



**Colorado Springs School District 11**  
Superintendent Dr. Nicholas M. Gledich  
**Division of Business Services**  
Deputy Superintendent/CFO Glenn E. Gustafson, CPA  
Director of Budget and Planning Kenneth L. Wieck, CPA

**DAC Budget Subcommittee**

Web page: [District Accountability Committee \(DAC\)](#)  
Chairman Enid Ruiz-Mattei

**Meeting Notes**

November 15, 2016  
6:00 p.m.

**Members present:** Deborah Boisselle, Lara Crowell, Jamie Cushenbery Parth Melpakam, Bob Miner, Trish Nixon, Kim Polomka Jan Rennie, John Roebke, Enid Ruiz-Mattei, Carl Schueler, and Jared Welch

**Members absent:** Marilyn Eggleston, Gwen Giddens, Pete Lee, and Toni Seberger

**Ex-officio members present:** Nora Brown, Glenn Gustafson, Laura Hronik, Ken Wieck, and Becky Moore

**Member candidates present:** Parent Andrew Hug and community member Bob Null

**Guests:** Technology Education Facilitator Melissa Smead (attending for Gwen Giddens in her absence), Principal Manuel Ramsey (Richard C. Bristol Elementary), and Principal Julie Johnson (Charles M. Russell Middle School)

The meeting came to order at 6:05 p.m. Chairman Ruiz-Mattei welcomed all and thanked everyone for coming this evening. Ms. Ruiz-Mattei told the group she would have to leave early but that the subcommittee should finish up without her. Mr. Miner made a motion to accept the meeting notes, which was seconded by Ms. Nixon. The meeting notes will be posted to the DAC web page.

DAC update had no new items for discussion. The committee will meet later this week for their November meeting. Mr. Schueler gave an update about the suicide training discussed at the last meeting. He stated that it was enlightening. Ms. Boisselle remarked that mental health training, to include suicide prevention, for District staff is offered and that it was well worth the time. Mr. Welch mentioned that the "Parent University" held at Florence R. Sabin Middle School engages parents about suicide but that he finds that it is hard to get parents involved with this sensitive issue.

Mr. Gustafson engaged the group regarding the mill levy override and bond election questions failure in last week's election. First he thanked everyone for volunteering to serve on the subcommittee. He began with voter turnout numbers and percentages of the pass/fail of the two measures. He noted that across the state, school districts asking for bonds or mill levies had a passage of two to one.

The Board of Education will discuss and decide if the District should try again in 2017 or 2018. Mr. Gustafson indicated that a major school financing reform bill may be coming in 2018 and that it might be prudent to consider another election question in 2017 rather than 2018, should the Board decide to run one again. After the data on the election this year is in and analyzed, the Board will have a public meeting about the results.

Discussion of the ballot questions failure included the following observations:

- Need for better signage (yard signs not specific as to what 3C and 3D were)
- Other local school districts passed their bonds/mill levies
  - These were not tax increases but continuation of current levies
- District 11's bonds are not the same as other school districts
- Conversations with "empty-nesters" indicate an unwillingness to pay more taxes
- Older residents of the District did not like the idea of "working off" tax increase by volunteering in the District
- Misunderstanding of the difference between the bond and mill levy override, many thinking the mill levy was less costly when the opposite is true
- Perhaps think smaller or run either the bond alone or the mill levy alone
  - Momentum is currently in the District's favor for another try in 2017

- Different avenues of communication (could come out of the election analysis)
  - Due to the aging population of the District 11 community, perhaps more communication through traditional means, not just through social media
  - Information was buried on the web site
- Fair Campaign Practices Act restrictions

It was pointed out that the Board will be considering joining an ongoing lawsuit suing the governor over the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR).

Ms. Ruiz-Mattei introduced the two principals visiting with the subcommittee. They decided to discuss each of the nine questions at the same time for their respective school levels (elementary and middle school).

1. *As principals, are you having difficulty in attracting and retaining highly qualified staff and if so, for what reasons?*

Both principals indicated that they felt posting positions earlier in the hiring season (April and early May) and then hiring as soon as possible would be beneficial. Waiting to post or to hire means loss to other districts. Highly qualified math teachers are difficult to find. School demographics can also influence hiring (at-risk population).

2. *Although there is an increase in enrollment for this year, what do you see as the most cost-effective way to attract and retain students in District 11 schools?*

Both principals noted that the more diverse and rich the program offerings are, the more attractive to students and parents. Also noted was the age and appearance of the facility. Ms. Johnson indicated that engaging the elementary students and parents in the next level of schools in their “cluster” and then middle to high school students and parents can help get the families of students leveling up excited about the programs offered at the next school.

3. *What, if any, are key financial needs not fully addressed by the bond/mill levy override packages for your school? What are the highest priority needs that are addressed in the election question?*

At the elementary level, highest priorities cited were safety of students and staff, compensation, building environment, hiring counselors and more space for programs such as band, orchestra, tutoring, etc. The middle schools indicated compensation, capital improvements, technology needs as well as expansion of the alternative schools.

4. *Thinking about your school's overall operations, which area would you view as most important when allocating your school budget (e.g., building maintenance, food services, attracting and retaining staff, safe learning and working environment, etc.)?*

The elementary schools cited the need for more and up to date technology and printing costs. The middle school level spoke to attracting and retaining staff and maximizing funds available to support staff in their mission to education our students. Some schools reported issues with getting work orders completed in a timely manner.

