

ENGLEWOOD SCHOOLS
Englewood, Colorado
Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education
August 5, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT

HEATHER HUNT President
MS. KAREN MILLER
MS. SHELLEY THOMPSON
MS. VICKI HOWARD
MR. SCOTT GORSKY

ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Mr. Sean McDaniel, Superintendent
Ms. Peg LaPlante, Chief Financial Officer
Mary Vedra, Exec. Director Learning Services
Ms. Gail Neubert, Director of Student Services
Dale Stout, Director of Technology

OTHERS PRESENT:

Tom Munds
Callan Clark
Victoria Nguyen

Nicole Westfall
Linda Torres
Sophia Mai

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Hunt, President, called the regular meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Roscoe L. Davidson Administration Building.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ADDITIONS TO AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mr. Sean McDaniel said there was a Personnel Addendum. Ms. Cheryl Mangels, Colorado Self Insurance Pool canceled. Mr. McDaniel will recognize Peg LaPlante for receiving the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Miller moved and Ms. Howard seconded to approve the July 15, 2008 Regular Meeting Minutes as amended.

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Gorsky, Aye
Ms. Howard, Aye
Ms. Hunt, Aye

Ms. Miller, Aye
Ms. Thompson, Aye
Motion Carried, 5-0

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

VI. SPECIAL REPORTS AND RECOGNITIONS

Ms. Heather Hunt said the Board is recognizing tonight **Sophia Mai**, a junior at Englewood High School, for being selected to serve as a Congressional Page for the 2008 session of Congress. Ms. Linda Torres, Principal of EHS, said Representative Diana DeGette contacted her and asked her to nominate a student to apply to be a Congressional Page. Sophia and her parents decided it would be a positive experience and Sophia applied. Ms. Torres read Sophia's application letter that outlined her school accomplishments and participation along with personal activities and goals. Sophia maintains a grade point average above 3.5, is in honor society, enjoys school activities such as True Colors, Link Crew, the Principals Student Advisory Council and sports including tennis and swimming. Classes that support Sophia's success are AVID, Choir, and Speech and Debate. Sophia is looking forward to learning more about how American government works and helping in Congress by performing the duties of a Congressional Page. Sophia will be leaving soon for Washington D.C. She will live in a dorm with 75 other Pages from across the United States. The Pages go to school from 6:30 to 10 a.m. (taking core subjects and Spanish) and then start work as a Page and work until the end of the day's session. Ms. Torres and Ms. Hunt, representing the Board, congratulated Sophia for her accomplishments and being select to serve as a Congressional Page. Ms. Thompson expressed the Boards' pride in Sophia. The audience applauded.

Mr. Sean McDaniel recognized **Ms. Peg LaPlante and the District's Business Services** department for receiving a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, from the Government Finance Officers Association. There are 178 school districts in Colorado and only 21 received this recognition. Ms. LaPlante stated she had a wonderful department; the best in the state. She named each of the Business Services' employees — Tammy Hohn, Judy Wynn, Harla Knapp, Theresa Kropp, Shaunie Wilson, and Mary Hensley — and said they deserve all the credit, they are amazing meticulous workers who require very little guidance. Mr. McDaniel said this may seem commonplace to some in the district because the Business Services department has received this award for many consecutive years, but this is a high achievement. Mr. McDaniel read the following from information that accompanied the award. *The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management. The program is designed to encourage state and local governments to prepare and issue a complete and comprehensive annual report of the highest quality. Top quality financial reporting is essential to governments if they are to be fully accountable to their citizen and to others with an interest in the governments business.* Mr. McDaniel congratulated Ms. LaPlante again and asked her to forward his congratulations to her department.

VII. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

- **Mr. Gorsky** stated he had the great opportunity to attend the Administrators/Board Retreat. The retreat brought everyone together for a great team building experience. He thought the retreat was very productive. He thanked Mr. Patrick Emery, from the Balarat Center for his assistance and congratulated Mr. McDaniel for all his work developing, planning, and leading the retreat.
- **Ms. Miller** reported that the Englewood Education Foundation's (EEF) Fall Fling event remains the focus for activities. Brian Leonard is donating his services for entertainment. Work continues on getting donations from local businesses.
- Ms. Miller also reported that teachers and staff have submitted applications for Creativity Grants that will be reviewed at the next EEF meeting.
- **Ms. Hunt** emphasized the success of the retreat and said she appreciated all the planning and work involved. She thanked Mr. McDaniel for doing all the preparation, supplying the food, and planning the activities at the retreat. Mr. McDaniel said he also enjoyed the retreat and was happy that everyone enjoyed and thought the retreat was a success. He stated the retreat's value would be determined as desired outcomes are observed.

