



Board News

Denver Public Schools Board of Education
board.dpsk12.org

Co-Chairs Named To Lead Secondary Reform Commission

Superintendent Jerry Wartgow this week announced the names of two co-chairs to lead the Secondary Reform Commission.

One co-chair is a familiar face – Board member Lucia Guzman. The other co-chair is Dorothy Horrell, currently executive director of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation. Horrell also is former president of the Red Rocks Community College and former president of the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System.

Guzman and Horrell will head “an extremely important commission with a complicated task,” said Superintendent Wartgow. He said the commission will be encouraged to study a “whole range of options to address the totally unacceptable graduation rates and dropout rates.”

Calling it a “great privilege” to serve on the commission, Board member Guzman firmly echoed that theme.

“For too long the graduation rate of our students has been extremely low and unacceptable and for too long the dropout rate

has been enormously high and unacceptable,” she said. “The establishment of this commission will give us a very formal, firm opportunity to build for the district a major plan to increase the graduation rate to 95 percent by 2010. We’re serious about it and I’m excited about it.”

The commission will make recommendations to the Board for use of the mill levy funds approved in November 2003 to reform middle and high schools.

Guzman said she expects to have commission members named by the end of April with a first meeting being planned for May.

Superintendent Wartgow urged community members and all district staff to recommend candidates for the commission. (Suggestions can be sent to Mark_Stevens@dpsk12.org or by calling 303-764-3414.)

“We’ve got a long way to go,” said Board President Les Woodward, “but we look to attack it with vigor.” ■

School Nutrition And Physical Activity Commission Convenes

The Commission on School Nutrition and Physical Activity, approved in January by the Board of Education, started its work in March and plans to report its findings to the Board in December 2004.

The commission’s charge is to propose recommendations for: 1) nutritional standards and their implementation for all food and beverages in DPS schools and facilities; 2) nutrition education for DPS students; and 3) appropriate outcome measurements. The commission also is charged with reviewing and revising as necessary DPS standards and implementation for physical education and determining the feasibility of its own recommendations as they pertain to costs, funding and sustainability.

The commission is co-chaired by Board member Elaine Gantz Berman and Dr. Reginald “Reggie” Washington, a prominent pediatric cardiologist from Colorado who, among many other regional and national appointments, is co-chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics National Task Force on Obesity.

Members of the commission are:

- Tami Anderson, Western Dairy Council, School Marketing Director
- Angela Baier, Marketing Director, City

and County of Denver, Mayor’s Office of Economic Development.

- Marilyn Day, Dietitian, Shape Down Program, Children’s Hospital
- Dr. Evie Dennis, Past Vice President of the US Olympic Committee and former DPS Superintendent, 1990-1994
- Andrea Dunn, Cooper Institute, VP Behavioral Science Research Group
- Happy Haynes, former Denver City Council member and Mayor’s liaison to City Council
- James O. Hill, Ph.D., Director, Center for Human Nutrition and Professor of Pediatrics and Nutrition, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center (UCHSC)
- David W. Kaplan, M.D., M.P.H., Professor Of Pediatrics, Head, Adolescent Medicine, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Children’s Hospital
- Dr. Nancy Krebs, MD, MS, Associate Professor, Head, Section of Nutrition, Department of Pediatrics, (UCHSC)/ Children’s Hospital
- Jillian Jacobellis, Ph.D., MS, Director, Prevention Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)

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Twelve Schools Start AVID Programs Next Year

The Board of Education yesterday accepted a staff recommendation to start AVID programs next year at 12 schools – Baker, Gove, Grant, Horace Mann, Martin Luther King, Jr. Merrill, Rishel and Smiley middle schools; Centennial K-8 School; and John F. Kennedy, Montbello and North high schools.

Ten schools already are implementing AVID – Advancement Via Individual Determination, a rigorous academic program that targets students who read at or near grade level and are not participating in accelerated and/or advanced placement (AP) courses. Students attend an AVID elective during the regular school day and small group tutorials two to three days per week.

The program has proven to be effective in encouraging students to attend college and providing them with the academic skills needed for success.

The district will pay all AVID program costs except for those associated with tutors. Total costs for 2004-2005 are estimated to be about \$545,000 (of which \$219,000 would be the responsibility of participating schools). Part of the \$2 million designated by 2003 mill levy funds for improving graduation rates would be used as a funding source.

East High School Boys’ Basketball Team Lauded

The Board this week recognized the East High School boys’ basketball team for outstanding performance in athletics and sportsmanship. The Angels defeated the ThunderRidge Grizzlies on Saturday, March 13 to win the Class 5A state championship.

Guard Sean Ogirri led the team with 32 points and was named the Rocky Mountain News/News 4 “Mr. Basketball” for 2004.

Behind coach Rudy Carey, the Angels completed their regular season and the playoffs without losing a game (24-0).

