

## DAC Meeting Minutes

PSD Boardroom

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

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
Marybeth Rigali-Oiler	Ian Rutherford	Susan Sasson	Scott Schoenbauer
Mark Strasberg	Michael Werner		

### Welcome and Introductions

Dwayne welcomed the committee members.

### Approval of Minutes

The February 21, 2024, minutes were approved and seconded as amended.

### Preview the Meeting Design – Dwayne Schmitz

Dwayne previewed the meeting design.

### Transfer & School Choice Policy Update – Dr. Traci Gile

Dr. Traci Gile presented a proposed change to the school choice and transfer policy, aiming to eliminate the transfer process and solely utilize the school choice process continuously during the year. School choice, mandated by Colorado State statute, prioritizes certain criteria for seat allocation, ensuring equity. In contrast, transfers, typically occurring after the school year starts, have been increasingly utilized for reasons beyond their intended rare and unique circumstances, leading to confusion and complexity in the system. School choice has a predictable order of who can be offered a seat, providing equity of opportunity.

The school choice process at PSD is a well-structured and predictable system. Families submit applications based on specific criteria such as district residency, program continuation, and sibling enrollment. These applications are then prioritized by the district, with in-district students given precedence over out-of-district students. The district sets its own priority order for placement. Ultimately, schools offer seats to applicants according to this prioritized list. The school choice process typically opens around November 1st for the following school year and continues until the first day of school. After that, the transfer process begins, originally intended for rare and unique circumstances but increasingly utilized, especially since COVID. This transfer process runs parallel to the school choice process, creating some confusion. Another complexity of the transfer process compared to the school choice system is prioritizing transfers over waitlisted students.

The recommendation includes:

- School principals are trending in agreement to make this change.
  - Schools will monitor the school choice list weekly and offer seats when space is available.
- Any student requesting a school change will use the school choice process, except for:
  - Loss of transportation (may return to neighborhood school)
  - Legal issue (victim-related crime, foster placement)

- School choice applications for the 2024-25 school year will remain open until May 1, 2025.
- School choice applications for the 25-26 school year will open on or around November 1, 2024

Committee discussion included:

- Transfer reasons include loss of transportation, rare and unique circumstances, and housing move.
  - Transfers due to peer conflict and changes in environment are the areas that create confusion. Some change of environment examples include wanting to go to a smaller school with fewer distractions, moving from a brick-and-mortar school to an online school, or a change in programming.
- A transfer student is a student who begins at one school but subsequently chooses to move to another school.
- Each priority group, categorized as 1, 2, or 3, follows a specific order determined by predefined criteria within its respective group. This is how seats are offered.
- If students opt out of a choice schools, they forfeit their seats at those institutions. Should they wish to return, they must reapply through the school choice process.
- A transfer request could be denied due to insufficient available space in a particular school. If space is available in a particular grade level, it is possible to prioritize a transfer over the waitlist.
- A student moving into a neighborhood school has first right to attend that school.
- Some parents have voiced concern about the priority of siblings at choice schools now that PSD employees are on the priority list above them. They would like to see siblings prioritized.
- With the talk of possible consolidations, the district is preparing for an increased volume of choice applications.
- Historically, PSD has not used the school choice process once school starts.
- It is very hard to define rare and unique circumstances regarding transfers.
- When a student transfers to a different school, the funding allocated to the original school for that student does not immediately transfer to the new school. Instead, it typically follows the student during the October count of the following year.
- Historically, the elementary school's procedure for school choice and transfers prioritizes criteria such as neighborhood registration and availability for choice families. Transfers are limited near the beginning of the school year to uphold fairness and prevent disturbances. A notable issue arises when families select schools based on reputation rather than proximity. To tackle this, the school employs a problem-solving approach that includes gathering feedback and communicating with families.
- Families always have first right to their neighborhood schools. The only exception to this is when center-based programming is needed.
- The impact of PSD employees having first choice in this process is negligible.
- The DAC would like some clarity on neighborhood-based programs.
- In addressing peer conflict issues at the elementary school level through the transfer or choice process, families' optimal strategy would involve applying to multiple schools. They can apply to up to five schools through a school choice application. Although a school may deny an application, the more schools they apply to, the better their chances are.

