

**Denver Public Schools
Presentation to A+ Denver
Finance and Facilities Subcommittee**

October 1, 2007
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Tonight's Presentation

- Report back to the Finance & Facility Subcommittee.
- Review the reform package District staff will present to the Board of Education on October 2.
 - The District based the following recommendations on principles and criteria developed by the A+ Denver Finance & Facilities Subcommittee.
 - The recommendations are directed at significantly improving our ability to deliver the educational promises of the Denver Plan.

Current District Challenges

- **Academic**
 - A history of underperformance on state and federal measures of academic performance.
 - 6 out of 10 students in district were not proficient on reading CSAP last year.
 - 7 out of 10 students in district were not proficient on math and writing CSAP last year.
- **Financial**
 - Over the last five years, we have cut over \$80 million from an approximately \$500 million operating budget.
 - During those five years, our total pension and retiree-related obligations have increased from \$57 million to \$90 million and are set to increase further.
- **Facilities**
 - The District has physical space for approximately 100,000 students. A+ Denver recommends DPS should maintain capacity for 93,000 to 95,000 students.
- **Enrollment**
 - Only 68,000* of the city's school aged children attend a DPS school.
(*Includes traditional, alternative, and charter students located in DPS facilities.)

The Strategy to Meet Our Challenges

1. Continue to pursue the instructional reforms of the Denver Plan.
2. Create innovative and high performing schools, especially secondary schools, by conducting a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to solicit new schools for the 2009 school year and beyond.
3. Expand high quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) /kindergarten programs to improve student achievement, close the learning gap and increase enrollment.
4. Stabilize the District's budget by financing our pension liabilities and selling surplus real estate.
5. Close eight buildings and create five new schools in existing buildings.
6. Ensure that all students affected by school closures have a better educational opportunity and that additional resources go to drive improved academic performance in targeted underperforming schools.

1. Faithfully Implement the Denver Plan Instructional Reforms

- Increase student achievement and support quality of instruction:
 - Close the achievement gap.
 - Prioritize funding to reduce class size.
 - Ensure that all students, including struggling learners, English language learners and advanced students, have access to the support they need to thrive in school, such as:
 - Intervention teachers
 - After school programs
 - Summer school
 - Extension and enrichment activities
 - Continue to develop and implement a strong curriculum in all areas and levels of instruction.
 - Refine benchmark assessments and support School Data Teams.
- Upgrade ProComp to increase pay for teachers consistent with the principles approved by Denver voters.
 - Make more effective use of the \$25 million in tax revenue collected to improve teacher pay.

2. Create High Performing Schools

- Create new schools that better meet the needs and expectations of the community and students, particularly at the secondary level, beginning in the fall of 2009.
- Initiate a Request for Proposal (RFP) process that solicits new schools that complement the Denver Plan.
 - First RFP will be released in spring 2008.
 - Create a single, coherent process to encourage and facilitate the development of new District schools and educational programs, charter schools, and contract schools in a strategic, coordinated fashion.
 - Encourage participation from both current DPS educators and other outside providers.
 - Provide training and support for educators to undertake new school development activities.
 - Focus primarily on middle years and alternative schools in first year of the RFP process.
- Hold all schools accountable to a uniform set of performance expectations as a part of the District's overall performance management strategy.

3. Significantly Increase Early Childhood Education (ECE) Opportunities

- Expansion of full-day ECE and kindergarten is vital to long-term educational performance of students and will generate enrollment for DPS.
- Expand DPS capacity to offer at least 4,000 full-day preschool seats by fall 2008, up from the 4,000 half day slots currently provided.
- The District will aggressively use funds from multiple sources, including the Denver Preschool Fund, to relieve any DPS budget impact due to the expansion.
- Use cost savings and outside funds to increase the number of full-day kindergarten classes offered.

4. Stabilize the District's Finances

- Finance DPS pension obligations.
 - Fund at 100%, instead of the current 88%.
 - Fully funded pension would be very good news for retired and active employees.
 - Enable the district to put at least \$15 million more a year into the classroom.
- Consider putting on the market selected surplus real estate, including vacant land and other properties.
 - Schools closed through this year's recommendations will not be considered for sale at this time.
 - The District will create a formal process to involve stakeholders in recommendations for the disposition of other properties / assets.
- Balance our budget without costly cuts to our classrooms.

