

**COLORADO SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT 11**  
Dr. Terry N. Bishop, Superintendent  
**Division of Business Services**  
Glenn E. Gustafson, CPA, Deputy Superintendent/CFO

**DAAC Budget Committee**  
Wendy Chiado, Chairman  
John Gartin, Vice-Chairman

**Minutes**

March 11, 2008  
6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Wendy Chiado, Katie Freidel, Suzy Gingrich, and Pete Lee

Ex Officio Members Present: Becky Kluck, Ken Wieck and Becky Moore

Guests: Jamie Cushenberry and Connie Rogers-Mitchell High School Faculty  
Dr. Nancy Homan, Special Education Department

Wendy opened the meeting at 6:10 p.m. She confirmed with the committee that the next committee meeting would be the following Tuesday, March 18, 2008.

Becky Kluck quickly reviewed the remaining meeting dates and unfinished work for the committee. She indicated that the grants policies review may have to be postponed to next year and that perhaps the committee would like to choose the grant fund as their fund to review and thus look at the policies at that time. The committee was agreeable and if needed, may consider the grants fund review for next year.

Wendy discussed her presentations to the Board of Education and to the Executive DAAC. She also discussed the preliminary budget development assumptions recommendations she made to the Board of Education at a separate meeting (BOE budget work session). She felt that the committee's recommendations had a favorable reception from both groups. Both Wendy and Becky Kluck felt the Board of Education may have a better understanding of the DAAC Budget Committee and what their function is. The committee's charge was discussed with the Board of Education and the process of how the committee selects the programs and tentative charge for review each year.

Before Dr. Homan's review with the committee regarding **IBR #17** (SPED facilitator of 1.0 FTE), the minutes were discussed with one correction from Suzy Gingrich. The minutes, with the correction, were motioned for approval by Katie, seconded by Suzy and unanimously approved as amended.

Dr. Homan told the committee a little about herself and gave a brief history of the Special Education (SPED) staffing. The SPED staffing has been on a roller coaster the past few years with the elimination of positions and high personnel turnover. With the coming year, the Achievement and Accountability Office (formerly known as Instruction) plans to return to vertically aligning all the schools which means a return to the five clusters. A cluster begins with one of the five high schools and then drops to all the middle schools that feed into that high school and then the elementary schools which feed into the middle schools. The district currently has only four SPED facilitators to cover the five clusters. Because of the need to cross five clusters, there has been hardship for SPED. The crossing of clusters has misaligned special programs. With the lack of expertise in administration, consultants have been hired to fill in the gaps and this has been expensive. The goal for the coming year is, through the IBR, hire a 5<sup>th</sup> SPED facilitator who specializes in autism. Currently the district lacks this expertise outside of the consultants it hires. This new facilitator would assist a cluster and provide expertise in autism.

At this point, Suzy brought up **IBR #17** and the educational assistant (EA) issue. She discussed that the money used to hire another SPED facilitator could hire many more EAs to help fill in the gaps. She reiterated that the new SPED staffing allocation will spread the EAs thin and reallocate some to other

schools. Dr. Homan addressed this issue. She indicated that the EAs are being redirected to schools that have the highest needs in their student population. This sort of redistribution is part of the picture. EAs must go where they are needed which may mean switching schools for some of the EAs.

Jamie asked about the consultants that work with the autistic. Dr. Homan stated that the SPED office wants to be pro-active with the students and not reactive. Jamie indicated that even in the past, the facilitators did not work much in the buildings. At this point, Dr. Homan pointed out that the 5<sup>th</sup> SPED facilitator would make a difference especially with the charter schools, which have really changed the need. Specialists have had to serve the charter schools and these schools need a lot of hand-holding. They are relatively unaware of special education processes and have had to have a good deal of training and education in this area. The district is held accountable for any issue that arises with the charter schools even if the charter schools are ignorant of what has happened. Dr. Homan also addressed the fact that facilitators spend much of their time working on legal issues regarding students in the District and in educational facilities.

Katie asked for clarification about the clusters and alignment. She was confused because the clusters do not have equal number of students, students with SPED issues or legal troubles. Assigning 12 schools to an executive director did not mean there would be equal SPED issues for each cluster so hiring the SPED facilitator may not help the situation. Dr. Homan indicated that if an autism expert is hired it would make a big difference in the district even in consideration of the potential realities posed by Katie.. She stated that SPED can still do the job with four SPED facilitators but the efficiency is not what it should be and the facilitators are over loaded resulting in high turnover of trained personnel. She told the committee that the legal issues have increased and with the increase is time teachers, consultants and EAs are out of the classroom to fight law suits which further erodes the effectiveness and efficiency of the SPED programs.

