

# PSD District Advisory Board

September 16, 2024

7:00-9:00pm

Boardroom

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## Meeting Agenda:

<b>Time (Approximate)</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
7:00	Welcome	DAB Chair – <b>Taylor Ritchie</b> CSU Moderator - <b>Martin Carcasson</b>
7:00 - 7:05	Introductions	All
7:05 - 7:10	Approval of May Minutes	All
7:10 - 7:20	Committee Updates	Membership Chair - <b>Sara Merrill</b> Legislative Committee - <b>Sarabeth Lundquist</b> District Accountability Committee - <b>Ashley Barrett</b> Academic Committee - <b>Jami Montoya</b>
7:20 - 7:30	BoE Updates	BoE, DAB Liaison - <b>Jim Brokish</b>
7:30 - 7:35	DAB 24/25 Presentation	DAB Chair - <b>Taylor Ritchie</b>
7:35 - 8:40	PSD Debt-Free Mill Presentation	PSD - <b>Dave Montoya, Lauren Hooten, Brian Kingsley</b>
8:40 - 8:55	Poll for DAB meeting topics	CSU Moderator - <b>Martin Carcasson</b>
9:00	Closing	DAB Chair - <b>Taylor</b>

## DAB Attendance- September 16th, 2024

Taylor Unwin (Bamford); Sara Bryan (Bauder); Tory Pappas (Beattie); Latoya Noel (Beattie); Brett Hansen (Bethke); Faith Fritsch (Blevins); Chelsea Wisdom (CLP E); Beth Reynolds (CLP MS); Jodi Quass (Compass); April Gerakos-Rooker (Dunn/Shepardson); Satie Walker (Johnson); Karrie Grama-Hatfield (Kruse); Jami Montoya (Laurel); Angie Dixon (Leshner); Michelle Duncan (Liberty); Jenny Miller (Lincoln); Jon Danielson (Linton); Katrina Toth-Green (Linton); Stephanie Matthews (Linton/Boltz); Grace Turnbull (Lopez); Jaime Donnelly (Olander); David Garner (Polaris); Sarabeth Lundquist (Polaris); Jenna Goupil (Poudre HS); Anne Nelson (Putnum); Gaylene Moldt (Rice); Michelle Finchum (RMHS); Christy Haldeman (Timnath MHS); Sara Merrill (Traut/Kinard); Taylor Ritchie (Webber); Lee Romsa (Wellington); Stacy Armstrong (PSD Global); Scott Schoenbauer (BOE); Ashley Barrett (DAC); Martin Carcasson (Moderator)

### Introductions and Announcements

- **Taylor Ritchie** introduced the agenda and oriented attendees to the Poll Everywhere topics survey.
- **Introductions** were conducted by all attendees, table by table.
- **Motion to approve May minutes** was made and seconded. Minutes were approved.
- **Membership Committee update (Sara Merrill):**
  - Expected some kinks in the next couple of weeks with new members being added.
- **Legislative Chair update (Sarabeth):**
  - School board working on Mill Levy.
  - Board voted to move forward with InvestInPSD.com for more information.
  - Special session over summer removed measures 50 and 108 that were both reducing school funding.
  - Talked about reduction in tax rates.
- **DAC update (Ashley):**
  - Met again this week.
  - At recent meeting, they did intros and action items for unified improvement plan, shared recommendations for that.
- **Academic Committee Member (Jami):**
  - Mentioned a Coloradoan article about PSD state testing scores and achievement scores.

- Wants to connect with the new curriculum instruction director to get insight into how curriculum updates are going.
- Has heard teachers are pleased with the EL curriculum even though it was a tough learning curve.
- They are seeing results.
- Jami hopes to get more hard data from new curriculum instruction director.
- Excited to participate in the executive committee meetings coming up to get a better understanding of WHO to reach out to this coming year and how to maximize the use of polls that we piloted using last year.
- Jami wants to feel like a useful team member by connecting with several people to get updates.
- Question came up about new SAT requirement for math.
- Jamie does not have an answer to this question.
- Brian Kingsley asked for the question again.
- Switching to electronic test per Dr. Gile.

### **Board Update (Scott)**

- Asked back table from district admins to introduce themselves: Martin Carcasson, Tracy Gile, Brian Kingsley, Lauren Hooton, Dave Montoya.
- Shared the following:
  - 7 members on school board, try to liaison with different groups. Jim Brokish will continue to be our liaison but is recovering from surgery.
  - Coloradoan has a great article about PSD's test results. We should be really proud of the results. 59% of students meeting English. Math 50% meet and exceed (33% at state level). Leading the way in northern Colorado.
  - Mill Levy – important. Last year was tough year. Budget challenges. Mill Levy one answer that came up during public feedback. Listening sessions are scheduled (include link here to listening session). 9/23-10/17. Seven total chances to hear more about Mill Levy and give feedback.
  - Next week is next school board meeting. Bamford feeder review will be on agenda. Might shift to help enrollment issues. Feedback to the board is welcome.

