

## I. PRELIMINARY

Cook called the January 5, 2010, meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### ***Roll Call***

The following members were present:

Matt Cook, president  
Amy Prince, vice president  
Jane Barber, secretary  
Peter Cukale, treasurer  
Jeanette Carmany, director  
Mary W. Lewis, director  
JulieMarie Shepherd, director

Also meeting with the Board of Education were:

John L. Barry, superintendent of schools  
Tony Van Gytenbeek, deputy superintendent  
Barbara Cooper, chief equity and engagement officer  
Rod Weeks, chief financial officer  
Kari Allen, chief personnel officer  
William Stuart, chief academic officer  
Anthony Sturges, chief operating officer  
Tonia Norman, assistant to Board of Education

### ***Pledge of Allegiance/Welcome to Visitors***

Cook led the Board and audience in the pledge to the flag. He then welcomed visitors to the meeting.

### ***Approval of Agenda***

The January 5, 2010, agenda was approved as written.

### ***Approval of Minutes***

The minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Education held December 15, 2009, were approved as written.

### ***Student Performance***

Mrachek Middle Schools students, under the direction of Kristin Denner, performed several instrumental selections for the Board and audience. Cook thanked all of the talented young students for the wonderful performance.

## II. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

### **Reports from the Board of Education**

Cukale attended a pajama party at Fletcher before the holidays and read to four second grade classes. All of the kids had a wonderful time.

Cukale, Lewis, and Barry led a VISTA 2015 presentation with the Key Community Response Team. More than 70 community members were present,

and asked some very good questions. We are expecting to get some good input and feedback from the group.

Lewis shared that January is National Mentoring Month. Aurora Public Schools and five mentoring groups have partnered with America's Promise Alliance to develop and distribute a brochure throughout Aurora to educate the community about the need for mentors for kids living in Aurora. The five mentoring groups include Aurora Youth Options, The Challenge Foundation, Big Brother Big Sisters, Save our Youth and Colorado Youth at Risk. Opportunities to mentor kids of all ages and backgrounds are available through any of the six mentoring programs.

Lewis attended the Crossroads transition exit program for special education students exiting out of the program. It was wonderful to see all of the student presentations illustrating what they had learned, goals, and family support.

Lewis attended the mid-year graduation ceremony at Aurora Central. About 19 students received a high school diploma. It was great to see all of the support from families and staff at Aurora Central.

Lewis showed pictures of hats that a group of friends had crocheted for preschool students in Brienne Cranston-Miller's class at Peoria Elementary where her daughter, Katelin Lewis, works as a paraprofessional. Every student in the morning and afternoon preschool class received a hat.

Barber recognized members of the Classified Employees Council for all their work and efforts in the community during the holiday season. Every group represented within the Classified Employees Council did a community project in order to give back to the community during the holiday season. They are all to be commended.

Shepherd attended the meeting with US Department of Education Deputy Secretary Tony Miller and APS teachers hosted by staff at Montview Elementary. Our teachers had very good suggestions for the secretary that hopefully will be reflected in changes being considered.

Cook commended staff at Sixth Avenue Elementary for collecting more than \$1,900 to help purchase food, clothes and toys for 75 families. Hats off to the entire Sixth Avenue Elementary staff.

Carmany recognized Kenton Elementary for their wonderful holiday program held at Aurora Central. A great job was done by all.

### **Superintendent's Celebrations**

Barry announced that the month of January marks the annual observance of School Board Recognition Month. He thanked and recognized the APS Board for earning the 2009 All State Colorado Board Award from the Colorado Association of School Boards. Only two of the 178 Colorado school boards earned the award.

Last fall, APS Board of Education President Matt Cook earned the prestigious McGuffey Award from the Colorado Association of School Boards, and was recently elected by other state school board members to serve on the CASB Board of Directors.

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We know that the time you spend in board meetings represents just a small fraction of the hours you spend leading APS. We are grateful for the countless unpaid hours you spend ensuring that our students receive the best education possible. Thank you for all you do!

Tonight we want to recognize two Arkansas students, Delma Solis and Azalea Ocom, for saving a young child's life. The child got trapped in a frozen pond after trying to retrieve a ball. Solis went in to rescue the child while Ocom called 911. A nearby adult helped Solis pull the child to safety. Their actions saved the child's life.

Solis and Ocom are true heroes. We are all proud of you for stepping in and taking action in such a scary situation. Your deed has not gone unnoticed. Please join me in applauding these two outstanding young ladies. Barry presented Solis and Ocom with Superintendent's recognition coins.

