



Board News

Denver Public Schools Board of Education
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HUBs Council Backs Bond Package, Mill Levy Proposal

The Denver Public Schools Historically Underutilized Businesses Council (HUBs) formally pledged its support for the proposed November 2003 General Obligation Bond and Mill Levy ballot initiatives during the Board meeting this week.

The Council is comprised of representatives from the African American Construction Council, Asian Chamber of Commerce, Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce, Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce, Denver Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Contractors of Colorado, Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber of Commerce and Women Construction Owners and Executives.

The HUBs Council was formed by the district in 1987 with representatives from the minority and women business communities. The aim was to affect the means necessary for increased purchasing transactions with the school district.

"We continue to be pleased with the progress of the HUBs program – we've addressed some very controversial issues, reached compromises, made adjustments and moved forward," said Manny Gonzales, President of the Hispanic Contractors of Colorado. "Approval of the proposed bond is critical if DPS is expected to produce the quality expected by parents,

educators, businesses and politicians."

Mike Langley, Executive Director, Facility Management, acknowledged that with the support of the Council, the minority and women business communities have been instrumental in assisting Denver Public Schools in strengthening its leadership position in developing, implementing and pursuing an aggressive policy that ensures quality, cost-effective projects while offering the maximum opportunity for diverse participation.

Langley also stated that "the inclusion and support of the MBE/WBE community and contractors in the 1998 General Obligation Bond program was a major factor in the success of the program which provided an additional new elementary school within the original funding."

The additional new school is the Lena Lovato Archuleta Elementary school, which serves 490 students in far northeast Denver. The school is 59,675 square feet and sits on 10.3 acres; the project cost was \$9,379,011. This tenth school was built within the \$305 million bond voters approved in 1998. At the time, the bond was scheduled to result in the completion of nine new schools (in addition to many other renovation and expansion projects). ■

District SIAC Supports Four Charter Schools; Raises Issues

The district's School Improvement and Accountability Council this week made formal recommendations on five pending charter school applications to the Board of Education.

The five applications were described in more detail in the Sept. 19 edition of Board News. Following is a recap of the conclusions by district SIAC:

American School Charter

Strengths: The school targets an underserved student population that is in "substantial need" of more educational opportunities. The school will serve students speaking a diverse range of languages using English immersion.

Concerns: Operating both a charter school for teenagers and a tuition-based adult education program at the same location presents administrative and logistical problems. The school is focused on an English instruction without fully defining academic program.

Recommendation: A majority of district SIAC supports the charter for its "ex-

tremely compelling" goal of working with underserved students but also urges no charter be granted if American School intends to offer services to adults over 21.

Leaders High School

Strengths: The "Leaders Challenge Program" on which the school is based has demonstrated an ability to teach leadership skills and teamwork, and the school appears to propose a rigorous academic curriculum.

Concerns: Does the applicant have the ability to operate Leaders High School and operate "Leaders Challenge Program" at its existing sites? Can leadership training and a full academic curriculum be accomplished?

Recommendation: "Leadership Challenge Program" would provide a valuable extracurricular activity that should be expanded to district high schools but is not the basis of operation of a full school.

Highline Academy

Strengths: The school has chosen a well-

\$1 Admission For DPS Sporting Events October 16, 17 & 18

Admission to all athletic events within Denver Public Schools will be dropped to just \$1 for Oct. 16, 17 and 18, Superintendent Jerry Wartgow announced this week.

The slate of activities during the Thursday – Saturday stretch includes football at All-City Stadium, the city gymnastic meet at South High School on Saturday, Oct. 18, and volleyball games at many high schools.

"This is a wonderful opportunity," said Board of Education member Sue Edwards. "For one dollar, you can't beat it. We'd love to see you there. One buck, what a deal." ■

New Laws Prompt Changes in Administering Medicine to Students

The Board of Education on Thursday considered staff recommendations to Policy JLCD – Administering Medicine to Students – in accordance with new state laws. The Board will take action on the changes at an upcoming meeting.

One of the revisions puts forward that students in Early Childhood Education through fifth-grade may not self administer medications.

Asthmatic students in sixth- through twelfth-grade would be allowed to carry their inhalers if the school has appropriate documented parent permission.

