

Colorado Springs School District 11
DAC (District Accountability Committee) Accreditation Subcommittee

<https://www.d11.org/Page/6992>

DAC Accreditation Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 25, 2021 (5:00pm-6:30pm)

Recording of meeting commenced at 5:03pm

Meeting Attendees:

Alexis Knox Miller, Ama Dei, Clara Hoellerbauer, Chris Wallis, David Khaliqi, Jane Tucker, Jan Rennie, Jenny Courtier, Julie Ott, Lyman Kaiser, Parth Melpakam, Sara Miller, Stacy Brisben, Trish Nixon, Velvet Stepanek

Agenda discussion:

I. **Enrollment and Projections (David Khaliqi)**

Enrollment projections are challenging. We are talking with colleagues around the region and state to determine how to do so. Our Kindergarten numbers took a big hit this year, as did Pre-School. We have more than tripled our intents to homeschool. Students are filtering out into other options. The driving question is whether or not students will come back. We are looking at pre-COVID rates of enrollment and the decline in enrollment over previous years and using those as the model for the upcoming year. We expect to see an increase in enrollment over last year but still a decline over pre-COVID years. These numbers will be used for staffing allocations.

(Jane Tucker) With children under age 12 most likely not being vaccinated until early 2022, will there be multiple options for learning online with current teachers/schools or will the Online school be the only option?

(David Khaliqi) Most likely there will be more options if we are not primarily back to a normal learning environment. This group will be kept informed as we have more information.

II. **Elementary Universal Screener Data (David Khaliqi)**

We know we had learning loss coming into the Fall. Attendance is a concern, the D-F rates with secondary students, and social/emotional health. These screener interventions are in place to make sure students are staying engaged and monitoring how we are doing in effecting student academic growth. The general message is that the majority are maintaining growth with some exceeding growth expectations. We are slowing the learning loss. Some of the strategies looking at engagement are paying off. We are still in the testing window so more data will be coming. Our growth for students is positive, but about half (on average) are still functioning below grade level in math. We are in transition of aligning the Unified School of Improvement Plan (USIP) with the Strategic Alignment Plan (SAP). We are also looking at utilizing the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) as another treatment intervention. Maintaining growth is a reasonable goal moving from quarter 4 last year to now, and setting our sights on stopping the loss first and working at leveraging gains to

exceed the growth. D and F rates are higher than pre-COVID years, we are in very unpredictable times.

(Alexis Knox-Miller) Through this pandemic, we haven't really changed a lot of our systems and one of them that we really need to be thinking about is the way that we grade. Our F rates have everybody concerned. But the truth is, our grades don't really mean mastery. They don't mean what we think they mean, and we need to start figuring that out as a district, because I think if we were grading from mastery, integrating with an equity lens, we would see something different. We haven't closed gaps with the "kill and drill" summer school method and those students who need enriching opportunities where they learn how to think about every subject that are placed in front of them and are able to solve problems and are embracing these kind of habits of mind. My equity concern is bigger than just getting each school the same resources. When Swigert came off of Priority Improvement and moved into Performance level it was the ELA department that I led that was able to do that. It was not a specific program that we used, it was based on engagement and it was around making sure that we didn't have passive learners and it was around teaching that resiliency. Every student, regardless of where they scored on that test, can use some extra schooling.

(Clara Hoellerbauer) I think we also need to really think about strategically teaching our kids to connect the dots. We, as teachers, or if you've ever done a presentation that somebody else created, you don't really know where those little tips and tricks and connecting points are, because you didn't create it yourself and that is similar to what we need to do better for our students. We need to teach them how to connect those dots and how to activate prior learning because that's one of those key things in brain research in order for them to be able to really maximize future learning. And we can do it for them so that they can then learn how to do it on their own.

(David Khaliqi) When we are moving students back and forth in different modes of learning, that is the ultimate test of resiliency to be able to function and flip in those modes and have tools that we can pull from. The adults in the system are struggling as well.