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

- **New Teacher Induction**— Mr. McDaniel stated that the New Teacher Induction commenced today. Ms. Mary Vedra and Ms. Michell Ansley did an excellent job putting together a great program introducing many of the vital aspects of teaching in Englewood. Mr. McDaniel said he light-heartedly asked teacher during the break if there was information overload and they responded no, they were excited and ready to go back. This speaks to the excellent job Mary and Michell did presenting a large amount of information. Their presentation was creative and interesting. The luncheon was very nice and enjoyed by all.
- **CDE Growth Model**—No Child Left Behind mandates an accountability system. Colorado's accountability system is CSAP. Most states have not given credit for growth. Colorado Department of Education has developed a growth model that will track student achievement from year to year providing credit for growth. This has been the missing link, in reporting test scores in past. Past test ratings only showed one years standing. District test analysis, showing test scores over time, will be developed and presented to the Board.
- **District Improvement Planning (DIP)**—Mr. McDaniel stated that he is very encouraged that because of DIP everybody is on the same page and moving in the same direction. Once again time will tell how this all plays out. Ms. Vedra provided clear direction on how to tie schools to the district vision and strategic plan. The process was precisely delivered by Ms. Vedra and Ms. Ansley. There is now clear direction on how we will tie school improvement plans to the district plan. Principals will be working on School Improvement Plans and SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely) to be completed in the fall.

- **FIDDLER ON THE ROOF**— Mr. McDaniel attended a performance of Fiddler on the Roof and commented on the talented performers and the skilled production of the play. He reminded the Board that this was Mr. Bill Ambron's one-hundredth play and suggested the Board recognize this accomplishment at a future meeting.

IX. ACTION / DISCUSSION / INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Achievement Results

Ms. Vedra reviewed achievement results and provided the Board with an understanding of where we are as a district. Presenting an overview of the district she stated progress is being made. This year has been a year of coming together as a district. The district has developed common goals and assessments and there is much confidence that positive strides will be made this year. School Accountability Reports (SAR) will be similar to last year. Ms. Vedra does not know yet if the District met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), she would guess not, because of our sub-group performances. Englewood is doing well in comparison with other similar districts in the metro area. When looking at cohort groups (the same group of students from year to year) Englewood students, for the most part, are making gains. Ms. Thompson pointed out that there is no established trend in the district. Mr. McDaniel stated that is a very valid point, it is important not to look at one year's data, but to look at several years to determine trends. It is important to follow groups to see their level of performance. Ms. Thompson also stated that in time learning taking place in the primary grades would also reflect in improved learning in subsequent years. Mr. McDaniel also stressed the importance of comparing our district to state performance levels. Englewood kids are making more aggressive gains than the State average. Ms. Vedra also showed performance factors for ethnic groups at various levels. Administrators and the Board agree that achievement for all students is the objective. Ms. Vedra acknowledged that the District must do better, stating work has begun to examine achievement and adjust curriculum and teaching to meet student needs. Late Start Mondays will allow a time for conversations, making adjustments and mid-course corrections to improve students learning. Instead of staying with a plan developed at the first of the school year. This year attention will be given to each individual, group, and grade level analyzing deficiencies and developing strategies to immediately respond to students' needs making course corrections where necessary. MAP tests show improved achievement from fall to spring. EHS Special Ed team teaching has shown success. Aligning Essential Learning Targets allowed teachers to become clear on what is expected at each grade level. Looking at writing there is concern about the lack of achievement in this area. Ms. Vedra said writing is really thinking and we have gaps in this area. This year two elementary schools piloted two separate instruction methods in writing and scores from these two schools will be examined to see which instruction strategy is best. Analyzing this data is complicated and many aspects must be considered before saying one is better. Ms. Hunt asked why there seems to be a drop in performance from elementary to middle and high school. Ms. Vedra said some drop is due to students not taking the test which severely lowers scores. Ms. Vedra said solving the problem of why high school students math showed a downward trend in 2007 is part of the work teachers and administrators are doing. Mr. McDaniel said it is very important to look at trends rather than one year at a time in order to determine

