction Project, with its combination of components, has been uniquely successful, that overall middle school daily attendance rates have increased, and for those students receiving a combination of their three-tiered services, fifty percent have improved their grades. She said the project is truly committed to ongoing efforts to prevent dropouts and increase student attendance rates, and that they look forward to the Board’s continued support.

Rev. Guzman said all Board members are very concerned about the extremely high dropout rate, and that every student and every effort counts. She said that Board wants to
do everything possible that will make a difference, and that the information they have presented will be taken very seriously.

Budget

Clark Strickland, Chair of the Arts Resource Council, expressed the Council’s concern that the clear intentions of the voters of the 2003 mill levy election are not being upheld. A copy of his remarks are appended to minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, VII-2.

Dr. Wartgow said that he does not disagree with any of Mr. Strickland’s comments, that he is one of the biggest champion of the arts, and that he was out there day and night promoting the mill levy. He said that every penny of the $6.5 million that the voters voted for is going to elementary arts education in the Denver Public Schools next year.

He said that he is aware that Mr. Strickland had participated on the citizen’s committee that had recommended that in the future, the new elementary arts program would include the five basic programs of visual arts, vocal music, instrumental music, drama, and dance. He said that in order for schools to even request an arts waiver, there had to be a guarantee that the school had a plan that would provide, in grades K through 5, for all five of these arts programs. He said it is his understanding that those conditions have been met.

Dr. Wartgow said they have not mislead the voters in any way. No elementary school will have less music or art teachers next year than they had this year. The bottom line is that every penny of the $6.5 million that we told the voters would go to the elementary arts program is going to the elementary arts program; there are 77 more elementary arts teachers in this district than there were a year ago, thanks to the voters of Denver.

Jesse Sutherland said that the District School Improvement and Accountability Council (DSIAC) is directed by state statute to make recommendations to the Board of Education regarding prioritization of expenditures. One of biggest problems with the budget cuts are that large high schools will be losing about four teachers. This is not an insignificant cut; losing four teacher is a very significant loss. Also, he said that they found it frustrating that the budget document does not reflect the process and that you cannot understand how the cuts were focused on district priorities or to support goals. They feel that the district should do a much better job of explaining its goals and mission, and how efforts were made to align the budget with those goals. A copy of his remarks are appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, VII-3.

Dr. Wartgow said they will try to do a better job clarifying that alignment. He thanked DSIAC members for the time and effort they put into their recommendations to the Board, and they will work on getting a budget format that is a little easier to understand.

Becky Wissink, President of the Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA), said that DCTA and DPS are experiencing problems in achieving agreement on the 2004-2005 teacher contracts, specifically, the amount of money available for teachers’ salaries and benefits. She said that she agrees that the district is experiencing unprecedented budget
problems, that the district must shift priorities to meet the needs of the most important elements of our work, and that despite this budget crisis we must minimize the impact on our students. She said that she has prepared a list of questions about the recently released proposed budget, that there may be logical answers to the questions, but she has not had the opportunity to ask them until now. She said that she believes that we can all agree that if we have common information and a rich understanding of the data, they will be better equipped to make decisions.

Dr. Wartgow said he had not been asked nor received the questions Ms. Wissink raised, and that these questions had not been given to the district’s negotiating team, but that the questions were related to him by a reporter from the Rocky Mountain News. He said that it was at the request of the union that further negotiations had been delayed until August. He said that they are prepared, as a district, to meet tomorrow to respond to these questions and enter into a dialogue.

Ms. Wissink said the proposed budget had not been public until May 21, and that during negotiations they did not have the final numbers. She said she is prepared also to meet with the district tomorrow, if necessary, to go through these questions.

Leo Smith said that he had some concerns about the proposed 2004-2005 budget. He said he is primarily concerned about funding for the revitalization program. He said that the goal of revitalization, to improve academic achievement in under-performing schools, is a praiseworthy goal, but he has always considered that to be a very undefined and ambiguous area that is open to waste and mismanagement and ineffective use of funds.

He said that the proposed budget lists four administrative positions in district quadrant offices overseeing the revitalization program. He does not feel there is any justification for that many administrators. He said that the cost for this is not specified, but judging from other costs in similar positions, it would be over $300,000, a $2.5 million item. He said that these are school-specific programs, only in thirteen schools, that could be handled within the school or by one person in central administration. There is no reason for that much administration to be aimed at this small program. Similarly, there are five and a-half positions dedicated to administration of the arts program. The arts program may add one teacher to a school or a class, so he does not see how that would require five and a-half central administrators.

Mr. Smith said that how the district handles the existing mill levy and how the voters view the district’s stewardship of that program may very well have a significant impact on whether the proposal passes when the district goes back to the voters for $25 million more in mill levy funds.

Rev. Guzman thanked Mr. Smith for his comments, and said that she and other Board members will take all of his concerns, particularly in terms of the revitalization funding, very seriously.
**Terry Garcia**, teacher, and **Sara Lujan**, parent, spoke on parental mistreatment at Schenck Elementary School. A copy of Mr. Garcia’s and Ms. Lujan’s remarks are appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, VII-5

A group of Spanish-speaking parents from Johnson Elementary School spoke, through a translator, about evaluation of a bilingual teacher at Johnson and their desire to retain that teacher for their children. Parents who spoke include: Cecilia Salazar, Patricia Ramirez, Maribel Munoz, Maria Munoz, and Brenda Adame. Copies of their letters are appended to the minutes of this meeting as Appendix 04-16, VII-6.

**Susan Arndt**, a retired art teacher from the Community College system, said she had come to express her concern about funding for the arts program in the elementary schools. She said that after listening to the discussions, the district is giving all the arts that it can and all the money to where it needs to go. She said that she had been very pleased when the Denver Public Schools went for a mill levy for arts.

Mr. Woodward said that many people had seen the disheartening report on television about the student at Martin Luther King Middle School. He read, on behalf of the Board of Education, the following statement in a response to dozens of e-mails that were received, literally from across the country, because the story was also carried on CNN, as well as on the local stations:

> We do regret the recent situation at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School. There was a series of procedural lapses in the way this situation was handled. The offender should have been disciplined earlier in the process, and the victim should have been encouraged to stay in school. We are working with the family to make it right and provide a safe, supportive learning environment. One of the district’s goals is to set high expectation for students, parents, teachers, principals, and all other Denver Public Schools staff and the community we serve. This series of events no doubt fell far short of that goal. Please know that while student discipline and staff personnel information is private by law, Denver Public Schools is following up with each of the individuals involved, staff members, and students, consistent with the policies that are relevant in this situation.

**VIII. Adjournment**

Mr. Woodward adjourned the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Michelle Moss, Secretary
Board of Education