



# Board News

Denver Public Schools Board of Education  
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## “Great Success Story” On School Accountability Reports

In a room buzzing with enthusiasm, hugs and standing ovations, Superintendent Jerry Wartgow led a round of celebration and congratulations at Thursday’s Board meeting following this week’s release of the state School Accountability Reports.

“Clearly Denver Public Schools once again distinguished itself with the number of schools that have improved,” said Superintendent Wartgow. “These are very positive results that reflect the hard work of students, parents, individual classroom teachers, principals, district administrators and community members who are dedicated to the work of improving student achievement,” he said. “This is a great success story.”

The results of the School Accountability Reports, Wartgow added, reaffirm that the district’s ongoing efforts to improve student achievement are headed in the right direction.

Superintendent Wartgow said he wished he could have invited every principal in the district to the meeting this week “because everybody has done a great job...thank you for your enthusiasm and for everything you are doing.”

John Leslie, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, introduced Darryl Keeton and Steve Parks, the principal and assistant principal of the Night High School, for improving the school’s ranking. Leslie noted the school has increased enrollment and worked hard on district content standards.

Northwest Area Superintendent Joe Sandoval introduced eight elementary principals for their school’s progress – Tom Archuleta (Valdez); Inez Catbagan (Eggleton); Myrella Goff (Barnum); Norma Giron (Fairview); Michael Gaither (Cowell); and Frank Roti (Beach Court).

Southwest Area Superintendent Melanie Haas introduced principal Frank Gonzales

and assistant principal Diana Talamus from Castro Elementary School; Patricia Castro from Traylor Fundamental Academy; and Jody Cohn from Munroe Elementary School. “There is tremendous work that goes on” throughout southwest Denver, said Haas.

Southeast Area Superintendent Irene Jordan Martinez praised the “very professional administrators” throughout the quadrant. She and Assistant Area Superintendent Beth Biggs introduced elementary school principals Michael DeGuire (McMeen); Gary Funk (Ellis); Ron Oakes (Whiteman); Khoa Nguyen (Rosedale); Jan Belt (Steele); Gwen Henderson-Gethers (Carson); Janet Box (Asbury); and middle school principals Kristin Waters (Morey) and Ann Greenfield (Merrill). Gail Paige-Archambeau, who was principal last year at Steele Elementary School and now works at Centennial Elementary School in northwest Denver, was also thanked.

Carla Santorno, Northeast Area Superintendent, said principals in the quadrant have “never whined or hung their heads” about the challenges. As a result, she added, the recent success is “very satisfying.”

She introduced elementary school principals Janice Spearman (Columbine); Kathy Salaz (Gilpin); Cathy Gonzales (Greenwood); Mary Sours (Swansea); Robert Woodson (Maxwell); Joyce Simmons (formerly of Smith, now at John Amesse); and Barbara Cooper (Hallett). Also introduced was Smith assistant principal Pearl Richards.

Because students at Swansea are always “working like crazy,” Santorno said she told principal Sours earlier that “if you don’t make it this year there is something wrong with the universe.”

Superintendent Wartgow also applauded the work of all the Area Superintendents

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### Highlights of School Accountability Reports:

- Of 21 schools rated “unsatisfactory” by the state two years ago, only one remains in the unsatisfactory category.
- Nineteen schools improved their rankings from one level to the next.
- Seven “unsatisfactory” elementary schools improved to “low” – Fairview, Gilpin, Hallett, Smedley, Smith and Swansea elementary schools and Pioneer Charter School.
- Five “low” elementary schools improved to “average” – Carson, Ellis, McMeen and Maxwell elementary schools and Challenges, Choices and Images Charter School.
- Three “average” elementary schools improved to “high” – Asbury and Steele elementary schools and Traylor Fundamental Academy.
- Two “low” middle schools improved to “average” – Merrill and Morey middle schools. Odyssey Charter School’s middle school grades (the school is K-8) climbed from “average” to “high.”
- DPS Night High School improved from “unsatisfactory” to “low.”
- Twenty-eight schools demonstrated “significant improvement,” including 23 elementary schools, three middle schools and two alternative high schools.
- The district is home to six elementary schools rated “high” (Asbury, Cory, Steck, Steele, Traylor and University Park) and four middle schools rated “high” (Denver School of the Arts, Hamilton Middle School, Odyssey Charter and Slavens School).
- The district is home to four elementary schools rated “excellent” (Bromwell, Crofton, Slavens and Southmoor) and one high school rated “excellent” (Denver School of the Arts).

## Individual Oversight Committees For Each Mill Levy Initiative; Bond Committee, Too

Superintendent Jerry Wartgow said this week oversight committees comprised of district staff, parents and community members would oversee each of the six mill levy initiatives approved by voters in November.

As part of its agenda this week, the Board of Education also formally established the Citizens Committee on Bond Expenditures and gave it a four-step charge.

