



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 29, 2016
6:00 p.m.

Members present: Deborah Boisselle, Jamie Cushenbery, Marilyn Eggleston, Gwen Giddens, Parth Melpakam, Bob Miner, Trish Nixon, Jan Rennie, John Roebke, and Carl Schueler

Members absent: Lara Crowell, Pete Lee, Kim Polomka, Enid Ruiz-Mattei, Toni Seberger, and Jared Welch

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

Member candidates present: Parent Andrew Hug

Guests: Principal Darin Smith (Francisco Vasquez de Coronado High School), and Principal Greg Wiley (Nicolai Tesla Equal Opportunity School)

The meeting came to order at 6:00 p.m. Chairman Ruiz-Mattei was unable to attend this evening so co-chairman John Roebke welcomed all and thanked everyone for coming this evening. Ms. Nixon made a motion to accept the meeting notes, which was seconded by Ms. Cushenbery. The meeting notes will be posted to the DAC web page.

Mr. Schueler presented the DAC update. The last meeting was well attended. The DAC is continuing with training and focusing on D11 family involvement. Also noted was that the DAC and its subcommittees are still operating under their presumed charges and membership. There will be two major training events in the coming year and he once again stated that the membership subcommittee is in need of members.

Mr. Roebke introduced the two principals visiting with the subcommittee. Mr. Smith spoke first and Mr. Wiley second.

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 has been beneficial and would like to continue to post and hire as soon as possible. Highly qualified math, science, and special education teachers are the most difficult to hire. High schools feel that the higher student/teacher ratios in District 11 and the condition of the District's buildings can have a negative impact on hiring. Alternatives stated that the "alternative label" creates a challenge in attracting staff with part-time or divided duties not attractive to candidates. Both cited competitive pay as a challenge. On the positive side, the District's insurance package is attractive and Mr. Wiley stated that the smaller, more personal atmosphere with the alternatives are attractive to some potential hires. Most emphasized was to increase and pay for professional development outside of the contract days.

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 unique, diverse, and rich program offerings are attractive to students. At the high schools, this would include activities, clubs and athletics too. Increase marketing of diverse programs and explain the benefits. It was noted such offerings may come at a higher price tag. Finally, grounds and facility appearance are another priority to attract and retain students. It was noted that this is anecdotal and data needs to be collected, however, the committee generally agreed that appearances do have an impact on attracting prospective families.

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?*

Expansion of the alternative schools and programs were not addressed. These programs and schools have the highest growth rate at this time. Another high priority need is reliable computer network and access for all students and staff. This is key for 21st century learning and the on-line schools. Upgrades to buildings was also cited due to the impact of first impressions when attracting new students. Another important point is the need for staff to support high-need students with mental health and community resources.

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.)?*

School budgets must be balanced with top priorities being student learning, professional development and safety. A healthy school climate is vital to learning. Both principals emphasized the need for **quality** professional development, which is most valued and appreciated by staff.

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?*

Mr. Smith indicated that school accountability committees and “coffee with the principal” meetings where discussion can take place regarding school issues as well as open houses with other school districts. Mr. Wiley indicated more principal involvement outside the duty day with translators available since the alternative programs have a higher number of non-native English speakers. Both advocated projecting a positive outlook.

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?*

Mr. Smith cited site based management of budgets and decision making to promote responsibility and efficiency. Personalizing operations and budgeting at the building level would be akin to personalized learning for students. Mr. Wiley stated building rental revenue is used for such needs but would that he would rather have those funds be used to support instruction in the classroom rather than facility maintenance.

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 high schools find that fundraising and class or activity fees are the most widely used alternative sources of funding. Because of the poverty level at many alternative programs, fundraising has not been successful nor is cost transfer to parents. The alternatives reach out to the community for donations or use rental dollars to fund activities. Funding sources for alternatives also come from state and federal grants and the D11 Foundation. The subcommittee would like to see how much these funding sources amount to.

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

Parents want the resources, facilities, technology, and teachers to deliver quality education for their children. Staff concerns are reliable technology, making a livable wage, being treated professionally, and getting trained to implement the District's mission.

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?*

High schools: training teachers to implement a 21st century model of instruction and assessment. This includes paying them on days they train as well as the training expenses (fees, hotel, transportation, food, etc.).

Alternative schools: keeping dollars close to the classroom.

Further topics of conversation with the two principals included:

- Further discussion of teacher staff development and keeping it meaningful
- Advantages and disadvantages of combo classes and “teaches on carts”
- Tesla moving to a separate location from Roy J. Wasson Academic Campus
- Alternative programs and schools lack of funding because they are so small
- At-risk students lack of resources to participate in athletics or other outside school activities as well as the inability to support class or program fees, athletic fees, etc.
- Building utilization
- Network not efficient and reliable, too slow – so many devices in the schools increases the load – bandwidth issues

- Makeover at John Adams Elementary has made a positive impact on students, staff, and its community
- Need for more mental health support and personnel
- Disadvantages of grants – short term, not sustainable, hiring to fulfill grant program can be difficult, especially if only one or two years in length
- Frustrations of students who are behind their peers and the challenges for staff to catch them up
- Growth of the alternative schools, waiting lists for Achieve Online and Tesla
- Student resources lacking at home – both financial and emotional – overwhelming for staff to help these students
- Restructuring library time for more than 30 minutes before and after school
 - Students lack computers and other resources at home

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

- The final student count is flat for this year, first time in a long time it did not decline
- Assessed value from the county is in and the mills are up slightly – tax increase of about \$1.19 for a \$200,000 home
- No rescission of funding is expected for 2016-17
- 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 had some final topics of discussion:

- The subcommittee's questions regarding the budget modification requests will have answers for the December meeting
- Send a "thank you" to Mr. Smith and Mr. Wiley

Finally, the topic for the December 13 meeting will be drafting any recommendation to the Board of Education regarding the 2016-17 mid-year budget modifications.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Next Meeting: December 13, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the District 11 board room.