

District 11 Appoints New Superintendent

Board Members Choose Dr. Nicholas Gledich to Replace Superintendent Terry Bishop

Leela Khanna
News Editor

After weeks of speculation, D11 board members voted Dr. Nicholas Gledich as the new superintendent. The vote for a new district superintendent took place early in February during the school utilization board meetings.

Dr. Nicholas Gledich is the chief operating officer at Orange County Public Schools in Florida, and will replace Dr. Terry Bishop who is retiring at the end of the 2008-2009 school year.

"I saw the posting and description for the superintendent's position on the Ray and Associates website," said Dr. Gledich. "Applying for the position of superintendent is the next step in my career with public education."

Dr. Gledich's resume includes being a senior director for elementary education services, an associate superintendent for education services, and senior executive director of policy for the Orange County School District.

District 11 board members also felt strongly about Dr. Gledich's experience working in public education. The process for finding a new superintendent began many months ago, when Terry Bishop first announced he was retiring. After the District 11 School Board received Dr. Gledich's application for the position, they interviewed him for hours over the phone as well as in person. Dr. Gledich had the opportunity to go to several District 11 schools and speak with the principals and students.

"The process also required me to do my homework prior to visiting the school district," said Dr. Gledich. He spent many hours researching the district and also reflected on what he believed he would want to achieve as the new superintendent.

"Colorado Springs School District 11 is of interest to me because of its reputation and community support," said Dr. Gledich. "My personal mission to be a superintendent is to lead and serve a community and make a difference for children."



PHOTO COURTESY/D11.ORG

Dr. Nicholas Gledich was appointed the new superintendent by District 11 board members in February. Dr. Gledich will replace superintendent Dr. Terry Bishop at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. Educational consultant Dr. James Ray and District 11 deputy superintendent Michael Poore were also finalists for the position.

The district also selected Dr. James Ray, educational consultant and former superintendent of the Stupski Foundation in San Francisco and Michael Poore, deputy superintendent of Educational Support Services in District 11

as finalists for the position. However, after District 11 board members made a trip to Orange County to visit Dr. Gledich's school district, they made a unanimous decision in February to appoint Dr. Gledich the role of superintendent.

Dr. Gledich's appointment has caused some objection in the District 11 community. Many members of the community feel Michael Poore, current deputy superintendent, would have been a better choice for the position of superintendent.

"Whenever important decisions are made, there are always varying opinions based upon people's beliefs and values," said Dr. Gledich. "Hopefully, over time, my actions, work, decisions and willingness to learn will make people comfortable with the decision."

Dr. Gledich's immediate goals will be to "identify what is going on, what is needed and what is wanted" and "implement a superintendent's entry plan" where he will focus on certain issues impacting the district such as "student achievement, business practices, and diversity of student needs and declining enrollment."

Though Dr. Gledich has been officially been appointed as the new superintendent, he has not as yet moved to Colorado Springs with his family.

"I am working with the school board at this time to determine the start date," said Dr. Gledich. "I do know that I will be there soon taking time to learn and understand all the great things D11 accomplishes daily for students."

Dr. Gledich does not feel at all apprehensive of the districts current standing and is looking forward to helping the District.

"I welcome challenges," said Dr. Gledich. "I see them as opportunities."

Dr. Gledich and his family are ready for the transition of moving from Florida to Colorado.

"Absolutely [we're ready to transition]," said Dr. Gledich. "It will be a new chapter in our lives."

Financial and Enrollment Issues Cause School Closures

District 11 Closes Eight Elementary Schools, Irving Middle School

Boris Leonov
Commentary Editor

On February 25 the District 11 School Board voted to close eight elementary and one middle school around Colorado Springs.

Buena Vista, Washington, Whittier, Ivywild, Pike, Longfellow, Jefferson, and Adams Elementaries, as well as Irving Middle School will be shut down, leaving 34 elementary schools and eight middle schools in the district. For the time being it was decided to leave Wasson High School open.

According to Michael Poore, Deputy Superintendent of District 11, the district will not have very much trouble relocating the students who attended these schools, primarily because the schools are spaced closely together.

As for class sizes and school populations, Poore stated that overall there won't be much trouble.

"Our district is under-utilized and even with students moving there'll be plenty of space. However, there will be

some modifications," he said. "For example, when we close Pike elementary we'll have to make an addition to Jackson to accommodate the extra students. With Adams closed we'll have to move the adult education program from Hunt to Jefferson elementary."

Poore estimates that District 11 will save around 5 million dollars. However, the closures come with their own costs.