Please join us for the Rebound graduation ceremony on Friday, January 8, at 4:30 p.m. in the Fine Arts Building Auditorium at the Community College of Aurora. Sixteen students, 15 of whom had dropped out of school, will receive their high school diplomas. Many of these students have also completed classes at CCA!

Barry recognized Rangeview High School Teacher Andy Kramer for being selected as the 2009 Science Teacher of the Year by the Colorado Association of Science Teachers. Kramer was scheduled to be recognized with Rangeview High School Teacher David West, who earned the Colorado Counselor of the Year award by the Colorado School Counseling Association. Barry thanked Kramer for all his hard work and efforts, and presented him with a Superintendent recognition coin.

Kramer thanked and recognized the administrative staff at Rangeview. They provide a lot of support and encouragement to staff. We also work with great kids at Rangeview.

## **Superintendent's Report**

### Items of Interest

Barry shared that Board members and district leadership will team together on January 28 to visit homes of truant students in order to encourage them to return to school. A press conference to kickoff the door knocking event will be held at 9:30 a.m. This is a good message that we want to continue to foster throughout the community.

The interim assessments have been completed. A report from each school will be provided to the Board. Information will be posted on data walls at each school site.

Climate surveys for all employees will be available online from January 11 to January 27. Surveys results are transparent, and will be posted on both the school and district Web sites. Lewis strongly encouraged staff, students and parents to take the time to complete climate surveys.

CELA testing has started and will continue to the end of the month. We are anxious to see how our English language development block has impacted our English language learners.

We have broken ground on the district's new professional development center. The center will be located directly across from Educational Services Center 2 and is scheduled to open in July 2010.

State of the school meetings are currently being held with principals and district leadership.

Several dignitaries have been invited to the Rebound graduation ceremony on January 8 including the lieutenant governor, Commissioner of Education Dwight Jones, and US Department of Education Deputy Secretary Tony Lewis. Lewis also suggested inviting representatives from State Farm. State Farm donated \$50,000 to the Rebound Program.

#### VISTA 2010 Update

##### People

Jack Kronser, director of Human Resources, presented information on Goal 1: recruit, hire, induct, support and retain high-performing staff. The metric is to determine the number of employees in each minority group and increase the number by 10 percent annually. We have steadily improved but have not made our 10 percent goal. We have been able to increase diversity through alternative and alternate pathways for teachers utilizing a variety of programs including Teach for America, Troops to Teachers, and a recent program through Colorado Works.

APS is moving toward cultural proficiency training for administrative/professional technical staff. We also plan to network with more programs in order to recruit candidates, and hope to report better gains, numbers and strategies to increase numbers next year.

Cukale asked about plans to network with cultural groups in the metro area to increase diversity in APS. Kronser shared that many jobs throughout the community are filled through networking. The overall plan is informal, but the general focus will be to increase network opportunities.

##### Achievement

Stuart reviewed the metric in Goal 2 related to the principal leadership program, National Institute for School Leadership (NISL). We are currently in our fourth year of partnering with NISL to provide leadership training for principals. District facilitators have been trained and work closely with NISL facilitators to provide training over an 18 month period to principal cohort groups. All district principals have either been trained or are currently in the program.

NISL has become part of the instructional culture in APS and will not be included in the VISTA 2015 Strategic Plan. We will continue training principals, but it will no longer be measured through a metric.

##### Community

Duran reviewed the task in Goal 1 related to increasing involvement and advertising forums through a variety of tools including Connect-Ed calls, Community Connection, and newspaper ads. We have met our goal and increased it as a result of word of mouth advertisement through community work

of Dr. Barbara Cooper and family liaisons in the Division of Equity and Engagement.

Data presented is from first quarter and does not reflect participation numbers from VISTA 2015 Listening Tour outreaches currently being held throughout the community.

#### Environment

Josh Hensley, district planning coordinator, reviewed a slide illustrating planned and active developments throughout the district including the P-20 campus located along the E-470 corridor. We are projecting 25,000 new students living in subdivisions along the E-470 corridor over the next 25 to 30 years.

Building activity as tracked by building permits issued by the city of Aurora along the E-470 corridor decreased over the past four years. The P-20 campus will be a major draw to the area and we are anticipating the number of permits to increase in the future. Approximately 1,200 students who live in new subdivisions along the E-470 corridor have enrolled in the district; 137 new students have enrolled since last year. We continue to see growth along the E-470 corridor despite the slow housing market and economic downturn.

#### **Board of Education Work**

##### Board Reports

Barber had an opportunity to attend a diversity training session with a number of students from APS charter and high schools at Rangeview High School on December 18. The talent of APS kids is just amazing. Students stressed that it was more important to develop relationships and listen to each other's stories as well as their teacher's stories instead of being concerned about test scores.

