

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
EDUCATION, ADAMS 12 FIVE STAR SCHOOLS, HELD AT
1500 E. 128TH AVENUE, THORNTON, CO 80241, NOVEMBER 5, 2014.

PRESENT:

Board of Education
M. Clark
E. Figueroa
N. Jennings
K. Plomer
M. Willsey

C. Gdowski,
Superintendent

WORK STUDY SESSION

Call to Order (Item A-1)

Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner (Item A-2)

Superintendent Update (Item A-3)

Superintendent Gdowski updated the Board on new developments, the status of ongoing operational issues, and political and legislative matters consistent with Board Policy 2.7 Communication and Support to the Board.

Mr. Figueroa arrived at 5:43 p.m.

Adjournment

The work study session adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

Call to Order (Item A-1)

Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 6:27 p.m.

Roll Call (Item A-2)

All Board Members were present, Mr. Figueroa arrived at 5:43 p.m.

Approval of Agenda (Item A-3)

Motion by Mr. Jennings, second by Ms. Plomer, to approve the agenda as stated.

Ayes: Clark; Figueroa; Jennings; Plomer; Willsey.
Nays: None. Motion carried 5-0.

Executive Session (Item A-4)

Motion by Mr. Figueroa, second by Mr. Willsey, to recess for an executive session to receive legal advice regarding the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) and Proposition 104 Colorado School Board Open Meetings Initiative pursuant to Board Policy 2.0 General Operating Limitations and C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(b) and to discuss negotiations matters regarding the Classified School Employee contract pursuant to Board Policy 2.6 Employment, Compensation and Benefits and C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(e).

Ayes: Clark; Figueroa; Jennings; Plomer; Willsey.
Nays: None. Motion carried 5-0.

RECESSED 6:29 P.M.

RECONVENED 7:05 P.M.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

School Presentation: Leroy Elementary (Item C-2)

Teresa Benallo, Principal of Leroy introduced the Leroy Lions Choir who performed for the Board under the direction of Connie Higgins, Music Teacher and Brittany Forney, choir assistant and 5th Grade Teacher. Hatti Fritch, PYP Coordinator and Briana Williams, 2nd Grade Teacher, introduced Christopher Vargas, Jr., 2nd Grade, who read his opinion piece regarding the “Buddy Bench”.

Leroy Elementary Community Engagement (Item C-3)

Board members solicited feedback from Leroy Elementary parents, staff and community members regarding “What is most important that students learn in school to be successful?” Community input is attached to these minutes.

RECESSED 7:55 P.M.

RECONVENED 8:09 P.M.

BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Board of Education Comments, Recognition, Awards and Vision (Item B-1)

Ms. Plomer:

- expressed appreciation for the meeting with Classified School Employees Association board representatives and for all that CSEA members did for the 3I and 3J campaign on their personal time.
- reported attending the 15th Anniversary of The Link celebrating their work to keep kids out of the juvenile justice system and find positive ways to redirect them. She acknowledged the work of their passionate and committed staff with the District’s most challenging students and the difference they are making in their lives.
- reported attending the CASB District 5 Fall Regional Meeting and finding it helpful. She noted a sharing forum that affirmed large, metro area districts are struggling with common issues including building/capital needs, assessments taking away from classroom instruction, and teacher effectiveness and the fair evaluation of teachers. She also acknowledged a helpful presentation on common core standards and the assessments and will forward the power point and talking points to board members and staff.
- acknowledged the death of Sean Cook, 2nd grade Westview Elementary School student and requested prayers for him family and the Westview community. She also recognized a fundraising walk held for Coyote Ridge Middle School student Nora Rosgani who is struggling with cancer and requested prayers for her and all families affected.