5. Close and Reprogram Schools

Summary of Actions:

- Close eight buildings
- Create and invest in five new schools.
- Provide extra resources to schools of reassignment.
- Provide extra academic resources to targeted underperforming schools with the lowest School Accountability Ratings (SAR).

6. Ensure that all Savings Support Affected Students and Improve Student Learning

- Standard per pupil revenue will follow students to their new schools.
- \$3.5 million saved in annual costs from 8 closed buildings.
 - **60%** of the savings from school closures will **follow students** to their new schools (\$2 million). These funds will be available to the school for three years and then the District will revisit the commitment.
 - **20%** of the savings from school closures will be used to support **targeted under-performing schools** (\$700K). An additional \$300K from Mill Levy funds will be used. These funds will be available to the school for two years and then the District will revisit the commitment.
 - **20%** of the savings from school closures will be used to fund the **development of new, high performing schools** and programs throughout the District (\$700 K) and will be aligned with \$300K additional Mill Levy dollars.

**A+ Denver's
Criteria for Closure
Recommendations**

A+ Denver Academic Criteria

- Schools with low “longitudinal growth” -- measured by year-over-year improvement of individual students.
- Schools with low *Choice-In to Choice-Out* ratios.
- Schools rated “unsatisfactory.”
- Schools with declining CSAP scores for more than two years.
- Schools with low retention, stability and attendance rates.

A+ Denver Facility Criteria

- Schools with less than 70% utilization.
- Schools in areas of low facility utilization, with steady or declining enrollment.
- Small, high-performing, well-enrolled schools may be consolidated “upward” with larger, lower-performing, under-enrolled schools.
- Facility condition, flexibility, expansion and related operating costs.

A+ Denver Community and Demographic Criteria

- Under-utilized schools in areas of declining school-age population.
- Schools in high-growth areas should not be considered for closure; if necessary, their programs must be improved.
- Schools with less racially, ethnically or economically diverse student populations that could be improved to attract a more diverse student population.
- Community needs and desires, in each “quadrant” or sector of the city, for resources and specialized programming.

Recommended School Actions

How the District Applied the A+ Denver Criteria

- All recommendations are grounded in A+ Denver criteria.
 - Each recommendation was made within a regional context; and
 - School closures were not recommended where better options and space were not available.
- We decided not to consider closure of schools with:
 - Growing school-aged populations;
 - Upward trends in academic performance and other evidence that they were outperforming other schools in the area;
 - Recent District commitments to transform due to federal, state or DPS accountability initiatives; or
 - Strong academic programs.

School Closure Summary Data

30% or less Proficient/Advanced (2007)	Math	7 of 8 schools
	Reading	6 of 8 schools
	Writing	8 of 8 schools
Decline or flat in percent Proficient/Advanced (2005 to 2007)	Math	4 of 8 schools
	Reading	8 of 8 schools
	Writing	7 of 8 schools
Decline or flat in SAR index (2005 to 2007)		8 of 8 schools
Less than 40% Proficient/Advanced after three years in the school	Math	6 of 8 schools
	Reading	6 of 8 schools
	Writing	8 of 8 schools
Declining or flat enrollment (2004 to 2006)		7 of 8 schools
10% or greater drop in enrollment (2004 to 2006)		4 of 8 schools
Less than 70% student retention (2005 to 2006)		6 of 8 schools
Less than 75% building use		7 of 8 schools

Southeast Region

School	Action
New Place E-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New magnet school with a focus on English Language Learners and a Newcomer Center• School of reassignment for Whiteman and Fallis, as well as the Merrill Newcomer Center
Place Middle School (6-8)	Close existing academic program
Whiteman Elementary School	Close building
Fallis Elementary School (E-5)	Close building
Number of students affected: 772	

New Place E-8

- Create a high-performing New E-8 program with an additional newcomer center, which provides academic programs and supports to recent immigrants and second language learners.
 - Brenda Kazin, who has successfully led schools for English language learners in Denver and elsewhere, will serve as principal for the school. She will assemble a dedicated faculty with expertise in this area, with first selection from the faculties at Fallis, Whiteman, Place, and the Merrill Newcomer Center.
- The New Place E-8 will offer:
 - A three-tier approach for teaching English Language Learning, that allows learners to be released from intense English development classes quickly, based on the student’s readiness to succeed in more traditional academic environments.
 - Teams of teachers collaborating to support students based in part on their English language fluency level as well as any other extraordinary needs due to their prior school experience.
 - Teams will be organized to serve early learners (ECE-K), primary students (grades 1 to 2), intermediate students (grades 3 to 5) and middle years students (grades 6 to 8).
 - Electives and “specials classes,” which include vocal music, instrumental music, art, technology and library services, are designed to support all students, including English Language Learners.
- A setting to demonstrate best practices for teaching English language learners.
- Currently, resources to support our newcomer students are spread across about a dozen schools. This depletes services to all students, including students who are not ELLs.
 - By centralizing resources, we will be able to optimize partnerships with business and human service agencies to better support the school and the student body.
- Provide networked transportation for students in the area so the school is accessible for a very mobile population.