Cook shared that the APS Board received a check for \$1,250 as part of the 2009 Colorado All State Board Award. A couple of suggestions to utilize funds included student scholarships and assisting students participating in district competitions with travel fees. The Board will utilize funds to assist students with a variety of future projects.

The Board reviewed the monitoring report format and schedule. The monitoring report for policy 3.2, treatment of staff, will be due third quarter. Barry requested that the monitoring report for policy 3.6, asset protection, be included in first or second quarter.

The Board discussed holding a workshop with representatives from AEA, SEA and CEC. A workshop or dinner will be held with AEA this year. Future workshops or dinners will be held with SEA and CEC.

The Board will hold a mid-year workshop on a Saturday to be determined in April, May, or June after data is received from VISTA 2015 community outreaches. Some discussion items would include VISTA 2015 community outreaches, policy governance ends and means statements and goals, and Superintendent monitoring reports. Prince, Cook and Norman will meet to determine a date.

The Board will meet in executive session following the February 1 Board meeting to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation.

Carmany requested that each Board member have a school assignment in every quadrant of the district as well as a magnet school and a high school. Lewis and Norman will meet to compile school assignments.

Cook is in the process of scheduling a date for the Board to attend a school board meeting with the Pourde Board of Education. Carmany suggested viewing a videotape of the Pourde board meeting in lieu of attending a board meeting.

## **II. CONSENT AGENDA**

The Board has set forth in policies items that are operational and items that are considered Board work. These are items that the Board is legally responsible to take action on. If a Board member has an issue or concern with any item scheduled for action on the consent agenda, the item will be brought forward for further review. If there are no concerns from a Board member or a community member who has signed up to address an item on the consent agenda, all items submitted for action will be voted on collectively.

Cook moved and Prince seconded to adopt the consent agenda as presented minus item IV-A-1, Race to the Top Competitive Grant Program. The following items were approved on the consent agenda:

- Open Enrollment Policy Changes
- Personnel

Lewis commended staff who worked to modify the open enrollment policy. She suggested including an open enrollment information page on the Web site to assist parents with the process. Barry assured the Board that training sessions would be provided to school staff. The open enrollment process will be reviewed quarterly to ensure it remains consistent throughout the district.

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook, Cukale, Lewis, Prince, Shepherd #8114

Approve on a vote of 7-0

Race to the Top Competitive Grant Program

Cook shared that the Board received a summary of the draft proposal for the state's plan for the Race to the Top Competitive Grant Program on December 15. If the Board desires to be included in phase I of the grant program, action is required tonight. The Board could take action to approve the program tonight, but could opt out of the process in May if desired.

Carmany explained the process used in making her decision in regard to the Race to the Top Competitive Grant Program, and requested that information be included in the record.

I have read everything that I could to help me reach my decision in regard to Race to the Top including articles and opinions from the Colorado Association of School Boards, National Association of School Boards, American School Board Journal, Phi Delta Kappan magazine, Education Week and the book, Making the Grade by Todd Farley. I have spoken to retired teachers, current teachers and non-educators.

It is not that I do not believe in reform or accountability in this important job that

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we call teaching and education. What I do not believe in is this kind of reform. I cannot sign my name to a memorandum of understanding when questions cannot be answered about the process or the use of the funds. I am well aware that we are facing a major reduction in revenue for the next few years, yet I cannot find anywhere where it states that these funds can be used to backfill this loss.

What I do see is added job responsibilities for our building administrators and teachers. Both groups are working as hard as they can, and I am concerned about adding anything else to their plate in the name of reform.

Teacher and administrative accountability is crucial for what we do. Until we can make reforms in areas that have also proven to be valuable, I am not in favor of having test scores and data account for more than 50 percent of any employees' evaluation, just to say we are reforming what we do.

Lower class size, equity funding across the district, cutting edge technology and teacher In-service on its use, building-driven staff development and students who are free from the worries of hunger, poverty and violence and who come to school with the tools needed to learn should all be part of this equation called evaluation and accountability.

The possible use of national standards and the loss of local control also have me worried. We saw a top down approach to reform under No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top appears to be micro-managing much in the same way.

Carmany read a quote from an article featured in the Phi Delta Kappan magazine by Yong Zhao, who is a leading educator in the area of English as a second language.

"American education is at a crossroads. We have two choices. We can destroy our strengths in order to catch up with others on test scores, or we can build on our strengths and remain a leader in innovation and creativity. The current push for more standardization, centralization, high-stakes testing, and test-based accountability is rushing us down the first path. What will truly keep America strong and Americans prosperous is the other path because it cherishes individual talents, cultivates creativity, celebrates diversity, and inspires curiosity."

