

District Advisory Board Meeting Agenda for April 7, 2025

The [District Advisory Board](#) (“DAB”) represents the interests of, and communicates with the Board of Education and Superintendent on behalf of, current District students and their parents/guardians in a cooperative effort to help improve and support Poudre School District programs and operations.

Meeting Time and Location
April 7, 2025 from 7:00 – 9:00 PM **Note the meeting location is in the main board room of the JSSC Johannsen Support Services Center 2407 Laporte Ave. Fort Collins CO

Time (Approximate)	Topic	Presenter
7:00 - 7:05	Welcome	DAB Chair – Taylor Ritchie
7:05 - 7:10	Approval of March Minutes	All
7:10 - 7:20	Committee Updates	Membership Chair - Sara Merrill Legislative Committee - Sarabeth Lundquist District Accountability Committee - Ashley Barrett Academic Committee - Jami Montoya SEAC - Aaron Green
7:20 - 7:30	BoE Updates	BoE, DAB Liaison - Jim Brokish
7:30 - 8:00	High School Cell Phone Policy	PSD - Julie Chaplain, Justin Stephens, Jaelyn Manzanares
8:00 - 8:30	GPA Policy	PSD - Beth Green, Tanya Alcaraz, Brett Fedor, Nicole Fassnacht, Chris Savage, Kim Wilder, Natasha Michaud, Betsy Westberry, Beth Green
8:30 - 8:35	DAB Bylaw Update Vote	DAB Chair – Taylor Ritchie
8:35 - 8:50	Role Overview and Election Nominations	DAB Chair – Taylor Ritchie
8:50 - 9:00	May Questions	DAB Chair – Taylor Ritchie
9:00	Closing	DAB Chair – Taylor Ritchie

Next DAB Meeting: May 5, 2025

Contact us: dabreps@gmail.com

DAB Attendance- April 7, 2025

Taylor Unwin (Bamford); Sara Bryan (Bauder); Tory Pappas (Beattie); Latoya Noel (Beattie); Mike Thomas (Bennett); Brett Hansen (Bethke); Stephanie Matthews (Boltz); Marissa Herman (CLP E); Beth Reynolds (CLP MS); Jodi Quass (Compass); Karrie Grama-Hatfield (Kruse); Marybeth Rigali-Oiler (Kruse); Jami Montoya (Laurel); Michelle Duncan (Liberty); Jenny Miller (Lincoln); Katrina Toth-Green (Linton); Jon Danielson (Linton); David Godlove (Lopez); Marta Isernia (Mountain Sage); Mackenzie Mushel (Mountain Sage); Kevin Dorn (Olander); Sarabeth Lundquist (Polaris); Anne Nelson (Putnum); Whitney Hersh (E Timnath); Sara Merrill (Traut/Kinard); Taylor Ritchie (Chair, Webber); Lee Romsa (Wellington); Stacy Armstrong (PSD Global); Jim Brokish (BOE); Aaron Green (SEAC); Ashley Barrett (DAC)

Meeting notes:

Taylor intro and welcome

Agenda review

Big agenda tonight – will need to potentially cut comments short if we run out of time.

Brian Kingsley visiting for May meeting – Taylor will send out form for people to submit questions for Brian.

March minutes approved.

Meeting started at: 7:02pm, Welcome by Taylor.

Agenda review

Committee Updates:

Membership Committee (Sara Merrill):

Membership update: Mountain Sage School officially added. If you are leaving your school site next year please let relevant parties know. If you are not a DAB representative next year, be in touch with your principal and parents to ensure representation occurs.

Legislative Committee (Sarabeth Lundquist):

Lots of legislation still going through both chambers. PSD endorsed Dyslexia screening bill. Sarabeth has a copy to read through if anyone would like to. Changes how the READ Act is implemented to support students. Currently the appropriations bill is starting to be discussed on the floor. We will know more soon.

Question: Is there anything about rural funding?

Answer: No, they're trying to get legislators to come out and see how rural schools are. Seems like no one was interested for the spring session, but might be open to Fall. Hopefully it will happen but not until fall. April 17th is community conversation night.

Question: One other legislative question re TABOR reform – is it being put forward?

Answer: It has been put forward every year, but nothing has happened from it.