Far Northeast Region

- Far northeast Denver is the fastest growing region in the city.
- The District is planning to build two new schools in the region with the passage of a future bond issue.
- Underperforming schools receiving additional support: Ford Elementary School and Howell E-8

Central Northeast Region

School	Action
Hallett Elementary School (E-5)	Close building
Smith Elementary School (E-5)	New school of reassignment
Stedman Elementary School (E-5)	New school of reassignment
Number of students affected: 150	

Smith Elementary School

- Betty Johnson, in her second year as principal of Smith and her 12th year as an administrator, is leading the turnaround effort at Smith, and has shown results in her first year at the school.
- Smith has shown improvement in all grade levels and every content area in overall School Accountability Rating, and double digit increases in reading and math.
 - 10% increase in students proficient or better in math.
 - 11% increase in students proficient or better in reading.
- Smith offers:
 - Strong core program of reading, writing, and math.
 - All day early childhood and kindergarten classes
 - Transitional Native language instruction for Spanish speaking English language learners
 - Challenge Program for gifted and talented students.
 - A wide range of after school activities including partnerships with the Colorado Symphony and the Colorado Ballet, and the Summer Scholars program
- Smith went through the Colorado Department of Education’s School Improvement process, an effort that brought a team of outside experts into the school to scrutinize its program and make recommendations for improving performance. As the result of that process, Smith was then awarded \$150,000, which has enriched its academic program and helped the school improve its academic achievement.
- With the students from Hallett, Smith’s enrollment will reach as much as 575, a size which will ensure as many as three classes per grade level and a wider selection of “specials” classes, including visual arts, vocal music and physical education.

Stedman Elementary School

- Deb Johnson-Graham, in her first year as principal at Stedman and her 12th year as a DPS administrator, leads a staff committed to growth in student achievement.
- Stedman is a historic neighborhood school with deep roots in the Park Hill community. Stedman has served generations of neighborhood families with a history of strong parent involvement.
- Continuously enrolled students show strong growth on CSAP:
 - 61% of students who are continuously enrolled are proficient or advanced in Math; 56% in reading and writing.
 - 96% of students who scored proficient or better in 2006 and were tested in 2007 remained proficient or better in math; 79% in reading.
- Enrollment has increased 13% since 2004.
- Stedman currently offers:
 - English language acquisition services
 - Intervention teacher to ensure that students receive one-on-one attention.
 - A wide range of after school activities, including a chess club, golf club.
 - After school academic support including DPS Success, Club Z and Education Station.
 - Experiential learning opportunities where students gain exposure to their community.
 - New learning landscape.
- A projected enrollment increase to 350 students will ensure 2 classes per grade level, as well as an increased selection of “specials” classes for students, such as vocal music and technology instruction.

Near Northeast Region

School	Action
Gilpin Montessori E-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program change • Enrollment priority for Gilpin area and NNE Denver • Serving infants – 5 year-olds in 2008-2009
New Cole E-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •New school •School of reassignment for Mitchell and Wyman •Connects academically with Manual High School
Mitchell Elementary School (E-6)	Close building
Wyman Elementary School (E-5)	Close building
Number of students affected: 770	
Underperforming Schools Receiving Additional Support: Barrett and Bruce Randolph	

Gilpin Montessori E-8

- Introduce a Montessori program at Gilpin serving students from infancy to grade 8.
 - The district will conduct a search and hire a Montessori Director to lead the new program. Cathy Gonzales will continue as principal of the school.
 - Gilpin’s Montessori program will grow from infants through age five in 2008 to a fully developed ECE-8 program no later than 2011.
 - The growth plan will develop the Montessori as quickly as possible, while ensuring stability for students currently enrolled at Gilpin and also granting time for current staff members who wish to develop Montessori skills.
 - The Montessori director, in collaboration with the community, will develop the implementation plan for the Montessori program.
 - Introduction of the Montessori program does not displace any current Gilpin students.
 - The Action restores a Montessori program to northeast Denver following the Board’s commitment in January 2008.
 - The community has already begun to develop a wide range of partnerships supporting the school.
 - The instructional program will be inclusive and incorporate English language acquisition-Spanish instruction.
 - The program change will make full use of one of the area’s best facilities.
 - Gilpin is currently under-enrolled by more than 250 students.
 - The Gilpin facility has ample classroom space ideal for running a Montessori program.