how students are learning. CFAHS has new expectations for math and those students showed an increase in math scores. Ms. Thompson asked if, in education circles, it is thought that a greater gap in learning exists in certain ethnic groups or socio-economic groups? Ms. Vedra replied that the answer is there are no excuses if we have a problem we have to fix it. Ms. Hunt said if you can pinpoint the problem it would help you develop strategies to solve the problem. Ms. Vedra said when issues are seen, for instance in an ethnic group, those areas are addressed. Ms. Vedra stated improvements in the math program included the district purchasing new Everyday Math materials that were well accepted. High school students are learning how to use graphing calculators and other technology items. Middle school showed growth in math and science. State comparison shows some declines and some improvements and is not what we are striving for, but we did have growth in kids moving from unsatisfactory to satisfactory. Mr. Gorsky noted that the State has remained flat so growth in Englewood is better than the State. He said it is not where we want to be but it is a step in the right direction. Ms. Thompson noted the State would stay flat because those scores represent so many districts. She explained that a large cohort like the State provides scores for comparison to see the direction individual districts are moving. Ms. Hunt asked when does the State expect all students to be proficient or advanced and will we get there? Ms. Vedra said 2013 is the target year. Ms. Vedra said we are expecting a huge change in scores next year based on the work we are currently doing with every administrator committed and knowing exactly what to do. We have come together as a district to analyze data, monitor progress, and talk about strategies for best practices. Ms. Vedra reviewed the ACT scores saying the test is required of all high school juniors, and designed to predict college success. Mr. Gorsky noted that this year's scores may not be what we want but the hard work across the district must not go unrecognized. Ms. Thompson asked if there are schools bucking the trend and showing good progress? Ms. Thompson sees leadership and clear vision as the key. Ms. Vedra stated that this year the new superintendent is clearly stating that the principals are the undisputed leaders of the school; this will instill confidence when teachers know who the leader is and what are the clear expectations. Mr. McDaniel stated he would be in the buildings to support the principals. Ms. Thompson asked what, in Ms. Vedra's opinion, has impeded success? Ms. Vedra responded fidelity to the essentials and consistency across the district is what will lead to improvement. Ms. Neubert emphasized the importance of seeing the same learning activities in all the same level of classes across the district. Ms. Vedra mentioned that Bishop was low performing but has risen to the challenge and shown substantial improvement. She stated the methods and materials did not change so the improvement is most likely due to Principal McCaslin consistently monitoring best practices, teacher conversation and goal directed activities. Mr. McDaniel said the district must revisit what is being done and be accountable to do whatever it takes to improve. This year there will be curriculum walk-throughs where principals will be in every classroom at least once every week. This will allow principals to see where kids are engaged and meaningful objectives are in place and also where gaps in learning may exist. Ms. Hunt thanked Ms. Vedra for her report.

fuel prices. Ms. LaPlante mentioned that the Operations Maintenance Transportation department is paying attention to using environmentally safe cleaning products. The Board expressed their desire to have a district plan that would include re-cycling, the use of environmentally friendly products, and practices that reduce the districts impact on the environment. Consideration will be given to all aspects of the environment. Mr. Gorsky mentioned considering energy saving methods.

Ms. Miller moved and Ms. Hunted seconded to direct the superintendent to form a Go Green Eco-Friendly committee to develop a plan for Englewood Schools

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Gorsky, Aye

Ms. Miller, Aye

Ms. Howard, Aye

Ms. Thompson, Aye

Ms. Hunt, Aye

Motion Carried, 5-0

5. **Board Members' Choice**

- **Ms. Thompson** asked to discuss the Board Meeting Schedule. She expressed that she did not want to miss important discussions on achievement that were scheduled for the August 19th workshop but she had a work conflict that evening that she could not change. Mr. McDaniel suggested that an alternative topic, perhaps a session on how to access Alpine Achievement data reports, could be the topic for August 19. Mr. Gorsky noted that since this meeting falls so close to the start of school it might be productive to cancel the August 19 Board Workshop and have the next meeting of he Board be on September 2. After brief discussion it was decided:

August 19—Meeting Cancelled

September 2—7:00 p.m. Regular Board Meeting

September 16—Conversation with the Board at 6:00 p.m. followed by a Board Workshop/Study Session at 7:00 p.m. (Profiles on Success)

October 7—Regular Board Meeting

X. **COMMUNICATIONS**

The Board decided to have one regular business meeting and one work/study session each month. This will allow time for in depth discussion of various topics. Work/study sessions are open meetings and the public is invited to attend. The August 19 meeting is cancelled to allow the focus to be on the beginning of the new school year.

XI. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. McDaniel provided these items in the form of a memorandum.

XII. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Ms. Hunt adjourned the meeting at 9:48 p.m.

Ms. Heather Hunt, President
Board of Education

Linda Felling, Secretary to the
Superintendent and Board of Education

Date Approved