

DAC Meeting Minutes

PSD Boardroom

Wednesday, March 1, 2023 (rescheduled from 2/22/23)

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Present:

Nikki Arensmeier

Erica Daniell

Marcy Lewis

Angela Lindquist

Kathy Mackay

Ian Rutherford

Susan Sasson

Scott Schoenbauer

Michael Werner

Becky Woodcox

Jessica Zamora

Minutes

Welcome and Introductions

Dwayne welcomed everyone.

Approval of Minutes

The January 25, 2023, minutes have been approved and seconded as amended.

Budget Update Presentation – Dave Montoya

Dave presented on high-level budget topics and asked for the committee's feedback. The feedback will be presented to the Board of Education and considered in the budget process.

Topics included in the presentation:

- School Finance Formula, as it currently exists.
- Possible Revenue Scenarios
- Board Budget Priorities
- Budget Timeline

Committee Discussion Included:

- Out of the \$9,000 per pupil amount, schools receive approximately \$7,000.
- The student population numbers are going down because birthrates have dropped. This is a national trend. We are also losing students to charter schools.
 - One community member shared that a state demographer gave a briefing on this topic: Weld County is one of the only counties in Colorado where numbers are increasing in both population and school age population. Most other counties are declining because of birthrate and because couples are waiting much longer to have children.
 - The cost of housing in this area is another reason. It's too expensive for young families to live here.
 - We are seeing more growth at the secondary level as families move up in their careers and can afford to move into the area.
- Even though we are declining in students as a district, we still have growth areas. Wellington and Timnath are those growth areas. We are expecting those schools to continue to grow. The district will continue to watch their long-range projections.

- Dave stated that there is not huge savings in shutting down buildings. Since the district follows student-based budgeting, the money follows the student. The majority of a school's budget goes toward the staff that go with the students; if the students move, the staff moves. They still support students, just somewhere else. There are some costs to operating buildings that aren't being used, like utilities, but not a huge saving.
- One committee member expressed concerns regarding boundaries being redrawn for our northern most communities, especially with the new Wellington Middle High School being built.
- It's important to know when to pay attention to the legislature when it comes to school finance and when not to. It takes having contacts and connections with people in the know on a regular basis and going through the process a couple of times.
- Budget priorities are aligned with the District Unified Improvement Plan.
- A DAC member asked about adding administrative positions at the district level. School budgets seem to get cut quite often, and now there is a decline in enrollment, which equates to a loss in staff members like, paras, counselors, specials programs, adding more students to classes. Losing these staff members has a huge impact on schools. Dave hears this concern a lot and will take this feedback back to the budget process.
 - The district needs to do a better job of explaining these positions, what the outcomes are, and how it impacts students.
 - The capital side of the budget, to make repairs throughout the district, has been stripped down very low, so making large, expensive, repairs is almost impossible. It needs to be built back up. This is going to be one of the big challenges for the district moving forward and we need a solution in the short term. School districts in Colorado do most of their maintenance through issuing bonds. This is not good practice because you are funding something for 24 years that may not have a life that long, and you're paying interest on it. This is a big problem that needs to be addressed.
 - Mental Health/Belonging and Safety are now separate categories in the strategic plan and are also looked at separately in the budget. Cooling district buildings is part of the safety priority. Sites are not allowed to open windows or prop doors for ventilation due to safety concerns, therefore having functioning HVAC systems is part of the safety plan.
- Please continue to maintain the practice of giving CTE dollars back to the schools. The reimbursement at one school has grown from \$140,000 (2019/20) to \$485,000 for this year. The extra money kept that school from having to cut staff because of declining enrollment. Tanya Alcaraz, Director of Career & Innovation, has come up with innovative ways to code classes so the schools get more money back. Tanya educates administrators on these practices so they can continue to get more money back each year.
 - This is a perfect example of how hiring an administrator at the district level favorably impacts schools and students.

School UIP Review & Co-development Process Presentation – Susan Thomas

Dwayne introduced Susan Thomas and her role with PSD as the Assessment and School Accountability Coordinator. One of Susan's roles is to use data and information to make sure our schools' improvement efforts are abiding by state and legislative rules. The DAC plays an important role in this process, and we want to determine what that looks like moving forward. Feedback from the DAC will include:

- What next year's process will look like for the DAC?
- What role should the DAC play?
 - Possibly focus on schools that can benefit from DAC thought partners.
- What information should Susan share with this group to help the process?
- Are we expecting to see alignment between the schools' plans and the district plan?

