

DAC Meeting Minutes

PSD Boardroom

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Present

Meghan Archuleta	Erin Austin	Clare Barquero	Ashley Barrett
Stephanie Cotton-Maceta		Erica Daniell	Tena Green
Lindsey Mozer	Jodi Quass	Courtney Rickard	Marybeth Rigali-Oiler
Ian Rutherford	Kim Tymkowych	Michael Werner	Joe Zappa

Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Traci Gile welcomed the committee members.

Preview Meeting Design– Ashley Barrett

Ashley previewed the meeting design.

Approval of Minutes

The committee approved and seconded the January 14th, 2026, meeting minutes as amended.

Highlights of the District Monitoring Report – Dr. Traci Gile

The committee discussed the annual Monitoring Report, a document that has been in existence for approximately 16 years. Its primary function is to evaluate the district's "Ends"—the four specific goals defined by the Board that outline the desired student experience:

- Foundations for Success (Academic achievement and growth)
- Connections
- Success in a Changing World
- Above and Beyond

The report serves as a critical bridge between past performance and future strategy:

- It provides data on how the district is performing regarding its strategic actions and whether it is achieving the outcomes most desired for students.
- The District Accountability Committee (DAC) is tasked with studying the report to provide formal input, which helps shape the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP).
- Due to the report's density, the committee is reviewing it in two "chunks." This session focuses on Foundations for Success, with the remainder scheduled for the April meeting.

It was noted that the report primarily reflects lag indicators—data that is 6 to 8 months old. While it depicts last year's outcomes, it is essential for understanding long-term progress toward strategic goals.

With leadership transitions occurring (specifically the departure of Dr. Schmitz), the committee addressed the report's sustainability:

- Data snapshots will be maintained on the district website, ensuring that access to the data remains easy for all stakeholders.

- While the report’s length may be streamlined in the future (potentially moving away from the 40-page format), the district has the resources and expertise to maintain the same analytical approach.

Following a silent reading of pages 3 and 4, the committee engaged in a discussion regarding the specific celebrations and opportunities for growth identified in the report.

Key Celebrations (Positive Trends)

- Reading gains seen over the last three years.
- The EL curriculum was praised for being "user-friendly"
- Students are self-reporting positive connections with peers, adults, and their own interests at school.
- The four-year graduation rate remains a strength.
- FAFSA completion numbers are up, aligning with an ambitious district goal to reach a 90% graduation rate by 2025 (a 5% increase from the previous 85% baseline).
- Data showed a positive increase in SEL competencies.

Opportunities for Growth

- The committee identified a critical opportunity to enhance support and safety for gender-queer students based on recent *Healthy Kids Colorado Survey* data.
- There is a noted decrease in enrollment.
- While overall gains are positive, some DIBELS 8 data showed declines.

Committee Questions & Technical Clarifications

- Dr. Gile clarified that the "additional support" category includes students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, typically those scoring below the 35th percentile on standardized tests.
 - *Note:* The district maintains a professional and ethical obligation to provide supplemental resources to any student in this bracket.
- A question was raised regarding the district's statistics for students with 504 plans versus IEPs/Title 4 rates. The committee noted an opportunity to investigate why 504 plan rates appear higher relative to state averages.
- A strong recommendation was made to include Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) student data in future iterations of this report to ensure a holistic view of the student body.
- It was confirmed that the Connections Survey uses the same questions and is administered at the same time every year.

The committee divided into working groups to analyze specific sections of the Monitoring Report. Below is a summary of the celebrations and strategic opportunities identified.

Foundations for Success: School

Group 1 Readiness & Early Literacy

- Celebrations:
 - Benchmark Success: PSD met 6 out of 7 benchmarks for Preschool results.
 - Early Literacy: Met 2 out of 2 designated targets.
 - Growth in Social-Emotional (S/E): While falling just 1% short of the goal, the committee noted "tremendous growth" in this area.

Group 2 Achievement and Growth

- Celebrations:
 - Students on READ plans are showing strong growth, with particularly high performance in Grades K–3.
 - Growth for Multilingual Learners (MLL) students currently exceeds the state average.
- Opportunities:
 - Continued focus is needed to bridge the achievement gap for at-risk populations.
 - A strategic need was identified to increase the growth effect size in Mathematics.

Group 3 Additional Support, Mental Health, and Belonging

Celebrations:

- District achievement growth is above state norms. While PSD is currently below its own ambitious internal targets, it is outperforming Colorado averages.
- High schools are well-represented on the success list despite often having fewer resources.
- Reading scores in 6th grade saw their first increase in three years.
- Opportunities & Discussion:
 - Concern was raised regarding "small" data points; some growth metrics are based on very few students, making them less reliable for broad conclusions.
 - The committee questioned who "opts out" of tests and how the district responds to those requiring additional support.
 - Members discussed whether the academic "kick-up" in 3rd grade is normal. It was noted that MAP testing in 2nd grade helps bridge the data to 3rd grade, and DIBELS is now used to measure reading rate, not just accuracy, to ensure students are truly on track.

Strategic Planning & The Dyslexia Pilot

A major focus of the discussion involved the district's proactive stance on dyslexia and future planning.

- PSD is currently piloting a dyslexia screener for Kindergarten and 1st grade. This is a significant step forward, as the district is ahead of state requirements and neighboring districts in this work.
- For next year's District Unified Improvement Plan (DUIP), the committee discussed how to formalize the dyslexia plan.
 - Action Step: Dr. Gile provided a handout outlining major improvement strategies. The committee aims to move dyslexia from the "preamble" of the plan into explicit action steps (e.g., specific teacher training targets) to ensure accountability.