Jim: The legislators get so many bills brought to the floor and some express they cannot yet address that.

District Accountability Committee (Ashley Barrett):

March meeting did not occur, due to Spring break (no updates).

Academic Committee (Jami Montoya):

Jami not yet arrived; we will circle back around to her later in the meeting.

SEAC (Aaron Green):

Work session in April – will cover SEAC parent handbook that is distributed. Updates to the SEAC application process. Likely Aaron's last attendance until next year. May be new person attending next year. Julie presented on new cell phone policy. Talked about impact on 504 kids. Also updates on federal grants and federal funding. With the changes occurring in the government, Special Education funding is a concern for a lot of people, particularly regarding services for students. Executive orders are just memos so it shouldn't matter if the government does away with the Department of Education, but many people are worried. Update on Unified sports – outlining processes. They need volunteers to make that system work effectively, especially in track and field. Aaron brought flyer with QR code and encourages everyone to pass the info along. Presentation on CO Jr Wheelchair Sports Camp – needs volunteers too. A QR code is available for people to access more information.

Question: Can volunteers be students?

Answer: Impression is they are looking for anyone willing to participate as a volunteer.

Comment: if you have electronic copies of the flyer please give that to Taylor to send to the group.

Comment: Link that can be sent as well.

Taylor Ritchie: Appreciation to Aaron

BoE Updates (Jim Brokish):

Not many updates today; the biggest news is Jim's daughter gave birth to Jim's 4th grandkiddo today!

Summary – Legislature hasn't really affected structural problems.

Question: New granddaughter's name?

Answer: Elizabeth

High School Cell Phone Policy/Practices Presentation (Julie Chaplain and Team):

Emphasizing "practices" rather than policy. 2014 initially put into place.

Policy is already established – cell phones not allowed in instructional spaces. Policy also allows for accommodations where needed.

Looking to align practices with all of our high schools.

The Anxious Generation book – lot of great info related to cell phones. Book outlines the high correlation between cell phones and other factors.

Student advisory committee stressed that in order to stay off of their phones, the phones just need to be taken away from students; cannot be on their bodies.

Air pods being included in practices. Corded headphones allowed – plugged into laptop. The kids really want their music. Smart watches silenced.

At SEAC – concerns about if I have my cell phone out, does that make it obvious that I have an IEP/disability? Is there another way to provide accommodations besides the cell phone? Sometimes there are software programs that cannot be loaded onto district devices, so cell phone is needed – can we look at how to get it on a district device to provide other options?

Time of Need Communication – students were worried about teachers asking for specific information about who they are calling and why.

Each school has 3-tiered response regarding cell phone violations.

Documentation varies: step one might be you've lost phone for the day, or might just be a warning. Notes are kept in system so other teachers can see. It does not become part of the discipline record – not put into discipline system until a Technology Plan is created or we fall into the willful disobedience territory. Step 2/3 – losing phone consistently.

Cell phone caddies and pouches sometimes being used – not required to be used.

Will not support a team saying NO to an accommodation with a cell phone if a cell phone is the only option for an accommodation.

Opened up for questions/comments.

Question: What kinds of metrics are being considered? Will you be having surveys? Pre/Post assessments?

Answer: No plans for pre or post assessments. There is the violation tracking. Timnath tracks how many phones are confiscated, repeat offenses, grade level, how many tech plans had to be created. Great question, something we will add to the conversation.

Additional – baseline numbers – Fort Collins High has had 5 kids needing a Technology Plan. Just one plan in play right now. It's been easy compared to what we thought it will be.

Additional – one student with many devices, burner phones, etc. Given us an opportunity to start the conversation sooner. Hope is that the middle schoolers learning now will have easier time. As we shore up process for collecting different metrics we will have a clearer understanding. We have not had any families push back yet because they are seeing positive responses in grades, attendance, etc. Staff feedback solid as well. Teachers appreciate that we are aligning practices.

Question: Curious – are there ways for students who don't have cell phones to reach their family members?

Answer: Front office at all schools have wired phones available for student use.

Question: In classrooms are there ways that a student can call 911?

Answer: Yes, phones in each classroom and emergency buttons in each classroom. Standard in all classrooms. Goes over the intercom to front office. Students are being told how to access the emergency systems to alert. Because we are not requiring phones to be in a caddy, students may have phones on them, and in an emergency could easily use their phone – might even be asked to use their phone in an emergency.

