

Board News



Denver Public Schools Board of Education
board.dpsk12.org

“Landmark Resolution” Prioritizes English Language Acquisition Efforts

The Board of Education this week affirmed its commitment to serve English Language Learners and promote equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of language barriers.

“This resolution is another very important landmark in the history of DPS,” said Board member Elaine Gantz Berman. “This is the first time the Board of Education is underscoring a commitment we’re already carrying out by court order.”

The resolution continues efforts to comply with state and federal law regarding the education of student whose language impedes equal access to instructional programs.

With the resolution, the Board of Education emphasized its commitment to the district’s significant number of English Language Learners to provide and maintain educational programs and services appropriate to overcome language barriers that impede participation in the instructional program. The intent is that the district provide an educational program designed and implemented to enable all students to become sufficiently proficient in reading, writing and speaking English so

that they may meaningfully participate in the district’s mainstream English language instructional program.

The resolution further pledges that DPS take necessary steps to remove language barriers that impede participation in programs and services, including allocating sufficient human and material resources to achieve that aim. To that end, the district shall continue to actively recruit instructional staff qualified to serve the needs of students participating in the program and provide training as needed to ensure that teachers have the skills necessary to implement the program.

DPS will monitor and review the program and make modifications from time to time to ensure continuing compliance with this resolution. ■

Did You Know?

There are 14,612 English Language Learners enrolled in DPS. Of those, 13,566 students speak Spanish. The remaining 1,046 students speak more than 88 different languages.

“High,” “Excellent” Schools Applauded

Following recognition earlier this month of Denver schools whose ranking jumped into a higher category on the recent State Accountability Reports, the Board of Education this week recognized principals from schools ranked “high” and “excellent.”

“While we have only the principals here tonight, we’re really recognizing all the individual staff and classroom teachers who contributed to these results,” said Superintendent Jerry Wartgow.

From the southwest quadrant, the Board applauded Tish Castro, principal of Traylor Academy, which was rated “high” by the state.

From southeast Denver, recognition went to principals of the following “high” elementary schools: Katherine Johnson of University Park; Jan Belt of Steele; Janet Box of Asbury; Charles Raisch of Steck; and Lynne Scates of Cory. Recognition of “excellent” elementary schools went to: Greta Martinez of Slavens; Anita Gallegos-Theriot of Southmoor; and Dennis Thompson of Bromwell. Middle school principals Reina Gutierrez of Hamilton, Patti Bipus of Denver School of the Arts, and Greta Martinez of Slavens were recognized for a “high” rating, and Denver School of the Arts high school was rated “excellent.”

From the northeast area, the Board celebrated Diana Howard of Crofton Elementary School for an “excellent” rating.

2004-2005 School Year Calendars Set

The Board of Education has approved the 2004-2005 calendars for both the traditional and continuous year schedules.

The first semester for schools on the traditional calendar begins on Monday, August 16, 2004. The last day of school is a half-day for students on Friday, May 27, 2005. The traditional calendar includes a new two-day fall mini-break Oct. 18-19.

For continuous year schools, the first semester begins on Monday, July 26, 2004. The last day of school is a half-day for students on Friday, June 10, 2005. The continuous year calendar is similar to this year’s schedule. The calendars are accessible online at www.dpsk12.org/calendars.

Mill Levy Initiatives Rolling

The six-part, \$20 million mill levy initiatives approved by voters in November are starting to roll out. Who’s on the committees? Board member Elaine Gantz Berman made a special point at this week’s meeting to emphasize that all who have expressed interest in mill levy committee work will be involved in discussions. Here’s a recap:

Art and Music Teachers - \$6.5 Million

First organizational meeting is Tuesday, Jan. 13 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at West High School, 951 Elati St. About 75 community members have expressed interest and will all be included on the committee. This committee is being led by Rosanne Fulton, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

Expanding Early Childhood Education, Kindergarten - \$3.5 Million

A group of about 70 has already met twice and plans a third meeting in January in order to make recommendations in time to communicate a plan for the 2004-2005 school year. Cheryl Caldwell, Director of Early Education, is heading this group.

Revitalizing Neighborhood Schools - \$2.5 Million

A January meeting is being scheduled to start this committee’s analysis, to be headed by Stephen Kaplan, who chaired the Citizens Committee on Facility Needs, and Maria Guajardo Lucero, the mayor’s liaison to education issues. The first step is to identify the first wave of schools to receive support.