The \$310 million bond and \$20 million

mill levy proposals were overwhelming supported by voters.

The bond will lead to construction of two new K-8 schools in far northeast Denver and expansion of two schools in southwest Denver along with hundreds of other improvement projects

The mill levy will provide \$6.5 million for art and music teachers in elementary schools; \$2.5 million to revitalize neighborhood schools; \$2 million to increase sup-

port for capital investments; \$3.5 million for new textbooks; \$2 million to support middle and high school reforms; and \$3.5 million to expand all-day kindergarten and early childhood education opportunities.

Superintendent Wartgow said the district would organize a special commission for the secondary school reform component. Improvements at the secondary level, he said, form the “toughest test” for cit-

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ies looking to make progress with student achievement. He promised a thorough conversation on the topic with national experts feeding ideas to a commission of thoughtful community leaders. Recommendations would be made sometime within the next year, he said, with an eye toward implementation for 2005-2006.

#### Citizens Committee on Facility Needs Thanked

The Board of Education also formally thanked the 40 members of the Citizens Committee on Facility Needs, which studied and developed the bond package and mill levy ideas. Board member Elaine Gantz Berman praised CCFN chairman Steve Kaplan for his "remarkable" leadership. Noting the positive results from the School Accountability Reports, Kaplan thanked district staff and the Board for all the progress. "What a great night – all the enthusiasm and excitement and success," he said.

Board member Berman also thanked campaign finance chairman Bruce Benson for his hard work and leadership.

"We had a real strong product to sell (to the voters)," said Benson. "I'm proud to be part of this whole operation." ■

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and the district's instructional leadership team, including Chief Academic Officer Sally Mentor Hay.

"We have a very good thing going and the bar has been raised all over the place," said Superintendent Wartgow. "The top end is moving up and the bottom end is moving up and the gap is closing ... we have got to stay the course and we are looking forward to another great year." ■

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## Board Notes

In other action this week, the Board of Education:

- Approved the appointment of William Ewing as interim principal at Archuleta Elementary School. Ewing was the assistant principal at Bruce Randolph Middle School.
- Thanked Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC) for the success with its 8th annual Dictionary Drive, which delivers a dictionary and thesaurus to every third grader in the district. Since the campaign's inception, the INC's point person on the drive has been Cathee Fisher, who was lauded by Board member Elaine Gantz Berman as "the kind of volunteer we wish could duplicate or triplicate."
- Recognized the six-year-old Horizons summer enrichment program at Colorado Academy. Horizons provides six weeks of learning, recreation, art and other experiences for students at Knapp Elementary School and Kepner Middle School.
- Approved a motion that the library at Cory Elementary School formally be recognized as the Sue Edwards library to honor Edwards' recent eight years of service as a member of the Denver Board of Education.
- Approved a motion that the theater at Denver School of the Arts formally be recognized as the Kay Schomp Theater.
- Approved a draft intergovernmental agreement with the City and County of Denver to secure School Resource Officers (SROs) at all DPS high schools and Lake Middle School.
- Approved an easement to Denver Water at All City Stadium. In exchange for the payment to DPS of \$156,800, this item grants an easement over a very low-use area, allowing Denver Water to construct and operate a pump station and a non-potable underground water pipeline that will connect to the city's main pipeline providing irrigation water for Washington Park, City Park and other properties.
- Certified the 2003 mill levies for the general funded and bond redemption fund (required by state statute to be certified to the City and County of Denver by Dec. 15). Considered a boundary change for Cole and Bruce Randolph middle schools to assign a small area into Randolph's attendance area. The area currently is assigned to Cole Middle School but geographically is closer to Randolph. The change would mean that two students would be able to attend a middle school closer to their residences than the middle school to which they currently are assigned. The Board will take action on this item in January.

## 2004-2005 Magnet School/Highly Gifted Program Enrollment Deadlines Soon

Now is the time to begin thinking about enrolling students for the 2004-2005 school year. The deadline to submit applications for all middle and high school magnets is Friday, Dec. 12. The deadline for elementary magnet school applications is Friday, Jan. 30.

Magnet schools may emphasize a particular style of learning or serve students with a common area of interest. Some magnets are located within a school. Others are the school. Transportation is generally provided to designated sites; eligibility for transportation is subject to general district guidelines. Each magnet school manages its own application process and deadlines. Families should ask for application information from the magnet school that interests them.

The district also provides a magnet program for first- through eighth-grade students with extraordinary academic needs, abilities and potential. Elementary and middle school highly gifted nomination forms for 2004-2005 are due Friday, Dec. 12 and are available in schools, online at <http://gt.dpsk12.org> or from the Gifted and Talented Education Department at 303-405-8272.

Students who qualify as "high achieving students" through the same nomination process may attend the Highly Gifted Program Magnet on a space-available basis at Carson, Crofton, Gust or McGlone elementary schools and Morey Middle School. ■

**For more information, contact the Choice Hotline at 303-405-6696**