Question: Can you explain why you are not implementing practices at lunch and during passing periods at high school?

Answer: It's not that we want to eliminate them ever using cell phones. We are developing a habit of when it's appropriate vs not. Passing periods and lunches you can come and go when you want so we are not going to be enforcing cell phone practices at that time.

Answer: Not realistic with 1800 students to limit phones entirely. We need some give and take. Trying to teach them how to be adults in the world. We are striking a balance. A lot of incidental communication that needs to happen in high school – soccer practice getting changed, etc. – changing ride arrangements – nonemergency communication often needs to happen during lunches and passing periods.

Question: For the Middle High Schools – any challenges implementing these different practices?

Answer: No not really. Middle and high schoolers have different lunch periods. Hasn't been push back. Timnath Middle High only had 20 students with more than 2 violations. I think because they were so upfront and clear with families and students about the expectations.

Question: You mentioned something about they might need their calendar as an accommodation. I'm wondering what the accommodation piece looks like. Is that a formal 504 or IEP accommodation?

Answer: Yes. Sometimes it's a goal to keep track of assignments, due dates, etc.

Question: You're focusing on a specific device. A lot of things you do on cell phone you can also do on a laptop. What makes it so kids can't do these things on a laptop?

Answer: They do have Google Chat and Microsoft Teams access on their laptops but they don't have access to social media. Have started talking about this because there are some good uses of Chat and Teams – we are not saying we are pulling away access to Chat and Teams.

Answer: And give your students credit, we get a lot of students reporting when they see something inappropriate – they do a nice job letting us know when something is happening that shouldn't be. We haven't seen a decline in Safe to Tell reports coming in even though they aren't using their phones to report.

Comment: Students may be creating videos related to education.

Answer: Recurring messages about school norms – getting student voices involved. Reinforcing those conversations.

Answer: Piece of paper is great – has a lot of info on it, can share these practices in a number of ways. We have a student toolkit online – we refer families to the online kit. Variety of ways to communicate about it all.

Question: How are you communicating about the WHY to students?

Answer: This is really important. We pulled in some research. Reminded WHY to staff and then to families, 9th graders, via video announcements, it was important to us to be explicit with our WHY.

Answer: Ours was very similar. Example that illustrates: we have Middle School transition day, welcoming 8th graders. Saw the 8th graders looking at me intensely, while the high schoolers totally tuned me out.

Comment: Thank you so much for prioritizing this, it's such an important thing. Parents are really hungry for resources of what to do at home, how to get guidelines, even at elementary schools. Some resources for parents would be helpful too – families are struggling with this.

Circle back around to **Jami's Academic Committee update**: no huge update. We all know state testing has started, PSAT, SAT, CMAS, that was mostly my update for today.

GPA Policy Discussion (Beth Green and Team):

We recognize stress level of students is high; this is one small way we can impact that within our system.

Question: Does GPA apply only to high school?

Answer: Only if a middle schooler takes a high school level course.

When colleges see this information, they make assumptions about the student based on weighted/unweighted GPA.

Question: When you have kids with the exact same GPA how do you rank them?

Answer: At Rocky we had maybe 2-3 students with the same class rank. Some colleges may ask if it's tied or not. We are sometimes asked what 10% ranking the student is a part of; then it becomes a moot point.

The various ranking styles can be confusing to students. We are hoping by instead doing decile reporting it will be less confusing.

At Fort Collins our top 20 students can all tell you who the other 19 are.

Students cannot get into certain classes on campus so they take BYU courses online - \$429 per unit. Equity issue.

We have students who want to be artists but take fewer art classes because of how it is weighted to affect their GPA. They are skipping classes that align with their plans for after high school. Will affect how we honor students who are graduating – valedictorians, etc.

Our high schools are in agreement with the proposed changes. We've talked with college admissions across the nation – variety of schools – we see no concerns with moving to a decile system. They will gladly see the adjusted GPA going away.

Proposing this for the class of 2029 (current 8th graders), which also aligns with the new graduation requirements initiating.

Question: I saw that all the PSD high schools are on board but I noticed we don't have any of the alternative high school counselors up here. Are they also on board?