The strings that are attached to the use of this grant money in the name of reform are not something I can believe in. At this point, I must vote no.

Barber attended a Race to the Top meeting in July 2009 that emphasized early childhood education. I walked away from the meeting feeling that there were more tests and more data that are teachers and students had to endure. I cannot see it just for the money we could get. I plan to also vote no.

Lewis moved and Cook seconded to sign the memorandum of understanding in support of the Race to the Top Competitive Grant Program.

Barry noted that 71 out of 178 school districts have signed a memorandum of understanding committing to Race to the Top. Forty more districts plan to commit to Race to the Top by the end of the week according to the Colorado Department of Education. Jefferson County, Douglas County, Adams 12, Adams 14, Westminster, Boulder Valley, Adams 20, Pueblo City Schools, and Greeley have all committed locally. The Denver Public Schools will vote on Monday.

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President Obama, the secretary of education, governor, lieutenant governor, commissioner of education, and the state board of education all support Race to the Top. There are still some unanswered questions, but districts have the option to opt out in May if desired. I feel very comfortable recommending to the Board that the district support the Race to the Top Competitive Grant program

The district is facing \$16 million in budget cuts next year with another estimated \$6 million in budget cuts for the 2011-12 school year. The estimate, as of now, is that Colorado could receive funding ranging from \$300 to \$500 million if successful. The district in turn could receive \$15 to \$17 million. Every article that I have read and questions that were addressed to the commissioner of education have given me assurances that options would be available to flex funds to allow the district to backfill in a number of areas.

I deeply respect the opinions of all the members of the Board, but I would highly recommend that the Board sign the memorandum of understanding in support of the Race to the Top Competitive Grant Program.

Prince asked if there was a tipping point between states and the number of districts signed up from each state in regard to the awarding of funds. Barry replied yes. Prince noted that if the district is able to opt out in May if desired, we should support other districts that desperately need funds as much as APS. Barry explained that if two states have equal points, the deciding and breaking factors are the number and support of school districts within the state that are supportive in the memorandum of understanding for Race to the Top. APS also has one of the largest Title I school groups, which is a significant factor for the state to include on its application.

Cook concurred that a number of items in Race to the Top have not been answered. Lewis had pointed out to Cook that this is fairly typical of a number of grants. Cook commented that this could be an opportunity to craft an evaluation model that could possibly be used as a leading evaluation model. We have an obligation as a Board to explore the possibility of obtaining funding to benefit APS students, especially since we know that we have an option to opt out in May.

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook, Cukale, Lewis, Prince, Shepherd #8115

Approved on a vote of 5-2

Barber and Carmany voted against support of the Race to the Top competitive grant program.

## **VI. CONCLUDING ITEMS**

### ***Opportunity for Audience***

Brenna Issacs, AEA president, 2851 S. Parker Road, 303-696-6265, thanked the Board for providing an opportunity to speak in regard to Race to the Top.

We have had numerous conversations this fall with association leaders and members in regard to Race to the Top. We have solicited input and feedback from our membership and are currently circulating a survey. We have not received an affirmative response from either our leadership or members in regard to elements in Race to the Top, specifically related to the great leaders and great teachers assurance that is part of and required in that component of the

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proposal.

The association is concerned that the district and the APS Board is being asked to sign a 191-page draft document in which we just saw last night and do not have all of the details or the particulars. There was a similar document presented eight or nine years ago called "No Child Left Behind." It was 1,000 pages and passed through Congress with hardly anyone reading it. It was signed into law and became the law of the land that we have suffered under for the past eight years. In some ways, we feel that we are moving backwards, in that "the devil is always in the details."

We are concerned about the process in that we are being asked to support something without all of the particulars and sign on faith and expect that this will be good and work out in the end. AEA members and leaders are concerned with the student performance and teacher evaluation component of the great leaders and great teachers component of the Race to the Top application. Some concerns that were voiced include:

- Unfairness
- killing creativity for students and teachers
- heading down a road that we are unsure of
- unsure of what it will look like

In some ways we are willing to practice on the backs of both teachers and students in order to meet the goals of what Race to the Top is promoting. Questions have still not been answered as to how this will cause teachers to be more effective or cause students to be more proficient.

I do not have a position to share with you this evening. We discussed this topic for the majority of our meeting and plan to continue our discussions. We are aware of the time lines and know that we are approaching a deadline. We plan to meet with Barry and Cook to discuss our decision on whether to sign the memorandum of understanding in support of Race to the Top.

***Next meeting date***

The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held January 19, 2010, at 6:00 p.m. in the Dr. Edward and Mrs. Patricia Lord Boardroom.

***Adjournment***

The regular meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

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**President**

**ATTEST**

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**Secretary**