Mr. Figueroa:

- thanked Leroy Elementary, the Leroy Lions Choir and Christopher for their presentations to the Board and indicated it was a nice reminder of why board members do what they do.
- reported visiting Northglenn High School for a day at the suggestion of students the Board met with on October 1, 2014. He joined Sydney Mayer, a sophomore who participated in the meeting, as she showed 8th graders participating in high school preview day around the school. He enjoyed seeing the advanced calculus, baking, STEM bio-med and engineering classes. Mr. Figueroa thanked Northglenn for the opportunity to visit and the sophomore students he hung out with for the day. He complimented the students at Northglenn indicating they were a great group and indicated Northglenn is well on its way to becoming something great.
- reported visiting Thornton High School with Avery Johnson, retired NBA basketball player and head coach who spoke with the basketball team and athletes about his humble background and the odds he overcame. They also visited the International School at Thornton Middle and he spoke to 8th graders. Mr. Figueroa acknowledged the great students at both schools and the impressive work of Principal Jami Miller and his staff at The International School. He expressed his
- encouraged board members to visit high school and spend time at the schools so students will know who the school board is.

Mr. Jennings:

- thanked the committee and everyone who worked on the campaign for their tireless work.
- expressed his appreciation for the meeting with CSEA board representatives and the helpful feedback they provided.
- reported attending the State Band Championship at the Air Force Academy indicating Legacy High School is the top band in the state again with a 5A Division win and the top score beating out Air Academy. He praised students, staff and parents for their hard work getting to and at the event and acknowledged the leadership of Clay Stansbury, Band Director. Mr. Jennings noted increased band participation which he attributed to Legacy's performance in the Rose Bowl and complemented the school on melding new participants into a great performing team.
- acknowledged Zane DeLuccie, a Horizon High School junior who is building a Monument to Veterans for his Eagle Scout Project in Veterans Park in Brighton. He recognized Zane as a great example of what Adams 12 students are doing.

Mr. Willsey:

- thanked Kari Cocozella, Executive Director of Schools, for attending Thornton High School's last football game of the season.
- reported visiting Glacier Peak Elementary School and indicated he was impressed with the safety at the school. He praised Tim Griffin the new principal and the school.
- acknowledged the great play of Juwan Thompson, running back for the Broncos, and let Board members know that his son coached Mr. Thompson in high school at Woodward Academy in Atlanta.

Mr. Clark:

- indicated he looked forward to visiting Vantage Point High School with Lori Goldstein, DTEA President.
- thanked everyone for their hard work on the bond and mill levy override campaign and expressed his regret that the community doesn't realize how much teachers, staff and administrators do with so little to educate students. He appreciated having the Leroy Elementary students at the meeting to raise spirits. Mr. Clark acknowledged that work in the district will continue, schools opened and 42,000 students walked through the doors and teachers, secretaries, custodians and bus drivers were smiling and plugging away.
- reported attending the Legacy High School band competition. He recognized the band students who participated in the Coyote Ridge Middle School fundraising walk for Nora Rosgani and even after being exhausted from competing were still able to give back to their community. He also lauded the professionalism of Fossil Ridge High School who came to Legacy to congratulate them. He acknowledged the great students in the district and throughout the state and lamented that the voters don't see that.
- indicated he enjoyed meeting with the CSEA board representatives and reiterated that they are the ambassadors of the district, the first face students and parents see.
- reminded folks that Tuesday, November 11 is Veterans' Day and asked all to remember the sacrifices the military and their families make every day.

Superintendent Gdowski:

- shared comments he made at the Public Education and Business Coalition's annual superintendents panel regarding testing, assessment, and accountability issues. His comments reflected a small group meeting with principals where he indicated his perception of angst in the broader community regarding the amount of testing and asked principals what assessments their teachers and staff members would recommend be taken off the plate. He conveyed response from Ron Salazar, Principal of Federal Heights, a high poverty school, 97% free and reduced lunch and 60% second language learners, indicating all current assessments are valuable and provide great information about where kids are at, what they need and what educators need to do differently to support their learning to a higher level, and none should be removed. He indicated the challenge is not the amount of assessment too little time. This was affirmed by other principals at the meeting. The superintendent reflected on feedback from the Leroy Elementary community advocating more time for foreign language, technology, full day Kindergarten, etc.. He acknowledged the District does not have enough time to teach what is currently required and that tweaking assessments or going to the federal minimums will not meet the needs of students He suggested that if the community wants to take on more ambitious goals a thoughtful discussion about the time component is needed and it has been lacking in most dialogue to date.