East High School Athletic Director Wes Ashley lauded the group of young men as one of the best he’s worked with in his 17 years at East and Manual high schools.

“Not only are they great athletes,” he said, “they’re good students and good people to be around.”



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Schools And Offices Closed For Spring Break

All schools will be closed April 5–9 during spring break. There will be no school for students on Monday, April 12. Students attending both traditional and continuous year schools will return to classes on Tuesday, April 13.

District administrative offices will be open on Monday and Tuesday, April 5–6 and closed the rest of the week. Offices will reopen on Monday, April 12.

2003-2004 Year End

The school year ends with a half day for students on Wednesday, May 26 for schools on the traditional calendar.

The school year ends on Thursday, June 10 with a half day for students in continuous year schools: Amesse, Barrett, Bryant-Webster, Cheltenham, Colfax, Columbian, Del Pueblo, Eagleton, Fairmont, Ford, Harrington, Johnson, Maxwell, McGlone, Mitchell, Smedley, Smith, Valdez and Wyman elementary schools.

2004-2005 School Year

The traditional and continuous year calendars for next year align as many vacation, parent conference and teacher professional development days as possible. Both allow for one parent conference day per semester and 173.5 total days of school. They also include for the first time a Cesar Chavez recognition on Monday, March 28, 2005, which falls during spring break. The Board of Education requested that DPS add the recognition without creating a new vacation day.

The first semester for schools on the traditional calendar begins on Monday, August 16, 2004. The traditional calendar includes a new two-day fall mini-break October 18-19 and repeats the three-day break during Thanksgiving in November and two-week winter break in December.

For continuous year schools, the first semester begins on Monday, July 26, 2004. The calendars are accessible online at www.dpsk12.org/calendars.

Omar Blair: "Pioneering Spirit"

Former Board of Education President Omar Blair, the first African-American to serve in that position, passed away Thursday, March 25.

This week, the Board of Education paid tribute to his remarkable life and inspired dedication to improving education.

"It was a time of dissension and tumult and he brought leadership in that time that was exceptional," said Board President Les Woodward, who said he had three children in district schools during the time Blair served on the Board, from 1973 – 1985. Woodward was referring to the racial tensions that surrounded the implementation of court-ordered desegregation.

Board member Elaine Gantz Berman

noted that Blair continued to show interest in school issues long after he stepped down. "There are many people who have served on the school board but some really stand out," she said. "He will be dearly missed."

Board member Kevin Patterson noted Blair's keen sense of humor and his ability to bring the district forward. "Leadership is very difficult because nobody is in front of you showing you the way," said Patterson. "It's an honor to follow in his path and serve in his footsteps."

The Board also passed a resolution acknowledging Blair's "broad and extensive record of community service, his dedication to youth and his pioneering spirit." ■

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- Paul Melinkovich, M.D., Director, Denver School-Based Health Centers, Denver Health
- Rick Metz, Past President for the Colorado Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (CAHPERD)
- Mary Lou Miller, PE Coordinator, Jefferson County Public Schools and Executive Director for CAHPERD
- Darryl Moore, Executive Director, Colorado Governor's Council for Physical Fitness
- Melissa Parker, Ph.D., Professor, University of Northern Colorado, School of Kinesiology and Physical Education
- Lisa Perry, Senior Consultant for Physical Education, Colorado Department of Education
- Cathy Romaniello, MPH, RD, Instructor, Department of Pediatrics, Section of Nutrition, UCHSC
- Dr. Sandy Stenmark, M.D., Pediatrician, Kaiser Permanente
- Peggy Vigil, Physical Education & Health Supervisor, Colorado Springs School District 11 and CAHPERD Board Member
- Donna Wittrock, Executive Director, DPS Food and Nutrition Services and President, American School Food Service Association (ASFSA) ■

Board Notes

In other action this week, the Board of Education:

- Appointed Les Lindauer as principal of the Emily Griffith Opportunity School.
- Approved the firm of Humphries Poli Architects, PC in association with Klipp, PC as the architect for the facility upgrade and master planning project for the North High School, Valdez Elementary School and MYEC structure (now being used by Denver Arts and Technology Academy charter school).
- Approved a one-year professional services agreement with Newton Learning Network Services to tutor second- through eighth-grade students in reading and math at Cheltenham, Cowell, Fairmont, Munroe and Schenck elementary schools (to meet No Child Left Behind requirements).
- Approved a one-year professional services agreement with Sylvan Education Solutions to tutor first- through twelfth-grade students in reading and math at Amesse, Barrett, Castro, College View, Del Pueblo, Ford, Goldrick, Hallett, Johnson, Knapp, Remington and Stedman elementary schools and Baker and Kepner middle schools (to meet No Child Left Behind requirements).
- Approved a lease agreement and amendment to the contract between the district and KIPP: Sunshine Peak Academy allowing for the disbursement of General Obligation Bond funds.