(Lyman Kaiser) We have to be careful about what are the standards and what are the criteria. Various teachers were grading a certain way but compared to how students were actually doing were very different. We have to be careful about relaxing grading. We have to have the thinking piece intact.

(Clara Hoellerbauer) We need a comparison tool or benchmark where we can see that our in-house created assessments between standards based and standardized assessments on a regular basis measure up. What we're often doing is taking opportunities away from those kids who clearly have holes in terms of their knowledge and their skills and their learning. We're also taking opportunities away from them and perpetuating the inequities in the system. We need to use the time that we have in terms of reading to fill those gaps within the reading time that we have. So that we can still give our kids the opportunities to participate in all the other things that we can offer them. Otherwise we are just continuing to perpetuate that cycle of inequity within our system.

(Alexis Knox-Miller) I think we do need to be careful about where we're giving resources, but also we need to be careful about the programming alignment. I don't want you to think when I talk about writing, I'm talking about relaxing. I'm talking about a standardized

grading process that shows mastery to a standard. That teachers standardize and formalize assessments that match the rigor of the state test and that the teacher has done enough PLC and formative assessment work.

(Ama Dei) Maybe there is a reliability issue between what we are assessing at the state, and the assessment I might throw together in my class and pass everyone with. We have to make sure those two things correlate. We need to tap into our students' willingness to engage and the reason why they should be learning and engaging in school. We need to find a balance between holding the students to a standard and rigor and engaging in their own learning. As well as making sure our assessments are actually measuring that standard that the state, or really the high standard that they need to even be successful, whether they go to college or beyond.

(Sara Miller) There is a difference between a universal screener and a standardized assessment. Universal screener is testing all kids no matter what, on the same type of standards. It doesn't matter what their learning environment is, where a standardized assessment is where all kids are in the same environment when they actually take the test. Being an online only teacher, I know that my students are not getting either the same advantage or disadvantage of being in person, whether or not a parent helps them, or whether or not they use Google to take the assessment or whether or not they don't care because they've not had standardized testing strategies built in to their everyday learning. In the classroom we can teach students strategies, we can go into deeper learning where in online learning that does not always occur. That deep learning is a struggle to take place because small group learning is a struggle, being able to walk around and monitor classroom learning is a struggle. The depth versus breadth is a struggle with online learning and that will show up in a universal screener. With a standardized assessment, my students that are online learners would be forced to go into the classroom to take the assessment. Just like everybody else. No parent help, high expectations, and a different setting. Teachers are worn out and tired. This pandemic has effected teachers as well. Test scores are not the focus this year for me. I care that my kids are still alive and that they are happy and they come to me with a smile on their face and that is the bottom line. That is a heart to heart from a teacher in the depths of it right now.

(David Khaliqi) We absolutely have to remember, and not lose sight of those daily interactions with the students, the social and emotional learning and the resilience and grit that mean so much.

(Clara Hoellerbauer) We are only assessing what we are assessing. That doesn't mean our kids aren't learning other skills. Kids are considered tech savvy these days because they have a cell phone but they don't really know how to save documents in an organized fashion, but they are now learning all of those skills. That probably would never have been at the forefront of their learning and a true focus, and these are lifelong skills that they will be able to use for years to come. The assessment tools we are using will only tell us what we ask, they will not tell us everything else that they are learning in terms of skills and content.

(Jane Tucker) The fact that we made the decision not to redistribute teachers and staff at the beginning of the year to avoid 44 students in a classroom so that we could have equitable distribution of teachers where a school like Scott lost 125 students and could move staff to fill in the gaps. It's really stressful, but it's stressful because we set it up the

way we did. If we had set things up in a way where we had to use teachers appropriately, we would have been able to relieve the teachers in the classrooms to be able to give those breaks that those teachers need.

(Lyman Kaiser) Part of the idea behind the accreditation and accountability of testing is to find out if we can show what is successful and what is not. Can we get a feeling for lack of attendance, lack of engagement, lack of different practices? What is working, what isn't and if we have the data to support it. How can we collectively work to learn from this experience and have a better overall system?