Dr. Homan also stated that even if the 5<sup>th</sup> SPED facilitator is hired, consultants will still be utilized. Connie indicated that expertise must be the hiring goal. Dr. Homan said that the SPED teachers are becoming more efficient as they train and are gaining experience but again, turnover has been high. At this time, the committee asked Dr. Homan if she could provide data to support the rise in legal costs since the elimination of the 5<sup>th</sup> executive director. Dr. Homan said she would get that information for the committee.

Katie mentioned that other districts work with fewer buildings and therefore the EAs are not spread so thin, and Wendy pointed out that the facilitators do help the folks in the classrooms and are not utilized solely for legal issues.

Dr. Homan took her leave of the committee asking them to contact her with further questions if they wish.

Becky Kluck reviewed the revisions to the Preliminary Budget Development Assumptions (PBDA) that occurred after the Friday Board of Education Work Session. Upon review of the updated PBDA handout sheet, she addressed the revisions as follows:

**Numbers 3, 4, and 5** were reduced by \$50,000, \$50,000 and \$25,000 respectively.

**Numbers 6-13** were moved from recurring to non-recurring with Becky noting that the 9<sup>th</sup> grade academies are pilots and must go under a review before being permanent. Because this is their first year in operation, no review has yet been conducted. The committee will be provided a copy of the Board of Education policy on pilots.

**Numbers 14-16 and 19** were brought before the board as DAAC Budget Committee recommendations to be moved to Priority 1. The Board met these recommendations favorably but no board approval of any changes will take place until March 12, 2008. Becky told the committee that she was still waiting for a reply from Dave Schenkel as to why **Number 19** (teacher sub rate increase) was not initially placed at a higher priority. It was noted that these same IBRs were important to the administration as well and if they could be moved to priority 1 there would be no objections.

**Number 20** was brought to the board as the priority IBR for funding by the committee. Becky discussed the pending legislation at the state level which might bring forth more funds for kindergarten which could help

pay for the aides. A request for a legislative update on this issue was taken and the budget office will look into the legislation.

There were no changes to **Numbers 17 and 18 or Numbers 21-27.**

At this time there was more discussion about **IBR #17**. Pete wanted to know how the district's legal consultants feel about this issue. Do they feel staffing is or isn't a cause of the high legal costs in the district in regards to SPED issues, IEPs not being met, etc? Also discussed was the IEP process from its initial writing through approval and implementation.

There was discussion about the signing bonuses (**IBR #15b**). The group felt that since the signing bonuses went to SPED hires last year, the bonuses should be placed there again this year. And because the bonuses should bring in more and better qualified people, the district could hire more expertise in the SPED areas it is lacking and therefore, the 5<sup>th</sup> facilitator would not be needed.

The East Math/Science Magnet School staffing was also examined (**Number 2**) with a handout of a breakdown of the staffing. Several members expressed concern about the staffing numbers being too high. If the projection is approximately 200 students, then a full time LRT would not be needed nor a full time LTE and Dean of Students. The committee would like to see the justification for these positions. The committee questioned the difference between a community liaison and community relations coordinator. It was noted that the liaison's work is mainly with the student and families and coordinator's work is with the community (businesses). Also questioned was the rationale for so many custodians. The thought was that there was work to renovate this building taking place because it will be a specialized school and there is the possibility that the administration building staff may be temporarily housed at East while the administration building is renovated. The committee was reminded that it is not just student population but square footage of the building that determines custodial staff numbers.

The committee really wanted to make more recommendations to the board of education concerning the PBDA. There are the concerns with East staffing and concerns with legal issues in SPED. However, the committee decided that it could not get enough information in a timely manner to make an informed recommendation at this time on these issues. The committee formally voted to move **IBR 17** from a priority 2 to priority 3 with a motion by Katie, second by Suzy and unanimous vote in the affirmative (only four members in attendance). The committee felt that **IBR 15b** would hire the SPED employees to give all services to SPED students and still stay within compliance.

The committee briefly looked at the Coronado Avid **IBR (#7)** and the FTE discrepancy. The IBR has been rewritten to clarify the FTE requested and the committee was satisfied. Also, a sheet with the Athletics game workers and officials pay was handed out as requested at the last meeting regarding **IBR #21**.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m. with plusses and deltas.

**The next meeting is March 18, 2008 in the administration building boardroom at 6:00 p.m.**