- acknowledged it was a tough day in the system given the election outcomes but indicated it was uplifting to join STEM Launch in celebrating their move from Priority Improvement to Performance. He lauded the passion and investment of staff in moving a school with 65% elementary and 85% middle school kids on free and reduced lunch to a top rated school, the highest rating that can be achieved in the state accountability system. The superintendent indicated breaking the correlation between poverty and academic achievement is the most important work the District can do to serve the community longer term and recognized great strides in the last year at Leroy Elementary, Federal Heights Elementary, Hillcrest Elementary and a number of schools in the system.
- reported visiting the Broomfield Chamber of Commerce where they discussed the use of funds from 3I and 3J should the measures pass and challenges in compensating early career teachers. Chamber members were shocked to learn entry level teachers make \$35,000 a year. The superintendent indicated discussions in conservative circles – Anthem Ranch, Broomfield Chamber, North Metro Chamber, and North Suburban Republican Forum members – that elicited the same shock and indication of injustice when people learned how little entry level teachers make to do their important work. He expressed disappointment that the outcome of the election means no improvement.
- discussed election outcomes indicating all Adams County school districts failed in their election efforts. He indicated Adams County finds itself an island amidst school districts that have invested significantly in K-12 in the last four years - Boulder Valley, St. Vrain, Ft. Lupton, Aurora, Denver, Jeffco, Cherry Creek and Englewood; with Adams and Douglas Counties being the only metro area districts that have not. He pointed out that Adams County has far more kids of poverty than Douglas, that statistics clearly show, struggle much more to achieve at the same level as kids who come from more affluent circumstances. He agreed money does not solve all issues but given the state’s record with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce declaring Colorado the second most efficient state in the country for use of resources and producing results, what Adams 12 has done to improve student achievement and graduation rates over the last three years and Adams 12’s recognition as a National Leader of Innovation School District, it is disappointing the District won’t have resources to serve kids in a community that has so many needs. The superintendent indicated the District will delve further into the community’s concerns to better understand shortcomings including reaching out to the bond and mill committee for feedback regarding election outcomes and critical issues in the District and holding a forum for the community to share their thoughts. The superintendent acknowledged good news in the coalition built of conservatives, liberals, moderates, choice advocates, traditional school supporters, teachers association, classified association, and people young and old that puts the District in a strong place to continue work in Adams 12. The District will learn what the community feels is lacking in order to support a bond and mill levy override but in the meantime he expressed confidence that Adams 12 staff will continue to work together to give kids everything they’ve got.

DSIT Report (Item C-1)

Stephanie James, DSIT President expressed frustration that she was not provided the opportunity to present the DSIT report when Leroy parents were present and inform them of DSIT projects including the Kindergarten book giveaway and the November 20, 2014 resource fair for families interested in opportunities to give back to their community. Ms. James reported DSIT has been reviewing the District Uniform Improvement Plan and is encouraged by the work staff is doing. She also expressed interest in DSIT review of the Westgate Community School charter renewal.

PUBLIC COMMENT

General Public Comment (Item D-1)

Joe Holt of Northglenn reiterated requests for the Board to consider more in depth meeting minutes and noted its commitment to revisit the topic, including posting of audio or video recording, after the election.

BOARD BUSINESS

Minutes (Item E-1)

Motion by Mr. Figueroa, second by Mr. Jennings, to approve the minutes of the regular Board meeting of October 15, 2014, as presented in Enclosure E-1.

Ayes: Clark; Figueroa; Jennings; Plomer; Willsey.

Nays: None. Motion carried 5-0.

RESULTS FOR KIDS

Board Policy Review (Item F-1)

Board members expressed interest in discussing revisions to board policies at a retreat meeting in early 2015 and will identify a date that works for all.

BOARD MEETING EVALUATION

Board Meeting Evaluation (Item G-2)

Josh Bastian, DSIT member, indicated support of frustration expressed in the DSIT report.

Adjournment (Item G-3)

The Board meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Adopted by the Board of Education at its regular meeting of November 19, 2014.