5. *What can you, as a principal, do to make parents and the community more aware of the importance of increased funding for the success of our students?*

Both principals stated that using the available communication tools to push out information. The elementary cited that the PTA is a good route for disseminating information.

6. *Many schools suffer from needed maintenance of their school infrastructure and outdated equipment. Besides bringing these needs to the attention of the school district, are there any options you might entertain to satisfy these needs?*

Elementary schools benefit from school fund raisers, personal family donations, in-kind donations and their PTAs. Middle schools do not find parent volunteers for such projects viable due to insurance requirements and lack of real skill for an installation. Most work needed end up going through the District's Facilities Department and the principals would like to have “pre-approved” options to take care of some needs.

7. *In the last five years, how often are other sources of funding used to cover student needs (e.g., fundraising, cost transfer to parents or staff, or PTA)? Is it possible to quantify and perhaps provide an example?*

The other sources listed here are used every year with the reliance on them mounting each year. School fund raisers are usually limited to two or three a year because fundraisers become a sore area with parents. Both levels rely on their respective PTAs for much needed support to purchase or share in the purchase of items for their schools.

Title I schools have the advantage of added federal funding for high at-risk student populations and local grants or donations are always welcome (butterfly project through Rotary for example).

Working one-on-one with the District's Grants Office to "personalize" a grant for an individual school based on its needs. The principals would like the Grants Office to reach out to them.

8. *What are the top, significant budget concerns of parents? Staff?*

Consensus is parents want a safe school environment and highly qualified staff for their children.  
Consensus with staff is compensation and new/upgraded technology.

9. *With the understanding that students are the priority, what is the one additional thing the DAC Budget Subcommittee should keep in mind when making recommendations?*

Quality staff with competitive compensation.

Ken Wieck discussed the current status of budget development. He had several points for the group:

- The governor has released his 2017-18 budget request to the Joint Budget Committee (JBC)
- Inflation is cited at 2.7 percent, -1.2 percent this year
- Negative factor could rise for future funding – initial projection is 11.7 percent but currently 11.13 percent
- Approximately 2/3 of funding is from local sources, with assessed values coming in higher
- State Joint Budget Committee must still hold hearings in December – typically many changes as we move through the legislative process
- Hoping the numbers are not so late as last year
- Assessed value coming in from the county before the end of November
- Mid-year budget goes before the Board as non-action on January 11, 2017 with a possible work session on January 18, 2017 and final adoption of January 25, 2017

The subcommittee turned to a discussion of the four budget modification requests. The subcommittee has asked for the amount of funding available for mid-year budget modification requests. One of the requests had been removed and a different request added.

Questions regarding PSS-1, school-based teacher substitute budget increase:

1. How many long-term teacher substitutes do we have? How many are highly qualified?
2. Are long-term teacher substitute positions posted? If so, how?
3. If teacher substitutes are working in long-term positions (greater than 10 consecutive days) why aren't the subs currently receiving the long-term sub rate?
4. What happens on day 21 if the increase is in affect from day 11 through day 20?
5. What is the current pay rate for long-term teacher substitutes that are highly qualified?
6. What do other districts pay long term subs? Highly qualified long-term subs?

Questions regarding PSS-2, purchase of a new talent acquisition management system:

1. What will the system do to increase the efficiency from what we are currently using?
2. The request is vague. In the section "Quantification by Funding," #4 indicates the amount requested includes software, training, equipment, and implementation. Then, #5 indicates funds expended initially are for software and then additional funds for training and implementation to include an annual maintenance cost. There needs to be clarification as to what the \$100,000 is purchasing. More general information about the new system is requested.
3. What are the recurring annual maintenance costs?

Questions regarding PSS-3, Amendment 70 passage for increase in minimum wage effective January 2017:

1. Would this be handled with a transfer from the general fund to the various funds it may affect?
2. Will this affect all wage earners? Will all wage earners receive the minimum or some other amount in a raise?
3. If so, how much more would be needed to accomplish this?

Questions regarding IT-1, ten-year lease for fiber optics:

1. Has this lease been competed with other providers of this service? Has this been considered?
2. Is the District getting the best quality from Colorado Springs Utilities or is this just convenient?

3. Does the lease have to be for ten years to meet the e-rate reimbursement since it is an annual reimbursement?
4. Why is this request coming now? Couldn't it have been requested for the 2016-17 budget last spring? Or could it wait to this spring since it is not due until September 2017?

Questions regarding SUP-1, four wet portable buildings (understanding that this has been removed from the list):

1. Why has this request been removed?
2. How was the funding to be delivered to the capital reserve capital projects fund? From the general fund?
3. Is it absolutely necessary for Monroe? The capacity report indicates Monroe is only six students above capacity. Instead of investing \$200,000 in a temporary fix, could we do something else?
4. Columbia and Steele continue to have healthy "permits in" numbers – could they manage their capacity issue by minimizing these permits in?
5. What happens to these portables once the numbers drop to capacity levels? Thinking of those schools that perhaps could manage down their permits to conservative levels in order to achieve a healthy capacity number.

The subcommittee had some final topics of discussion:

- PERA reserve – next year will be the final year to be funded, then the dollars can be freed up.
- The Board of Education will meet with the various committee chairs regarding their charges, membership, etc. Ms. Brown will bring an update to the subcommittee at the next meeting.
- Concerns about asking staff for information.
- Send a "thank you" to Ms. Johnson and Mr. Ramsey

Finally, the topics for the November 29 meeting were determined. The alternative and high school principals will be sharing their reports and the subcommittee will continue their review of the mid-year budget modifications.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

**Next Meeting: November 29, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the District 11 board room.**