Topics included in the presentation:

- Review School Unified Improvement Planning (SUIP) Requirements
- Major Improvement Strategies
- Action Steps
- Targets
- Process and Outcomes for Review of SUIPs

Committee discussion Included:

- Timnath Middle High School and Wellington Middle High School are both new school sites. On these plans TMHS shows up as a new school and WMHS does not. The State had to create a new school code for TMHS and WMHS used Wellington Middle Schools old code. The 2022 data for WMHS is going to be off because there will be no high school data associated with them even though that had an influx of students transfer there from other schools. These schools will be writing a single plan that will include both middle and high school.
- Should the district plan be based on what the schools need? Supporting the schools at the district level, so maybe not being aligned, but a close connection between SUIPs and the DUIP. Each school is different so having autonomy as to what works for them.
- All schools have different local needs so there should be a blend between SUIPs and the DUIP. Part of the DAC's role is to figure out a better way of connecting the two.
- Schools can only focus on two or three priorities at a time. Each school needs to figure out what their priorities are, and the rest of the problems will get better.
- While giving feedback on SUIPs, it is important for the DAC to understand improvement strategies, action steps, and expected outcomes.
- School and district Performance Frameworks will be available in late August. SUIPs are due to the State of Colorado in October.

Dwayne asked the DAC to think about how they would like to structure their time in September and October to support this process. A system will be needed for limiting focus as there will not be enough time to look at all schools. Dwayne gave a couple of suggestions: look at percentage points on past and present SPFs for varying schools to help identify which schools would be best supported or looking at plan types, identifying issues at various schools that could use feedback and positive thought partners.

- If SUIPs are due in October, then we only have our September meeting to go over them.
- Understanding what is being said in these reports can be difficult. It would be nice to hear from the principals about their thoughts and what they're doing to make these plans real. Hearing what is happening in the schools is helpful.
- Create ways to help other people find the resources that have been worked on and talked about in our meetings. There is no way a DAC member can get all the information out to thousands of people. Maybe there is a way that is more collaborative for the parents to better understand the information being discussed.

The DAC could go through a process to determine what school/s they would like to invite to a DAC meeting. If that school's principal and team would like to have thought partners in their action steps, then there would be a real time conversation that would benefit both the school and the DAC. This would give the principal the opportunity to give a dry run presentation and get feedback from the community perspective before presenting it to the board. Maybe this is the service that the DAC offers in this process.

The group likes the idea of narrowing down the number of schools to support, digging deeper into how to better support those schools, and building the process around a support concept. Some schools will get extensions, giving them and the DAC more time to give feedback.

DAC Timeline:

- Work on the 23/24 District UIP in April and May
 - The monitoring report is in the process of being approved.
 - The strategic plan should be completed by the end of March.
 - The August meeting will be revisiting what was written in the April and May meetings.
 - Present the 23/24 DUIP to the Board of Education at their 2nd August meeting.
 - By doing this, schools will have earlier access to the DUIP by the end of August for alignment purposes, where necessary, when working on their SUIPs.
- The March 22 DAC meeting has been cancelled.

Committee discussion:

- Has anyone noticed a decline in parent engagement in schools this year? For example, back-to-school nights, conferences, PTO, etc.
- Our high school reps spoke to this and said that the numbers are starting to pick back up. We should wait another year and see what the trend looks like.
- Dwayne came across some data recently that showed the number of volunteer hours has gone way up. The district uses the Raptor system to track volunteer hours.
- It was said that the Raptor system does not work properly:
 - Not getting the volunteers needed for events like vision and hearing screenings.
 - A lot of room for improvement because it is a new platform.
 - Parents are having a hard time understanding the new platform.
 - Hard to find easy way to access volunteer opportunities because the system is very school specific.
- Michele Lae investigated this issue further and contacted Dawn Feit, Volunteer Program Coordinator, dfeit@psdschools.org, 970-490-3517. Dawn stated that there is room for

improvement on the how the system works and that the district is working with Raptor on getting the bugs fixed. One of the biggest issues is that when volunteer's sign-up in Raptor, their welcome email goes straight to junk, so then it's forgotten about. This is the reason that volunteers were having a difficult time signing up for volunteer opportunities. The district has been working on getting communication out to parents through district newsletters, school newsletters, emails, and the district website on our how the Raptor system works and to watch junk email. Communications will continue to go out about Raptor and best practices on signing up. Once the community is educated on Raptor, the process will be streamlined. Dawn said that overall, the communication has worked, and more and more volunteers are signing up to the point that most volunteer opportunities have been full. Please feel free to call Dawn if you have any questions.

Next Steps for DAC

- District UIP

Closing

- Next meeting: April 19, 2023, JSSC Boardroom, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Adjourned

2022-2023 Meeting Dates:

- August 17, 2022
- August 31, 2022
- September 21, 2022
- October 19, 2022
- November 16, 2022
- January 25, 2023 (revised date)
- March 1, 2023 (revised date)
- April 19, 2023
- May 17, 2023

Parking Lot Items: none