New E-8 at Cole

- The District will anchor a high performing feeder pattern for Manual High School by opening an E-8 program at the Cole campus in fall 2008 .
 - Restores a high performing school to a building of historic significance to Denver and its neighborhood.
- The District will conduct a search and hire a principal to lead the new school.
- The program will further be defined and developed by the new principal in collaboration with Manual principal, Rob Stein, and the community.
- Cole will fully implement the core elements of the Denver Plan within an educational program aimed at addressing the unique characteristics and needs of its community.
- With a projected 660 students, Cole will be large enough to support at least two classes per grade level and offer a range of “specials” or electives, such as art, vocal music, instrumental music, foreign language, technology and library instruction.
- The new Cole will give students and parents a comparable middle years alternative to Bruce Randolph 6-12 School (which does not have the capacity to accommodate all area students in grades 6-8).
- The Cole ECE-8 location will be appropriately equipped to facilitate both elementary and middle years students.

Northwest Region

School	Action
New E-8 at Horace Mann	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New school• School of reassignment for Horace Mann 6-8, Remington and Smedley
Horace Mann Middle School (6-8)	Close existing academic program
Smedley Elementary School (E-6)	Close building
Remington Elementary School (E-6)	Close building
Number of students affected: 663	
Underperforming Schools Receiving Additional Support: Cheltenham, Cowell, and North	

The New E-8 at Horace Mann

- Veronica Benavidez, who will serve as principal, brings 30 years of experience as an educator, including 23 years as an instructional leader. She has been an active member of northwest Denver community for 27 years.
- By creating a new school, the principal, faculty and community will be able to establish a renewed culture of high academic expectations in the Horace Mann building.
- The E-8 will fully implement the core elements of the Denver Plan within an educational program aimed at addressing the unique characteristics and needs of this community.
- The school leadership will collaborate with the newly expanded school community to develop an academic design with the following features:
 - looping model grade configuration where each child has the same teacher for K-1, the same teacher for 2-3 and the same teacher for 4-5.
 - middle-level students will change classes generally working with a looping team of three to four teachers, each of whom teaches one or two subjects.
 - science labs, foreign language classes and algebra in the 8th grade.
 - classroom lessons at the middle level will focus more on project-based learning and problem-solving activities than in the elementary grades.

West/Southwest Region

School	Action
Kunsmiller Arts Academy (6-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create New 6-12 Arts Focus Magnet School
Kunsmiller Middle School (6-8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close existing middle school. • Continue academic program for currently enrolled students until current 6th grade advances (spring 2009-2010)
Del Pueblo Elementary School (E-5)	Close building
Number of students affected: 442	
Underperforming Schools Receiving Additional Support: Godsman and Rishel	

Kunsmiller Arts Academy

- Create a new school to open as early as fall 2008 that serves students in grades 6 through 12 with a demonstrated desire and commitment to learning the arts. It will:
 - Motivate and push students to reach their highest academic and artistic potential.
 - Allow students to pursue a specific arts discipline while exploring other arts and academic interests.
 - Incorporate arts in academic coursework and reinforce academics in the arts courses
 - Incorporate an interdisciplinary, experience-based curriculum aligned with state standards.
 - Students selected by interview, not audition. Students selected by desire to excel in the arts and pursue careers in the arts.
 - Link to higher education programs in arts related careers, like graphic design and arts marketing.
- The district, in collaboration with instructional and community leaders, will develop a detailed plan for the school.
- The district will conduct a search and hire a principal to lead the new school.
- Kunsmiller Arts Academy will be a magnet program.

Summary of School Transactions

- **Close eight buildings:**
 - Del Pueblo, Fallis, Hallett, Mitchell, Remington, Smedley, Whiteman, and Wyman
- **Create and invest in five new schools:**
 - Cole ECE-8, Gilpin Montessori, ECE-8 at Horace Mann, Kunsmiller Arts Focus School, and Place ECE-8 Bridge School
- **Provide extra resources to schools of reassignment:**
 - Greenlee, Smith, and Stedman
- **Provide extra academic resources to targeted underperforming schools with the lowest School Accountability Ratings:**
 - Barrett, Bruce Randolph, Cheltenham, Cowell, Ford, Howell, Gilpin, Godsman, North, and Rishel

Districtwide Issues

How Will These Reforms Affect Faculty and Staff?