- These adjustments won't increase schools' workloads. Previously, the transfer process placed a significant burden on principals.
- When students encounter challenges like transferring due to issues at their previous school or legal matters, privacy concerns are addressed through a specific process. Law enforcement typically notifies the Assistant Superintendent's office of victim-related crimes, leading to immediate administrative transfers and prioritizing safety. Conversely, foster placement changes involve direct communication between the family and the school, with staff members like counselors, registrars, or office managers informed about the new placement.
- Some parents expressed concerns about potential consolidation and its impact on school choice priorities. They question is whether their non-boundary neighborhood school, where their children attend, will remain accessible through school choice. The issue of priority orders in other districts facing closures or consolidations was used as an example, with some districts incorporating specific groupings into their systems without weighting them. This approach aligns with the existing priority orders.

### **Long Range Planning Update – Dwayne Schmitz**

The committee discussed PSD's [Long Range Plan](#) and summarized what they heard at the BOE listening session:

- The purpose of listening sessions is to understand the reasons for the current proposals.
- The voting process might be extended, with some families suggesting it's preferable to address the issue swiftly. This prolonged process has led to significant distress and anxiety among families. Others advocate for slowing the process down. Have we thoroughly explored all options to address all possible solutions or alternatives?
- Rushing could cause us to overlook unforeseen opportunities. Let's proceed with caution and carefully consider all available information.
- Although many individuals are deeply passionate about their own schools, only a small number have considered the broader implications for the entire school district. How can we integrate all these passionate viewpoints? Some schools have not been heard from. While numerous people have criticized the process and data, few offer constructive solutions or recommendations.
- Trust issues are hindering progress. How can we enlist an impartial mediator to resolve this matter?
- There's incredible talent within both the community and staff that we should leverage. The timeline is challenging.
- Decelerate the process and scrutinize the data; birthrates don't solely influence enrollment.

### **DAC Budget Priorities Survey Update – Dwayne Schmitz**

Due to the delay in compensation plans, the survey was sent out later than usual, on April 4th. This survey is highly valuable for schools.

### **Review Revised Graduation Requirements – Dwayne Schmitz**

The Board of Education has endorsed the proposed adjustments to graduation requirements via the consent agenda. Fine & Applied Arts and Wellness courses are mandatory, each worth

10 credits. Modifications provide students with 20 more credits to go to additional coursework. The changes will be implemented for this year's 7th-grade students.

### **Family, School, and Community Partnership (FSCP) Update – Clare Barquero**

Clare provided an update on policy changes, noting limited progress. She emphasized efforts by the Language, Culture & Equity (LCE) department and family engagement. In March, LCE hosted Parent Academy sessions featuring cybersecurity, social media, and educational support tools. David Autenrieth delivered the keynote speech. Two long-range planning sessions were also conducted. Sessions were in Spanish and Arabic. Additionally, Clare noted that the CDE (Colorado Department of Education) is launching a new social media feature called Family Engagement Friday to highlight the ways that Colorado schools are connecting with parents and families. Poudre High School's Cooking with Families program was recently highlighted. Mental health resources in schools were discussed, with concerns about counseling support. Efforts, including grants for smaller schools, are underway to address this issue.

### **Monitoring Report – Dwayne Schmitz**

This will be discussed at the next DAC meeting.

### **Unified Improvement Plan – New Template – Dwayne Schmitz**

Colorado has introduced a new UIP template for schools to experiment with this year. We will be testing it on the district's UIP.

### **DAC Recruitment & Meeting Dates 2024/25 – Dwayne Schmitz**

Dwayne discussed open seats for next year. The [District Accountability Committee](#) website lists open seats and application instructions.

### **Student Advisory Council (StAC) – Syllabus Recommendation**

The Student Advisory Council has been working together to develop a concise syllabus document. Dwayne will meet with the PEA (teachers union), counselors, and PAG (Principal Advisory Group) to gather feedback on the syllabus recommendations. These recommendations, crafted by students, aim to assist in stress management and enhance well-being. The DAC approves of the suggested syllabus recommendations and is fully supportive.

### **Closing**

The next DAC meeting will be May 15, 2024, JSSC Boardroom, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

### **Adjourned**

#### **2024-25 Meeting Dates**

- August 21, 2024
- September 18, 2024
- October 16, 2024
- November 20, 2024
- January 15, 2025
- February 19, 2025
- April 16, 2025
- May 14, 2025

#### **Parking Lot Items:**