(Clara Hoellerbauer) We need to take more informal, observational qualitative data to add to the story that we are telling to get a complete picture. I think often we end up falling back to just the numbers, because the numbers are easier to understand and have less interpretation on the input side. It is not complete. How do we add all the layers to get a complete picture?

(David Khaliqi) We need a greater holistic picture. We need to understand what our short cycle key result goals are. What impact are those having in a variety of ways. These goals can be engagement, I feel safe in the hallway, I feel supported by a teacher, I feel like my voice is heard. All of these pieces coming together to form a complete picture. How does that change that entire picture? How does it change academic performance? That's the goal. The ultimate metric in the sense of the word, that as a District we are on the hook to produce educated students that can go boldly into the world with any post-secondary option that they choose. Getting out of improvement or priority improvement into performance is our goal. That's the way we've been setting goals for a while. I haven't been here for too long, but what I've seen those are the types of goals that we set and they don't work. You can't get there from here. But you can get a student to start to own their own education and mathematics, and they are starting to hear and feel that their voices heard and that they enjoy going to class.

(Jane Tucker) Is there a plan to have communication across the District regarding what works and what does not? Since we're doing something that's so brand new with the Strategic Plan to kind of have people work together to find those best practices and implement them throughout the district?

(David Khaliqi) That is the secondary goal. We need to work to have clear and easy access to the data so that at the school level and across the District it is shared.

(Ama Dei) There needs to be a mental shift that sharing what works with other schools is not giving away secrets in a protectively competitive manner, but working together for the benefit of all schools throughout the District. We all want great outcomes for our students so we need to make sure that the information is shared because they are all our kids. We need a cultural shift. We need to build trust. There needs to be a system implemented in a way where there is an expectation that this is done on a regular basis.

(Stacy Brisben) I believe at the elementary level that information is shared more but I think it is because we have more data than the middle and high schools receive. Math does not provide a lot of clean data like reading does, like DIBELS. We need a standardized math informal assessment that we can use with kids to say this is the rigor. This is where we need to be, who is doing it, who is not.

(Alexis Knox-Miller) Schools “in trouble” have more precise PLCs that are monitored closely. We need that for every school.

(Ama Dei) These things need to be built and expected and calibrated.

(Clara Hoellerbauer) This needs to be a District-wide expectation. It might look a little bit different at each school, but as soon as one school or one leader is pushing a little bit more, you tend to be out on an island. We don't need to do everything equally, but we need to do it equitably and we need to have a certain system in place that needs to be consistent so that all of our kids will collectively benefit from it.

(Sara Miller) There are good things happening at the school level with collaboration and communication amongst teacher teams.

(Lyman Kaiser) Some Principals may feel that they are putting themselves on an island and making peers mad at them and that the competition issue starts to show up in negative ways. We want them working as a team, discussing what they are doing that is working well. How do you get teachers into a real team mode to where, if one is doing really well, all of the rest are willing to look at that and see how can we improve with what each of us are good at? We need to foster this all the way down the line. We can't let rigor get away from us, but we have to always be looking at how can we use the 5 elements to improve at every level in that system. There is a lot of potential here that we could make progress for students.

(Jane Tucker) As Alexis said, it pertains to pockets of excellence versus systems of excellence. As a parent, I'm assuming I'm coming into a system that is going to offer me a consistent level of quality, but really, what happens is your experience is so different, depending on which school you happen to go to. This is definitely a problem and I am hoping this is something we can try to have some kind of impact on that will translate into academic performance and the success of our kids as well.

III. SchoolMint questions for testing (David Khaliqi)

Time did not allow for discussion

IV. CDE process for State Board hearings (David Khaliqi)

Time did not allow for discussion

Next Accreditation meeting will take place Monday, February 8th, 2021 from 5:00pm-6:30pm

DAC Accreditation meeting minutes can be found in the DAC Drop box:

<https://www.dropbox.com/login?cont=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dropbox.com%2Fh>

Meeting adjourned at 6:37pm