- The District expects these reforms and the savings they will create to result in additional teaching positions next year.
- The District will meet or exceed the requirements of applicable negotiated agreements.
- Teachers will be given an opportunity for an early interview at the school where their students are reassigned and two additional interviews in the staffing cycle.
- The District expects ample opportunities for reassignment for office staff and other employees.
- The District is developing a retention bonus plan for teachers and staff impacted by closures.

How Will the District Support Communities Affected by School Closures?

- DPS has employed four Choice Liaisons who will work directly with families of students affected by closure to advise them of their options and to assist with the enrollment process.
- Schools of reassignment will hold initial meetings to welcome new parents and students in the second and third weeks of October.
 - The District anticipates principals continuing a dialogue with parents throughout the school year.
- Parents and students will be invited to attend open houses at schools of reassignment to welcome them into the school community.
 - We anticipate that the work of the Denver Plan and Outreach Subcommittees of A+ Denver will play a critical role in ensuring successful transitions for affected students and families.
- The District will collaborate with school and community leaders to maintain existing school partnerships and realign them with the new and reprogrammed schools.

How Will We Assist Families Making Choices?

- **Current District Policy:**
 - Students are guaranteed a seat in their school of assignment and transportation according to current policy (K-5th – live 1 mile from the school; 6-8th – live 2.5 miles from the school).
 - The “Choice” process allows parents to choose any DPS school if space is available.
- **Choice Priority for Students Impacted by Closure:**
 - **Students who attend their school of assignment and live in the boundary of closing school** will be reassigned to a school nearby and transportation will be provided under current guidelines. If students choose not to attend their newly assigned school, they will have a priority in the choice application process, but transportation will not be provided.
 - These students will have priority after students who live in the geographic boundary of a school and the siblings of students who are currently enrolled in the school.
 - **Students who are currently on choice at a school that is closing** will have priority in the choice application process to attend the school(s) where other students from that school are reassigned. Transportation will not be provided.
 - **5th grade students who would be assigned to a school that is closing** will be reassigned to the new area school and transportation will be provided under current guidelines (6-8 – live 2.5 miles from the school).

What Will Happen to the Eight Closed Buildings?

- The Board of Education will establish a process in collaboration with the affected communities and the City to consider the long term re-use, lease or sale of buildings.
- As a good neighbor, the District will maintain the grounds of all schools.
- Playing fields will be available for community use.

Summary of District's Strategies

1. Continue to pursue the instructional reforms of the Denver Plan.
2. Create innovative and high performing schools, especially secondary schools, by conducting a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to solicit new schools for the 2009 school year and beyond.
3. Expand high quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) /kindergarten programs to improve student achievement, close the learning gap and increase enrollment.
4. Stabilize the District's budget by financing our pension liabilities and selling surplus real estate.
5. Close eight buildings and create five new schools in existing buildings.
6. Ensure that all students affected by school closures have a better educational opportunity and that additional resources go to drive improved academic performance in targeted underperforming schools.

What Are the Next Steps?

- A+ Denver's Finance and Facility subcommittee will review the District's application of its criteria.
- The District will hold public hearings to discuss the recommendations.
- The Board of Education will vote on the recommendations on Monday, November 19.

CALENDAR

PRESENTATIONS TO DPS BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Tuesday, October 2nd, 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- Thursday, October 4th, 4:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
First Floor Board Room, 900 Grant St.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY MEETINGS : MEETINGS FOR FAMILIES AFFECTED BY SCHOOL CLOSURES

- Wednesday, October 3rd and Thursday, October 4th
Specific dates, times and locations will be available on October 1st at www.dpsk12.org

MEETINGS FOR FAMILIES AFFECTED BY SCHOOL CLOSURES AT THEIR NEW ASSIGNMENT SCHOOLS

- October 8th – October 17th
Specific dates, times, and locations will be available on October 1st at www.dpsk12.org

DPS BOARD OF EDUCATION PUBLIC HEARINGS

- Thursday, October 18th 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
- Thursday, November 15th 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
First Floor Board Room, 900 Grant St.