

10.9.2017 Cherry Creek School District School Board Meeting Summary

Thunder Ridge Middle School

For agenda, minutes and presentations, see <http://boe.cherrycreekschools.org/co/chcr/Board.nsf/Public>.

Approval of October 9, 2017 agenda; Approval of September 5, 2017 Special Board of Education Meeting and September 11, 2017 Regular Board of Education Meeting minutes.

Communications from the Board of Education and Superintendent Bull:

- Cardboard Challenge;
- The new school delay schedule for inclement weather includes elementary school starts and bus pick-ups 60 minutes later and middle and high school on a 90 minute delay for school starts and busing.
- Proclamations this month include National Principal Month and Safe Schools Week, among others.
- Recognition of Teacher Cadets.

Student Leader Reports. Student leaders from Eaglecrest and Grandview High Schools describe academic, community service, athletic, artistic and other extracurricular achievements.

Special Report 1: Hiring Update by Todd Fukai, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Jennifer Squire, Director of Human Resources, and Amanda Waleski, Director of Human Resources. To access the presentation, go to <http://boe.cherrycreekschools.org/co/chcr/Board.nsf/Public>. The report addressed hiring and staffing of classified employees, licensed employees and administrators for the 2017-2018 school year, which was marked by a decrease in the number of positions filled despite an increase in applicants, with particular shortages in food service, bus drivers, and licensed employees. This year, CCSD saw an increase in the population of diverse staff and a small increase in the number of applicants for administrator positions. Although CCSD strives to hire employees reflective of student demographics, there is about a 25% gap between the student population of color and employees of color, prompting recruitment and retention efforts to close this gap. Overall, there remains a decline in the number of college graduates for teaching positions (“education completers”) and 30% of Colorado teachers are retirement age, presenting great opportunities for incoming education completers. CCSD has low turnover compared to elsewhere in the state. A large percentage of new hires are from out of state. CCSD is committed to “growing our own” from student teachers hosted in district and continues to recruit in hard to fill areas by collaborating with colleges and universities. Approximately half of CCSD applicants are elementary education teachers. Teachers with culturally and linguistically diverse endorsement are in high demand. The quality of life in Colorado remains a big attraction, but the cost of living is a detriment in metro school districts, not just CCSD.

Audience Comments

- Five Sky Vista middle school parents expressed concern about a teacher’s political comments and the social justice focus of the extended core course she teaches, including topics such as DACA protests and police brutality. They also objected to a specific guest speaker.
- A teacher who has taken CCSD’s Beyond Diversity training expressed pride in the district’s leadership in equity work and referred a parent’s feedback about the above extended core course as the most thought provoking class in which students strengthen critical thinking skills. The

speaker asked the Board to consider whether we want to silence one of the few teachers of color we have and reminded them that the children are watching.

- Another teacher spoke in support of the above-described class, including support of content that addresses LGBT issues, support of diverse students, bullying prevention and suicide prevention, all of which further the district goal of inclusive excellence. She called to task the parents objecting to the course for their own white privilege.
- An AP/honor society high school student spoke in support of the above-referenced class and its social justice content, which connects real world issues to education and prompts students to learn about issues to form their own opinions.
- A teacher with an elementary and special education dual degree who taught in Massachusetts with a diverse demographic of challenging students described the physical danger she experiences at East Ridge Elementary. She reported that the administration systemically dismisses and fails to respond to concerns about student and teacher safety, sending the message to teachers that they do not matter. After a lack of response to repeated emails about a student's threat to kill her, she resigned out of fear for her safety.
- A speaker expressed concern again about substitute teacher coverage issues, affecting teacher morale and student learning. She reported that office personnel beg teachers to cover during their planning periods. She reported that kids are divided into different classes and "babysat" for the class period. She met with district personnel to brainstorm solutions and make recommendations, concerned about the impact of the substitute shortage on student success.
- A former president of CCEA and coach for 32 years spoke in support of Grandview football and the upcoming final Cajun night in the press box at Grandview High School.
- The CCEA president thanked Mr. Perlis for his service and wished him good luck. The speaker stated that CCEA looks forward to working through change with the CCSD School Board.

Consent Agenda: Resolutions 229-17 to 245-17 were approved unanimously and without polling or discussion.

Special Report 2: Climate/Safety/Wellness Survey Results: How Are the Kids? To access the presentation, go to <http://boe.cherrycreekschools.org/co/chcr/Board.nsf/Public>. The survey of students, parents and staff of all elementary schools and randomly selected middle and high schools, has been administered every other year since 2000 and gathers data on how safe and supportive students see their school environment as being and how they are doing on skills, risk behaviors and supportive factors. The report addresses research-based programs to build positive and supportive schools through the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program, and to provide culturally responsive behavior management and discipline, integrating equity work into all of the research-based programs. PBIS is a proactive system for behavior management that provides structure for discipline in the classroom, fosters student/teacher relationships, decreases discipline referrals and helps prevent bullying, with some schools adding No Place for Hate and restorative practice programs. Other programs include Mindful Life to address stress and anxiety, primarily in elementary schools. There has been a significant increase in the number of threat assessments conducted since the Arapahoe High School shooting and in the number of suicide assessments, particularly in middle school and spiking in 9th grade. The report addressed data regarding the unlikeliness of students disclosing their own suicidal thoughts but their greater likeliness of intervening on behalf of a friend, often telling an adult family member. Students reported not disclosing suicidal thoughts because it's hard to talk about, the belief that people would overreact, the belief that people would judge them, and fear that

others would find out. To address these concerns, the Signs of Suicide (“SOS”) program used in all secondary schools teaches students about depression and how to support peers, including contacting trusted adults for help, to “acknowledge, support and tell.” From 2007 to 2016, self-reports of substance use decreased in high school and middle school regarding alcohol, marijuana, binge drinking, prescription drugs and others, although self-reported use increases from middle school to high school, after which it decreases. Data based on the prior school schedule – before the changed start times – includes students reports of 6.5 hours of sleep per night for high school, under 8 for middle school and 8.5 for elementary school. Students connected to others were less likely to report suicidal thoughts or alcohol use, which emphasizes the importance of relationships with adults in the school, adults in the home and other students. GLBT students were much more at risk for anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. All students need positive supportive environments where they feel socially accepted and emotionally safe.

Next Regular Meeting: Monday, November 13, 2017, 7 p.m., Village East Elementary School, 1433 South Oakland Street, Aurora CO 80012.