Comprehensive Planning Committee Update and Engagement – Dr. Traci Gile

Dr. Traci Gile provided the DAC with a progress update on the Comprehensive Planning Committee. This 22-member body—composed of nine appointed district staff and 13 parents and community members—is tasked with analyzing the district’s future and leading community engagement regarding declining enrollment. Following the update, DAC members were invited to provide feedback and engage in a dialogue regarding the committee’s long-term recommendations.

Studying the facts

- The district utilizes 1-year and 5-year enrollment projections. While the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) provides state-level data, PSD’s internal IT department has proven significantly more accurate, predicting the most recent October count within a margin of only 18 students.
- Data from the state demographer indicates a rapid decline in the school-age population (a loss of 10,000 students year-over-year). There is no current evidence to suggest a post-pandemic "rebound"; rather, this appears to be a long-term geographic shift nationwide.
- Current planning incorporates the Student-Based Budgeting (SBB) model, historical school choice patterns, and regional development trends to ensure data reliability.
- The district is facing a steady 2% annual decline in enrollment.
- Every 2% drop in student population results in an estimated \$6 million reduction in funding. Given current economic factors, this loss may increase in future cycles.
- Boundary changes alone are no longer a sufficient solution to address the magnitude of the declining enrollment.
- The district currently maintains an unsustainable number of vacant seats.
- To ensure fiscal health and educational quality, the district is reviewing building utilization with the intent to consolidate facilities.
- Evaluation is based on objective metrics, including:
 - Per-pupil costs and energy expenditures.
 - Overall building condition and utilization rates.

Committee Feedback on Engagement Questions

1. What would be some ways to keep our community informed?

- Information should be disseminated through school principals. Parents report a higher level of trust and engagement with building-level leadership than with district-wide communications.
- Updates must be sent out across all platforms and schools simultaneously. Non-synchronized communication creates confusion and information gaps.
- To ensure critical updates get through, the overall volume of non-essential building and district emails needs to decrease.
- Communication should use a "positive vantage" rather than focusing on negatives (like budget cuts). Instead, frame the discussion around growth and how these changes will enhance programming for a better PSD.
- Use bold headers and clear formatting to distinguish major updates from routine news, making them easier for busy parents to scan.

- Since meetings are time-constrained, create a permanent online form for question submissions. Pair this with a "Living FAQ" page on the district website that evolves as new questions arise.
- Moving beyond translated emails is essential. Providing "in-person" spaces to discuss data in Spanish allows for a deeper understanding of the impact on specific communities.
 - Meet the community where they are. This includes targeted engagement at the Senior Center, Future Ready facilities, and other locations serving underrepresented populations.

2. What would a specific process include?

- The process must emphasize the opportunities created by consolidation, such as increased student diversity and more robust program offerings.
- Create a clear, specific vision of what "target capacity" looks like across different school levels. The community needs to see a tangible picture of the end goal to shift the current perception of loss.
- Clearly illustrate the advantages of a larger student body (e.g., comparing a 500-student school to a 300-student school). Highlighting what a 450-student school can provide—such as full-time specialists, more electives, and stabilized resources—helps parents see the value in the change.
- Address concerns regarding students with special needs and sensory challenges. Larger class sizes would negatively impact this population of students. The process should demonstrate how a larger, better-funded school can provide *more* consistent support (e.g., more paras and special providers).
- Acknowledge the current budget strain where larger schools receive less funding to prop up under-enrolled buildings. A successful process will show how consolidating restores fiscal equity and allows all students to benefit from full funding.
- Stakeholder involvement must continue through every phase of implementation. Transparency shouldn't end once the initial criteria are set; it must remain a priority past the first steps.
- Recognize that the district's best "marketing" is word-of-mouth from staff. To prevent staff from feeling attacked or marginalized, the district must prioritize internal transparency and robustly support employees through the transition.
- Accept that a successful process does not require 100% agreement. The goal is to handle disagreements professionally and respectfully, serving as role models for the students throughout the change.

3. As we move forward in developing an approach what might be some ways to be unified as a district rather than divided as schools or groups?

- To build a sense of unity during a time of significant transition, the committee suggests shifting the focus from protecting individual schools to building a stronger district together.
- Avoid singling out specific "failing" or "shrinking" schools. Instead, communicate that the entire district is evolving.

- Every community should prepare for some form of compromise. By framing this as a district-wide initiative, you prevent "us vs. them" mentalities. When everyone's experiences change together, the burden feels shared rather than targeted.
- Acknowledge that while everyone changes, some communities will face a much higher level of disruption (e.g., losing a neighborhood building).
- Create a "better piece of the deal" for the most affected groups. This could mean prioritizing those students for new programming, specialized facilities, or additional staffing in their new locations. It ensures that those who give the most to the district receive the most support in return.
- People are loyal to "schools" (the culture and history), but "buildings" are just physical structures. Pitting School A against School B for a building creates division.
- When multiple schools consolidate, consider creating a brand-new identity.
 - Treat a consolidation like the opening of a brand-new school.
 - New Names: This prevents one school from feeling like "the winner" and the other like "the loser."
 - Highlight what the *new* combined building can provide
 - Follow the "new construction" protocol by naming the principal and key staff *well in advance*. This creates an immediate anchor for the new community. Having a leadership team in place early allows families to form relationships with the *new* school before the doors even open.
- Children take their cues from the adults around them.
- By approaching consolidation with a problem-solving mindset rather than one of conflict, adults model healthy resilience. If the district remains unified and professional, students will view the change as an exciting new chapter rather than a loss, proving that the community's strength is in its people, not its bricks.

The next DAC meeting will be on April 15, 2026, JSSC Boardroom, 6:30-8:30 p.m.