The third policy change would prohibit school staff from recommending or requiring that a student be prescribed psychotropic medication to attend school. Staff should discuss behavioral concerns with parents/guardians and may suggest that consultation with a health care provider might be beneficial to the student; however, staff must obtain prior written permission to implement behavioral testing and disclose results of such testing. ■

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Board To Settle On Parent Involvement Policy This Month

The Board of Education this week considered an updated draft of the parent involvement policy proposed recently by taskforce members who have been working on the concept since June. The Board will take action on the policy at the Oct. 16 meeting.

The federal No Child Left Behind act calls for school districts to develop jointly with parents a written parent involvement policy.

"I believe this is an excellent policy that was developed in the true intent of the law," said Superintendent Jerry Wartgow. "This is all about our goals of setting high expectations, improving the performance of all students and closing achievement gaps. It would be impossible for us to do that without meaningful parent involvement."

The proposed policy outlines a course of action for central administration to work with parents and guardians to actively support schools; for principals, teachers and all school staff to work in collaboration with parents and guardians; and for parents and guardians to be involved in their children's learning.

Taskforce member Cathy Roper said "we realize the new policy requires the district to make some cultural shifts, but we know it's the right thing for children."

Once the policy is adopted, the next step would be to establish a districtwide parent advisory council that would host stakeholder summits in each quadrant and recommend strategies for implementing the policy.

The proposed policy is online at <http://www.dpsk12.org/nclb>.

Board Notes

In other action this week, the Board approved:

- Agreements with the Denver Federation for Paraprofessionals and the Amalgamated Transit Union.
- A conservation easement to Boulder County over the Balarat Outdoor Education Center property.

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established curriculum that has repeatedly proven to result in high student achievement. The school has strong parental and community support and the school plans to start in an area of Denver (east-central Denver) where there are presently no other charter schools.

Concerns: Very few were raised although the committee of district SIAC wondered about the school's ability to organize a diverse student population and whether it would impact enrollments in schools nearby that are already underutilized.

Recommendation: District SIAC "strongly recommends" that the application be granted.

Southwest Early College

Strengths: The proposed school would present a choice for students in southwest Denver that would likely result in families choosing a DPS secondary school instead of attending nearby schools in adjacent school districts. Also, the school would provide a program of secondary and college courses with a liberal arts focus that would complement vocational programs elsewhere.

Concerns: The school may only consist of students presently attending Grant Ranch School and the applicant should be required to reach out to middle schools across southwest Denver. There should be some assurance that the college level courses will be of high quality and academically rigorous.

Recommendation: District SIAC recommends granting the charter school "on the assumption that the applicant would present and implement an outreach program throughout DPS with special emphasis on all of the middle schools in southwest Denver."

Green Valley Ranch/Montbello Edison Charter School

Strengths: The applicant has chosen an operational model that is familiar to DPS and that has successfully operated in the district for several years. Edison Schools have an established curriculum and a method for delivering instruction that generally works well even in schools that have high levels of at-risk students.

Concerns: The financial uncertainty of Edison Schools "gives us pause in enthusiastically supporting" the proposal. A request to raise enrollment to 806 students in the event that the charter receives only 95 percent of per-pupil operating revenue may indicate that the project isn't financially viable. The major concern raised by district SIAC, however, involved the applicants' proposal to be housed in the new K-8 school in Green Valley Ranch. Discussion of district SIAC's concerns on this issue covered nearly two pages.

Recommendation: District SIAC supports the school being granted a charter but not in the new DPS facility presently under construction in the area. ■

Nonpublic Schools Sign Up For Pilot Program

The Board of Education accepted three of the first four applications DPS received from nonpublic schools to participate in the 2004-2005 Colorado Opportunity Contract Pilot Program. By this week's deadline, 83 nonpublic schools had submitted applications. Within the month, the Board expects to take action on the remaining applications and notify those schools of its decision by Nov. 1.

Nonpublic schools that apply to DPS may be approved if they meet certain criteria related to health, safety and nondiscrimination. A list of participating nonpublic schools will be posted on the district's web site, www.dpsk12.org, by Nov. 1. Watch for that list under "updates."

Next Steps

- **December 1** – DPS notifies qualifying families of pilot program and participating nonpublic schools.
- **January 1** – Eligible families apply to DPS to participate in pilot.
- **February 15** – DPS notifies applying families whether child meets criteria.
- **March 1** – DPS selects participating families.
- **April 1 to May 31** – Families submit applications to participating nonpublic schools. Schools must confirm or deny acceptance.
- **September 15** – Eligible child must be enrolled in participating nonpublic school