### **DAB Presentation (Taylor)**

- Mostly for new members. What is the DAB? dabreps@gmail.com
- 5 slides, attached to this email

- Jami mentioned along with assuming positive intent “Owning impact” – we can say something that we intend to be positive, but it might cause harm. Can we be mindful of that. Perhaps “mindful impact”?

### **Mill Levy Presentation (Dave Montoya, Lauren Hooten/Brian Kingsley)**

- BK: not trying to convince anyone of anything, but trying to educate community on the facts. Leading with an apology. Hard year for people, highly emotional, had opportunity to talk about very hard things last year. Learning a lot about PSD still. Really starting to think about financial standing of PSD. We learned a lot – we have over 1 billion in needs in maintenance etc. Fiscal stewardship. BK says initial approach last year lacked human stewardship, didn’t allow deep collaboration that this community values. Hopeful about charting a new path forward. Let’s talk about next steps. DAB can help get the word out. Helping celebrate successes of this district. We are starting to be recognized as an exceptional district in literacy. The 74 – newsletter that lets you go state by state and look at info. Curriculum is a tool – teachers had to spend a lot of time taking on this new challenge when we do not have a lot of time in the calendar to prepare. Last year looking at grades k through 3, we advanced number that were on grade level by 21%. Huge. 3rd grade scores can be a predictor for future academic success. Graduating with options is a priority. College, military, 2-year program, directly into workforce. We are blurring the lines between the workforce and our schools. 87% grad rate, and data showing that last year was the highest in decades. Mental health and belonging: reduced by 40% suicidal ideation, feelings of hopelessness. Received funding to add social workers to PSD. Sometimes this data gets weaponized: because we are a high performing district, sometimes people take that to mean we don’t need more money. Some challenges: some teachers and employees are underpaid compared to other districts. Drivers, paras, food workers, etc. as well. 9-12% less than other districts along Front Range. It used to be that hundreds of teachers would apply for ONE job in PSD. No longer the case. Retention rate about 78% for classified staff. BK knows there is a perception that PSD is top heavy. But those people are not just admin. BK has reduced cabinet from 12 to 9. We learned from McKinstry last year that we have over 1 billion in improvements needed. It’s not a rounding error. If we were to add air conditioning to all schools it would cost \$250-300 million dollars. Looked into solar. We don’t have the \$ to invest in solar. When we looked at potential scenarios/savings last year, it wasn’t that much. We did not experience a windfall of cash as property taxes increased.

**Dave Montoya presentation:** Slides will be emailed by Taylor.

- Categorical funding – fairly small. Two driving forces: property taxes and equalization. We don't get a lot of federal funding – fairly small portion.
- Where do we get our money from? Total Program - Public School Finance Act – makes up about 75% of funds. Reviewed the formula of how it's calculated.
- Enrollment (October count is important) x Factors. For every student you get a base unit. Then the State goes further with considerations. Size and cost of living are impactful for PSD. We are 8th largest district in CO, we don't get much of a size adjustment. At-risk is next factor. We don't stand out as having high concentration of at-risk though. Nothing there really lifts us up. Cost of living is next big factor. State does study every two years – cost of living in Fort Collins vs other places. We then get funded based on cost of living. We get the bare minimum state formula can derive. We are the lowest funded district as far as this formula goes.
- District A and District B charts – think of them as two water glasses. When local share grows, state decreases amount provided. State kicks in less. State will not balance us out. Bottom line: we are not getting anything to help us out.

## Q&A

- **Question by member:** were there not talks about changing this formula at the State level?
  - DM: yes, legislature worked on them last year. Adjusting cost of living factor a bit. They are going to run this new formula in parallel with current formula for 6 years to see how things look. We got a small increase due to this.
- **Question:** Generally, would you say the higher the cost of living the less the state gives?
  - DM: Generally, then the state will give more, so you can hire teachers.
- **Question:** state sees property taxes went up, so they are going to give us less money. Why doesn't cost of living increase simultaneously? Cost of living in Fort Collins has dramatically increased.
  - DM: Disagrees with some data informing the policy, there may be politics involved.
- **Question:** it's state-wide right? So we're comparing Fort Collins to Denver to Aspen, etc. it's frustrating.
  - DM: I struggle with fact that Northern CO ends up where it does
- **Question:** Does Mill Levy override change state funding?
  - DM: no
- **Question:** Mill Levy credit question, regarding crediting taxes back. Did not capture question.