The modifications that will be made to some of the schools are only part of the cost. Professional development will also be necessary, as teachers typically use a wide variety of educational styles and will need to "get onto the same page" according to Poore. In addition, teachers will have to be paid for additional days that they spend in transition from their former schools to their new places of employment.

The decision to close the nine schools came in part from a move to implement a better delivery, achievement, and space and resource use model.

One change that will result from the school closures is

that most elementary schools will now have teams consisting of two or three teachers per grade level, as opposed to a sole teacher. Such an approach should help improve student performance.

However, economic concerns also affected the decision. The state is making a 1.5 million dollar cut to the district's budget and next year is predicted to bring about another \$4.5 million shortfall, according to Poore.

Although Wasson High School has been kept open for now, it's not completely certain this is a permanent resolution.

"Wasson won't be closing for at least three or four years," said Poore. "But this is only phase 1. The district is going to look at the situation in three years and may decide to close more schools."

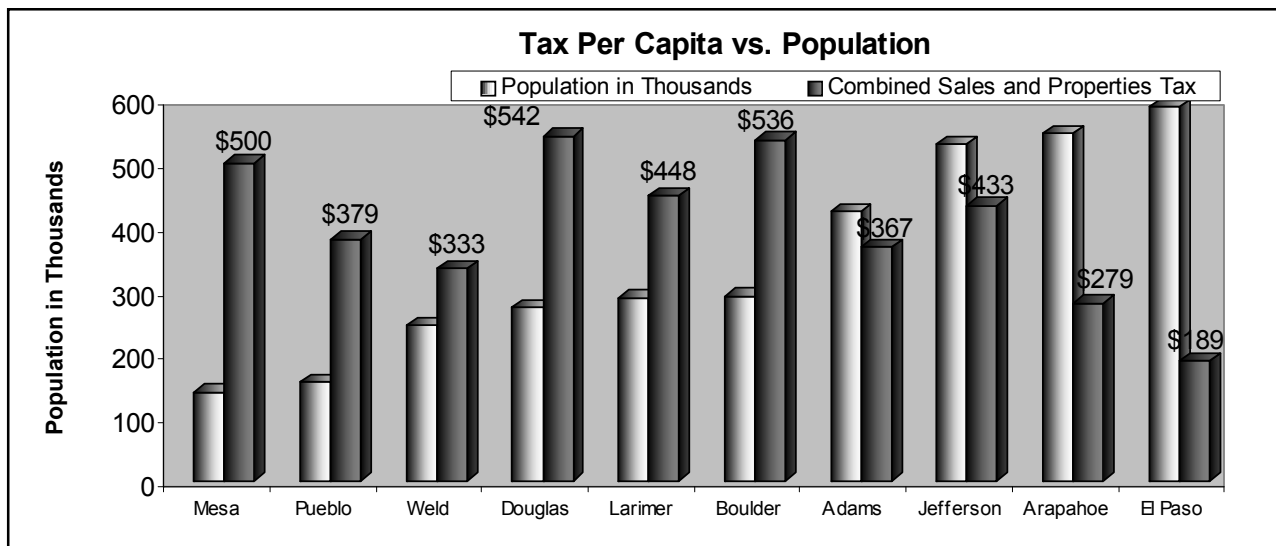
The district has been losing students in past years, so many buildings are becoming underused and therefore unnecessary. On the other hand, if attendance to District 11 increases it's completely possible that schools will be reopened.

Unpassed Initiative Causes Budget Cuts

Riley Chambers
Staff Writer

Recent budget cuts are taking place in El Paso County because the public voted no on initiative 1A in early November. As a result, Police are writing more tickets to replenish funds, emergency vehicle response times have become longer, the Parks Department is no longer employing maintenance workers for preservation purposes, and the health department is no longer offering certain services and programs.

The bill proposed a one-cent sales tax increase on all county goods for the next year. The increase would have granted all county services an extra 75 million dollars collectively while keeping county sales tax



Initiative 1A proposed a one-cent tax increase on all goods and would have granted an extra 75 million dollars to the county. However, because 1A was not passed by voters, budget cuts are taking place in El Paso County. The graph above shows that though El Paso County has the highest population, it receives the lowest per capita funding.

below the city's. However, the recent budget cuts are a reflection of 1A not passing.

"They'd wanted to cut the department earlier," said junior Nic Rogers. Rogers' mother recently changed departments in the El Paso Public Health Department from STD clinic to Emergency Preparedness after the STD services were terminated due to 1A's failure.

According to Rogers, Public Health Department did not want to close the STD clinic because of their impressive record in the department, but the clinic had to close. 1A deprived the health department of too much, and the program was cut.

