



# BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

## Standards-based learning pilot shows positive results

### Students have multiple opportunities to show learning

Davis School District administrators shared with board members during a board workshop on Tuesday the status of the district's standards-based learning system pilot program. The program is currently being piloted by seven junior high schools in the district.

Standards-based learning is based on a student's mastery of standards-aligned activities. The system uses a one-through-four grading scale, similar to the grading system currently in place for all elementary schools in the district.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Logan Toone explained how the program focuses on increasing student learning.

"We are trying to identify what every student needs and providing the instructional set of resource materials and processes in classrooms that will accomplish that. Then we are trying to report how well the student has mastered those concepts that we are required to teach," said Toone.

Teaching and Learning Director Belinda Kuck reported that as the standards-based learning initially rolled out to pilot schools, the focus was on grading, which is the least important role of the program.

"The most important thing we need to be focused on is learning," said Kuck, "and how that looks to the student, their teacher and their parents, and in the very end, how do we report that? Can a student talk about what they know, what they can do and what their skills are? That is

the most important thing."

Kuck also pointed out that with standards-based learning, extra credit is no longer needed because students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning. If a student needs to retake a quiz or rewrite an assessment, they are given every opportunity to do so.

"If they don't have it mastered, they are not penalized for learning. We want to give them more opportunities to learn and not get penalized for it," said Kuck.

Legacy Junior High Principal Chadli Bodily spoke about how students and parents have responded to a standards-based learning pilot program at their school.

"At the end of the last school year, I went into many of my classrooms that were doing standards-based grading and the students loved it. It reduced their anxiety because they knew exactly where they stood in the class," said Bodily. "If they were getting a three on something, they knew they could retake a test to hit mastery."

At parent-teacher conferences recently, Bodily said parents had expressed little concern about the program and asked questions about how to help their students improve mastery skills.

Toone reinforced that the district does not plan to get rid of letter grades on transcripts for parents and students concerned about how the standards-based learning affects applications for college and sports.

"Grades will be calculated based on learning

**See PILOT, Pg. 2**

## Few speak at elementary boundary study public hearing

Five community members impacted by proposed elementary boundary changes spoke to the Board of Education during a public hearing Tuesday.

Citing distance, split neighborhoods and immersion, each asked to remain in their current school boundaries.

Dr. Darrell White, the boundary consultant hired by the Board, said

**"We know there are no perfect boundaries. We want these to be as perfect as possible."**

— Dr. Darrell White

the boundary study group started the process months ago. Ellison Park, Heritage and Sand Springs elementary schools are overcrowded. A new school being built in west Layton will help lower enrollment at those schools.

"Putting this together is complicated by where people live," White said, indicating that the majority live near the existing schools. "We know there are no perfect boundaries. We want these to be as perfect as possible."

Crystal Henriksen said her family currently has a home under construction. They specifically chose that site so they could be within Her-

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## PILOT, from Pg. 1

rubrics before assessments are put into the grade book,” said Toone.

Board members responded positively to the update.

“This helps so many of our students be successful in college because they’ve learned how to learn and won’t have depended on

## BOUNDARY, from Pg. 1

itage Elementary boundaries for the Chinese immersion program. However, the new boundaries place her home within the new school boundaries.

Chris Whipple said his comments also stem from immersion. His children currently attend Sand Springs Elementary and participate in the immersion program. Technically, they will still attend Sand Springs because immersion students receive a variance. His neighbors, however, will not.

Whipple said there are only about seven families in his area who will be sent to the new school because their students are not in immersion. The boundary proposal, he said, is causing a divide in the neighborhood.

Jared Crawford said his neighborhood is also being split. Additionally, he said the distance to the new school removes that feeling of a neighborhood school.

“There’s a lot of houses around the schools and there’s a reason for that,” he said. “I was always raised that a school should be the heart of a neighborhood.

...This map shows neighborhoods being fractured.”

Nathan Weyburn said distance from the new school was also an issue for his family. Currently, he is in Ellison Park boundaries. He said he understands the concerns about students crossing the railroad tracks to attend Ellison, but putting his neighborhood at the new school means students will travel quite a distance on a bus

an extra credit assignment that had nothing to do with their learning,” said Board Member Brigit Gerrard.

“This is a large transition, more for parents than students, but once parents understand how this works, they will be more excited about it,” she added.

and pass one school to attend another.

Adonia Perham asked the Board to consider allowing families who had lived in the area a long time to be grandfathered into their current school’s boundaries.

Board President John Robison said the final proposal will come to the board for an initial vote on Nov. 6. The final vote is scheduled for Dec. 3.

White said every comment will be considered. Additionally, comments or questions can be emailed to [elboundarystudy@dsd-mail.net](mailto:elboundarystudy@dsd-mail.net). That email remains open until the final boundaries are adopted.

In other business, the Board of Education agreed:

- To a contract with Piercy Bowler Taylor and Kern for internal audits recommended by the Board’s Audit Committee. The company currently conducts contract work for Canyons, Tooele and Weber school districts. Business Administrator Craig Carter said the company will charge an hourly rate and give the board an estimate prior to any audits.

- To grant another 2 acre feet of water to Layton City for the new elementary school site. Previously, the board had approved granting three water shares. However, based on size, the city determined about 3.3 water shares were needed. Accounting Director Tim Leffel said the district will look at the best way to grant that share portion.

## State assessments may carry disclaimer

The Board of Education received an update on the results of the state assessment data. District Assessment Director Janeal Magalei reported the decision made by the Utah School Board is to move ahead with the RISE accountability calculations, despite repeated test interruptions.

Students in elementary, seventh and eighth-grade participated in the state RISE testing assessments earlier this year. Multiple testing glitches occurred during the process, causing a lack of confidence in the assessment results, according to Magalei.

“From an education standpoint, if the scores didn’t represent the way a student learned, how they had learned or what they had learned, then it was a cause for lack of confidence because of the challenge we had,” said Magalei.

Superintendent Reid Newey agreed with Magalei, saying, “This was a major disruption for our students. High-stakes testing is not a part of our makeup in terms of student learning and what’s important for students. My frustration is the intense level that the state board has tried to account for what occurred during the spring testing.

“They spent millions of dollars, so it’s difficult for them to step back from it and issue a complete disclaimer, which is really what it becomes for our district in terms of the way it affected our students, teachers and administrators, especially if you can see the error report, which was pages long.”

At this point, the state plans to engage with legislators to identify flexibilities relating to the state accountability requirements, according to Magalei, such as not assigning letter grades, not identifying schools that need improvement, and a disclaimer on the website dashboard displaying the scores, indicating the interruptions that occurred during testing.