- **DM on Mill Levy Proposal:**
  - 2024 Levy similar to 2019 override. See slides for notes.
- **Question:** Is Mill Levy for a set amount of time?
  - DM: No, usually in perpetuity
- **Question:** Handout – can overview chart be modified for ease of reading? Looks like there is a checkmark in each box for each school except for Small School support to Stabilize Budget.
  - DM: Thanks for feedback
- **Question:** How do you convince people to want to pay more taxes? Businesses, people who don't have kids, etc.?
  - DM: It's really hard.
- **Question:** Sought clarification on numbers related to tax decrease
  - DM: clarified, referring to the chart
- **Question:** how involved were the schools in this process? In getting feedback on what their needs really are?
  - DM: A lot of it came from the engineering study. Also looking at requests made by schools for things that need to be done. Sound systems, repairs, etc. Multiple pieces of data.
- **Question:** CDE did a facilities assessment. Have they been compared?
  - DM: Not nearly as comprehensive as McKinstry study
- **Question:** What sort of parameters are going to be put in place to ensure funding goes to where you are saying it will go.
  - DM: Mill levy will be tracked separately from all other funding. Lauren added there will be an oversight committee, as with all ballot measures.
- **Question:** Is this graphic going to be made pretty?
  - DM: (Laughter) Ouch. We can talk about that.
- **Question:** Our biggest task is to go share this information. In our climate right now, we do better when our neighbors do better. We can capitalize on that energy right now. Staying on that positive note, not just looking at ourselves but aiming for ALL of us to do better. Let's lift everybody up. For those who ARE invested in PSD, will the failure of the Mill Levy to pass put the school closures back on the table?
  - BK: Good news: enrollment is stable compared to last year, more high school students than anticipated. We need to look at all aspects of how our budget functions. We don't have to have that conversation in December. Comprehensive planning committee, look at maximizing use of our facilities as a continuous movement. BK does not believe there will be a hard pivot in December if Mill Levy fails. There are 1 billion dollars of infrastructure needs with only 800k available.

- **Question:** How did we get here? How are we so back logged?
  - DM: It comes down to hard decisions that were made during other recessions. We went through significant budget cutting then. Tried to preserve staff and instruction best we could. We started cannibalizing the maintenance budget.
- **Question:** Is there a process in place to better evaluate those needs?
  - DM: yes. Continuing to make improvements in budget
- **Question:** 15 million in competitive wages being talked about. Why is that number so big?
  - DM: Would go to all staff. Try to get something that would move us closer to market rate. Average of 5% increase. BK clarified that it would require a closer look across different groups, the 5% is just an average. DM: Each group would get a pro rata share. Teachers are wanting to change their raise schedule a bit. That discussion is ongoing.
- **Question:** Categorical funding from state/federal: how does that work?
  - DM: Most do not have strings; exception is Special Education funding.
- **Question:** Title 1 finding?
  - DM: IDEA, Title, HeadStart big ones. Lots of grants in there too.
- **Question:** Comparing to Cherry Creek and Boulder – Mill Levy comparison?
  - DM: Presenting that info at Board of Education meeting next Tuesday. We fall in the lower middle. There are districts getting much more in overrides than we are.
- **Question:** If we take projections we looked at last year, would it mean our Total Program funding will decline? Concerned we are shifting our buckets too much and not creating a reserve. What happens if our Total Programming funds go down? Will that jeopardize teacher salaries?
  - DM: Appreciate the feedback. Would be great if we could build reserves. We are where we should be for reserves.
- **Question:** strategy related to polling done. People indicated they want to see this money being spent on teachers. Presentation lends itself to buildings, maybe focus more on teachers.
  - DM: Thanks
- **Question:** trying to understand strategy with maintenance and renovations. 40+ years to address current needs. What is strategy for how to achieve this practically?
  - DM: the billion dollars is s big number, tests voter tolerance. Gets us much better than where we are now. BK: there will always be a maintenance need in this system. Looking at what is our capacity to doing this work. Need to have a community conversation around HVAC. In past 3 years, only real

investments have been in curriculum and computers. We've had zero replacement for other needs. Schools are doing their own independent fundraising to make improvements, and that's not how we should be doing things. Need equitable solution/standard not dependent on zip code.

- **Question:** Educating committee about mill levy vs bond is very important. Average FC person does not understand. Stress that in material.
  - DM: Thanks
- **Question:** Timnath Elementary is not ADA compliant. Discussions happening. What is plan for pumping money into schools where truly we need a new school?
  - BK: That problem is here now. Weighing pros and cons. Need all schools to be ADA accessible. Other reality is PCA – Poudre Community Academy. Will require board conversation that can go back out to voters potentially for a bond. You are right in suggesting that is not evident in what was heard here tonight.
- **Question:** trying to understand piece with Charter Schools. Once Mill Levy passes, what if more charter schools are added? Is there any oversight with how Charter Schools use the money?
  - DM: Charter Schools do have an external audit they need to do. If needed, more money would move over to the charter schools. They still have the requirements that come with the Mill Levy.
- **Question:** Would Charter Schools receive emergent needs funding?
  - DM: If something were to happen, that's not our obligation. District does not have to fund that. We pass money through to them.

**Reminder from Taylor to respond to the Poll regarding topics for future discussions.**

**Meeting closed at 8:56pm.**

--Karrie Grama-Hatfield, DAB Secretary