Answer: Yes, we have a core counseling group, PCA, Polaris, Wellington, they are all on board.

Question: Does this mean we will be running two programs at the same time while this is implemented, for the 8th graders coming in?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Thank you for thinking creatively about this issue. I was one of those kids who felt that weight. I was a gifted and talented student who would not take lunch so I could get ahead. I want to thank you for doing that. I did want to know about the alternative schools. How do you think it may affect these students in particular?

Answer: I'm thinking it's an advantage for them as well. Sometimes these students are in a class of 50. When you're in a smaller class like that....

Question: So if you are getting rid of exact ranks, do you know what impact that would have on your highest rank individuals who could have said they were ranked 2 or 3 in a high performing class. Do we know what that impact might be?

Answer: Hard to say – had the opportunity to look into review process with some programs, reviewers are getting trained on how to look at students within context, dive deeper into their course choices, how does that intersect with their activities and their plans to impact their communities? Looking more at context. If our most selective colleges and universities understand students within context, others can as well.

Answer: Some school districts do not rank at all.

More answer: I'm from LA and LAUSD does not do any ranking. So we know the universities can figure it out.

Question: So even if we change do we think kids are just not going to talk about their GPAs?

Answer: They will talk, I think at Fort Collins High we have about 5 kids all around the same rank, the math gets hard to do at some point.

Comment: Where I grew up there was a cap on the number of courses you could have counted.

Comment: I also really like that idea. As someone else who also maps out every AP class possible, you will still have that top decile, and I imagine the only way to get to that is to max yourself out, so are you really eliminating the true barriers to students learning what they want to learn versus feeling pressured to get into that top percent.

Answer: I think we are hoping that the conversation will not be “How do I get to number one?”, but “How do I choose what is best for me?” We have students who are competitive about athletics and performing arts, etc. so how can we strike a balance between what is healthy and safe?

Answer: Classes available to students via Front Range or AIMS Community College.

Question: Thank you, as the parent of a kid who is living this every day. We will be out at dinner and the phone comes out because student needs to check grades AGAIN. Thank you for seeing that the mental health impact is significant. Have you thought about the kids at the bottom of the GPA scale and what that will look like?

Answer: Most of our kid at the bottom of the scale are looking at a 2-year program.

Answer: I used to work with those kids and they see where they are at – to the decile they just see the bottom 10% instead of their ranking, and we can look more closely at their path.

Question: I'm kind of shocked about all this. I've been teaching high school for 10 years and I have never seen any ranking system before. I'd never heard of it. I like the decile system better. I am thinking about the bottom 50% not being included at all? Thinking about Poudre High – how if they are weighted would you not have only IB kids at the top at Poudre?

Answer: We take the IB students and they kind of rise to the top because every course they take counts toward those adjusted points. So we remove those kids from the rank and re-run the rank without them so that we have two ranks. It's been really messy to explain that to a college at times. By going to decile that will allow us to collapse that.

DAB Bylaw Update Vote:

Motion to update laws, seconded.

Bylaws approved and updated. They will go to the Board for final approval.

Role Overview and Election Nominations:

Nominations for open positions

Descriptions have been provided. DAC is not up for re-election since that one is a two-year term. Need to get name in tonight if you want to be considered.

Taylor reviewed responsibilities related to each role.

Question: When someone is nominated what does that mean for being the school rep? Do they have to give up their role?

Answer: Only as the Chair.

Question: Legislative chair meetings can be listened to later?

Answer: No, they are recorded but recordings are not posted/accessible. You do need to attend live. Fairly extensive time commitment during the winter months.

Question: If someone wanted to stay in their role, can they be re-elected?

Answer: They'd have to technically put their name back in the hat. People can choose to nominate themselves tonight and then withdraw if they want to.

Nominations received for each position, including:

Chair Elect: Taylor Unwin, Sarabeth Lundquist, Marybeth Rigali-Oiler

Secretary: Tory Pappas

Membership: Jenny Miller

Legislative: Sarabeth Lundquist

Academic: Anne Nelson, Mike Thomas

Everyone is encouraged to submit questions for the May meeting, for Brian Kingsley to respond to, via the form being sent out.

Meeting ended at 9:04pm.

Prepared by Karrie Grama-Hatfield

DAB Secretary