If no more money is going toward funding the county, the necessities take precedence over programs that aren't essential.

"The fact is, certain things have to be done without negotiation," said Lisa Powell, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinator for El Paso County. "Jails must be built, roads must be repaired."

Powell explained the problem isn't that the county isn't being funded, but rather that funding has decreased over the years, especially in Public Health.

"Since 2001, our budget's been reduced to half," she said.

In 2001, the county had \$5,102,699 to spend. Now in 2009, the projected budget for this year is \$2,298,751.

"El Paso County has one of the highest populations in Colorado,

but is receiving the lowest per capita funding," Powell revealed.

As a result, many Public Health programs cannot be offered due to low funding. In 2001, the first major budget cut claimed Powell's personal Methadone clinic where she worked for eleven years.

Since then a number of programs have been eliminated including Outpatient Laboratory Services, Drug and Alcohol Education and Prevention, and Methamphetamine Lab Clean-ups and Regulating.

While these past programs have already been cut, another concern is the

programs that may be terminated due to budget cuts this year: city and county parks, kids programs, 4H, and Drug Abuse Resistance Education.

"We just closed child care inspections but recently got a grant to open that again in April," Powell said.

While grants are a way for the county to replenish funding, many require the county to pay the amount of money that the grant offers.

"The county just doesn't have the money for matching grants," said Powell.

Grants don't guarantee programs will stay open even if the county exceeds its previous budget because grants are written for specific programs.

"The trickle-down effect of 1A not passing is that the funding the county provided to the city was also cut," said Powell.

As a result, city-funded programs and places are also affected.

Fewer emergency personnel were hired this year because the city did not have the money for wages. In addition, 50 potential jobs for police were not filled because the city couldn't pay them. There will also be 4500 to 5000 fewer vaccinations in 2009 because of Health department cuts.

"It's very simple. When you don't fund safety initiatives, you have less safety," said Powell. "It really comes down to quality of life. What kind of quality do you want?"

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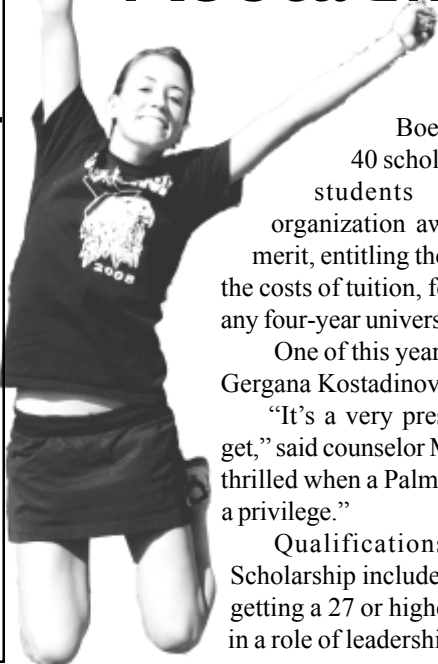
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Kostadinova Scores Boettcher

Ben Busby
Staff Writer



Every year since 1952, the Boettcher Foundation awards around 40 scholarships to outstanding high school students throughout Colorado. The organization awards scholarships of the highest merit, entitling the student recipient full coverage of the costs of tuition, fees, and books for all four years of any four-year university or college residing in Colorado.

One of this year's recipients was Palmer IB senior Gergana Kostadinova.

"It's a very prestigious award for any student to get," said counselor Mrs. Nola Thomasson. "I'm always thrilled when a Palmer student gets it, because it's such a privilege."

Qualifications for receiving the Boettcher Scholarship include being in the top 5% of your class, getting a 27 or higher on the ACT, and being involved in a role of leadership.

"Basically, after I fulfilled the qualifications and sent in my application by November, they notified me that I was one of 200 semi-finalists," Kostadinova said. "After that I was required to get three letters of recommendation from my teachers, someone who has witnessed me in a leadership position, and a counselor."

Kostadinova chose Ms. Keller, Ms. Lynch-Neveu, and Mrs. Thomasson to write her recommendations.

"I think [Gergana] is a terrific candidate," said Mrs. Thomasson. "She has worked very hard, shown a tremendous amount of dedication, and will serve Denver University very well."

With the Boettcher in hand, Kostadinova plans to attend DU to pursue international studies.

"For Palmer students wishing to follow in my footsteps, I recommend that you be involved in both your community and at Palmer," said Kostadinova. "But it's also very important to keep your head above water and to never forget your friends and family. They can get you through hard times."