Textbooks - \$3.5 Million

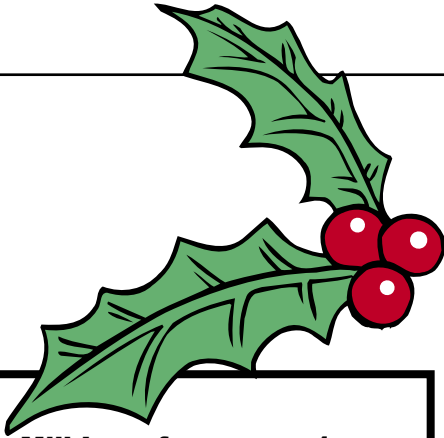
A staff team of principals and teachers will start meeting in January to reconsider the textbook adoption cycle with an eye toward matching those changes to potential curriculum reforms.

Secondary Reform - \$2 Million

Superintendent Jerry Wartgow told the Board this week that a Blue Ribbon Commission of citizens would “look at all options in secondary reform – all of the options that exist and hopefully some that don’t exist.” More information will be coming in January.



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Support For Repairs And
Maintenance - \$2 Million**

The process, to be guided by Andre Pettigrew, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services, is to be announced.

**Oct. 1 Eligibility
Date Set**

The Board of Education this week moved to Oct. 1 the eligibility date for incoming youngsters. The change is effective for the 2004-2005 school year.

The eligibility date is used to determine whether a child is eligible for Early Childhood Education (four years old), kindergarten (five), or first grade (six).

Early entrance will also be considered for a few exceptional children for whom beginning school early may be an appropriate educational option and for other children who have already begun or completed a grade level outside the district or state.

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**Joint Advisory Council To Find Common
Goals Among Individual Committees**

Under the latest policy approved yesterday by the Board of Education, a new Joint Advisory Council will serve as a forum for DPS councils and committees to identify common topics on which they can collaborate.

Individual advisory councils will continue to exist, and a representative from each will serve on the Joint Advisory Council to provide to the Board an update of their constituency's activities and objectives.

Pam Bisceglia of the Student Services department reported that over the years, councils have found they have a number of common goals that advocate for systemic change to serve the interests of the many DPS demographics.

"This policy sanctions the individual councils and the important work they do,"

she said. "At the same time, it creates the opportunity for them to work together on common goals."

Existing councils and committees required by state or federal law or endorsed by the Denver Board of Education include the American Indian Education Advisory Council; Arts Education Advisory Council; Asian Education Advisory Council; Black Education Advisory Council; Denver Parent, Teacher, Student Association; District School Improvement and Accountability Council; English Language Acquisition Education Advisory Council; Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual or Transgender Advisory Council; Gifted and Talented Advisory Council; Hispanic Education Advisory Council; Parent Council; and Special Education Advisory Council. ■

**Community Meetings Jan. 6 and 7
For Green Valley K-8 Charter School's
Proposed Assignment Plan**

District staff will host two community meetings in early January to gain feedback about the proposed pupil assignment plan for the new Green Valley K-8 Charter School.

The proposal calls for elementary school students residing east of Pena Boulevard be given first priority to attend the new charter.

Elementary school students residing west of Pena Boulevard would be given second priority.

Middle school students in all of Montbello and Green Valley Ranch will have first priority for grades six – eight.

The first public meeting will be held Tuesday, Jan. 6 at Montbello High School, 5000 Crown Blvd. The second meeting will be held Wednesday, Jan. 7 at Green Valley Elementary School, 4100 Jericho St. Both meetings begin at 6:30 p.m.

The new school is being built by the district but will be run and managed by Edison Schools as a charter school. The new facility will have the capacity to serve 750 students in kindergarten through eighth-grade.

The proposed assignment plan will be formally considered at the Jan. 22 Board of Education meeting. ■

Board Notes

In other action this week, the Board of Education:

- Approved a draft merger agreement between DPS Retirement System and the Public Employees' Retirement Association. "A big step forward," noted Board of Education President Les Woodward. This step leads to a merger date of Jan. 1, 2005.
- Welcomed Dr. Edward Freeman, newly appointed Executive Director of the Department of Technology Services.
- Approved architect selections for the new Montbello K-8 School (H+L Architecture); new Green Valley Ranch K-8 School (M+O+A); new Stapleton Bus Terminal Project (OZ Architecture); and CEC Middle College of Denver addition (Larson Architects).
- Approved a change in Policy JBBA – Harassment Based on Race or Color, National Origin, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Disability or Religion – to be consistent with other existing district policies.