

DAC Meeting Minutes

PSD Boardroom

Wednesday, November 15, 2023

6:30 p.m.– 8:30 p.m.

Present

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Nikki Arensmeier | Clare Barquero | Erica Daniell | Tena Green |
| Marcy Lewis | Angela Lindquist | Kathy Mackay | Luis Montalvo |
| Jodi Quass | Marybeth Rigali-Oiler | Ian Rutherford | Susan Sasson |
| Mark Strasberg | Michael Werner | Becky Woodcox | |

Minutes

Welcome and Introductions

Dwayne welcomed everyone.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from October 18, 2023, were approved and seconded as amended.

Preview the Meeting Design – Dwayne Schmitz

Dwayne previewed the meeting design.

Leadership Fort Collins Tour of PHS – Michael Werner

Leadership Fort Collins, a program under the City of Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce, comprises 30 members committed to a one-year duration. Their responsibility is to convene monthly and delve into the intricacies of the community. Recently, the group visited Poudre High School, specifically touring the integration of the Futures Lab with the standard curriculum. The tour aimed to showcase the seamless incorporation of the Futures Lab into regular programming at Poudre High School. The group expressed strong admiration for the diverse course offerings provided by both programs, catering to the needs of all students.

The group received a presentation from Becca Benedict, the Director of Early Childhood, regarding the Universal Pre-K (UPK) program. The program encompasses more than 600 children who collectively speak 30 languages. This initiative aligns with the Graduating with Options Priority Performance Challenge within PSD. Michael emphasized that the DAC's efforts are impactful in the district, making a meaningful difference for our students.

Committee discussion included:

- The Futures Lab will be hosting an information session on Nov. 28, from 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- Marcy expressed gratitude to Dwayne and Michael for acknowledging the diligent efforts of teachers. She highlighted that her colleagues consistently go above and beyond expectations, contributing significantly to their roles.
- The Futures Lab is highly valuable. This programming plays a crucial role in instilling self-belief in students and fostering a desire to attend school. The district possesses data supporting the positive impact of these initiatives.

Review School Budget Survey Results – Dwayne Schmitz and Dave Montoya

Dwayne distributed copies of the questions and responses from the SAC Budget Priorities Survey, Spring 2023. The committee then divided into four groups and employed the constant comparative method to discern themes in the survey responses across different sections. These sections encompassed Professional Development Needs, Staffing Needs, Facility Needs, and Other.

Professional Development Needs – What are your budget priorities in this area?

1. Curriculum and Instruction Strategies
2. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
3. Teacher Collaboration and Well-being
4. Special Programs and Language Development
 - a. Focused on English Language Learners
5. Safety and Security
6. Time
 - a. Teachers often find themselves with insufficient time to complete their assigned tasks.
 - b. Increasing the number of paraprofessionals would provide grade-level teachers with additional time for collaborative efforts.
 - c. Sufficient time is essential for the successful integration of the new literacy curriculum.

Committee discussion included:

- Principals express concern about teachers working beyond their regular hours.
- Teachers face additional external requirements, such as the Colorado Department of Education mandating 45 hours of cultural literacy training.
- Question raised: Why wasn't some of this training integrated into the district's professional development day?
 - Dwayne emphasized the critical nature of how district PD days are utilized, and feedback will be conveyed to Kate Canine, Director of Professional Development.
- The impact of grade-level teachers being absent to attend training is noted; it poses challenges for students and other staff members.
 - Suggestion: Consider front-loading some training before the start of the school year to mitigate disruptions.
 - Propose compensating teachers for training on days without student contact to ease the impact.
- Two key areas of concern identified in this discussion are content and scheduling.

Staffing Needs – What are your budget priorities in this area?

1. Counseling and Mental Health
 - a. More staff needed.
 - b. Full-time counselors, social workers, school psychologists
2. Smaller class sizes while maintaining staff
3. Continue the High Dosage Tutor Program (grant-funded) if possible.
4. Staffing a dedicated in-house floating sub at each school

- a. Having in-house substitutes familiar with the school and its students is advantageous. This approach could contribute to lower burnout rates and help retain current staff.
 - b. While the majority of substitute costs are covered by the central budget, some expenses are site-based, especially when substitutes are utilized for teachers undergoing professional development. Salaries for in-house substitutes are allocated to schools based on student-based budgeting and programming.
5. Staffing more crossing guards.

Committee discussion included:

- Improving communication about volunteer opportunities is crucial for PSD. The community should be informed about the district's needs beyond financial support to encourage greater involvement. For instance, one practical example is inviting community members to volunteer as crossing guards, which not only eases the budget but also fosters community engagement.
- An available resource is the Community Partnership landing page on the PSD website, where community members can submit applications to become partners.

Facility Needs – What are your budget priorities in this area?

1. Infrastructure and Building Improvements
2. Climate Control & Comfort
3. Concrete and Asphalt Work
4. Sports and Athletic Fields, Playground Maintenance
5. Safety and Maintenance
6. Access to small vehicles and transportation
7. Furniture Replacement

Committee discussion included:

- McKinstry was commissioned to conduct a thorough assessment of the district's infrastructure needs, addressing both the historical smaller scale and current expanded requirements.
- Past processes lacked systematic organization.
- Addressing equity issues in the music program, there were concerns about the costs of the music program and its impact on different schools.
 - The district is currently in the process of collecting data on the expenses associated with the music program since student fees have been excluded.
- PTOs sometimes have the capacity to finance new playground equipment, a practice observed disparately across schools. This extends to varying capabilities in affording items like new balls.
 - The committee inquired about the delineation between items that should be funded by the district and those that should be covered by individual schools.

Other - What other fiscal areas need to be addressed?

- Student Enrichment Opportunities
 - Transportation for after-school Programs
 - More field trip opportunities

- Staffing and Teacher Support
- Special Requests for Special Services

Committee Discussion Included:

- Explore and compile a directory of free opportunities, including collaborations with community partners like transportation services and the Discovery Science Museum.
- Consider partnerships with the community, such as chartering unused city buses and utilizing city resources and CSU for enriching experiences.
- Introduce children to public transportation early on to enhance their safety awareness and comfort levels as they grow.
- Amid budget constraints, explore creative ways to partner with individuals and organizations possessing resources.
- Emphasize the need for innovative thinking, recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all solution.
- Prioritize collaboration and identify areas of need through ongoing discussions.
- Implement actionable items based on the insights provided by the committee during upcoming community events.
- Initiate conversations promptly, considering the time required for the planning and execution of potential solutions.
- Avoid assumptions about widespread awareness of the financial situation; disseminate knowledge to empower the community.
- Acknowledge the current budget constraints regarding playgrounds and consider alternative solutions.
- Explore opportunities for student involvement in addressing challenges, potentially leveraging their skills and abilities.

Overview of Education Budget in CO and Enrollment Pattern Changes – Dwayne Schmitz

This agenda item was rolled into the topic “Review School Budget Survey Results”.

Budget Review and Anticipated Constraints – Dave Montoya

This agenda item was rolled into the topic “Review School Budget Survey Results”.

Closing

The next DAC meeting will be on January 17, 2024, JSSC Boardroom, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Adjourned

2023-24 Meeting Dates

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|----------------------|---------------------|
| • August 16, 2023 | • January 17, 2024 |
| • September 20, 2023 | • February 21, 2024 |
| • October 18, 2023 | • April 17, 2024 |
| • November 15, 2023 | • May 15, 2024 |

Parking Lot Items:

Consider focusing on volunteerism at the January DAC meeting. Extend and invitation to Brian Kingsly to contribute valuable insights to the discussion.