



COLORADO
Department of Education

Colorado State Board of Education

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
BEFORE THE
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMISSION
DENVER, COLORADO
June 12, 2014, Part 4

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT on June 12, 2014, the
above-entitled meeting was conducted at the Colorado
Department of Education, before the following Board
Members:

Paul Lundeen (R), Chairman
Marcia Neal (R), Vice Chairman
Elaine Gantz Berman (D)
Jane Goff (D)
Pam Mazanec (R)
Debora Scheffel (R)
Angelika Schroeder (D)



1 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: I'm running out of gas
2 and I probably need another cup of coffee. You know,
3 dialoguing in nature and informal in style, so I guess I'm
4 (indiscernible) time (indiscernible) set the tone a little
5 bit better.

6 We will probably be back together in a more
7 formal setting in the future, and this is it impresses
8 staff. This is to give us context, but hopefully pick up
9 on the nuances and (indiscernible) some bases with the
10 situations that we're dealing with. So, we wanted you to
11 have a chance to make a case. If you would kind of
12 constrain yourself to 20 minutes, 30 minutes max in terms
13 of your presentation and give us, you know, an equal amount
14 of time, 20 or 30 minutes, for questions and interaction
15 we'd certainly be grateful for that.

16 So, with that kind of a (indiscernible) I
17 would say on behalf of the board, welcome. We're really
18 glad you're here. And then hand it to the commissioner.

19 COMM. HAMMOND: Thank you very much. We're
20 probably, again, the only board (indiscernible) I know of
21 that has a (indiscernible).

22 But, anyway, it's really my pleasure to have
23 you here today, (indiscernible) and Don, so I was pleased
24 to hear (indiscernible) was going to work with you
25 (indiscernible) appreciate that. Spending some time also



1 to tell your story (indiscernible) on your road to
2 improvement. So, with that (indiscernible) note, shall I
3 turn it over to you, Kermit (ph), or Debbie?

4 MS. CALDWELL: I'll let Kermit take center
5 stage.

6 COMM. HAMMOND: Thank you.

7 MR. SNYDER: First we'll go ahead and
8 introduce ourselves, so you get an idea of the roles that
9 we play in the district. So, first, I'm Kermit Snyder,
10 I've been Superintendent in Rocky Ford School District for
11 three years now. Just completed the third year. And then
12 -- so I'll go and let folks introduce themselves.

13 MR. NAPPA: Yeah. Thank you, Commissioner,
14 for calling us to come up tell our story. I'm Don Nappa
15 (ph). I've been on the Rocky Ford Board for 12 years, and
16 on the CASB board with Angelika, and thoroughly enjoyed all
17 of those experiences. And I'm here today as part of the
18 local effort to talk about and hear from other as to what -
19 - where we're at and what we can do.

20 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. I'm Debbie Caldwell.
21 I am on my third term on the school board, and I'm also the
22 school district nurse. This is my 14th year in the school
23 district. So, I've been able to see our district from the
24 inside and the outside. It gives me a nice vision of all
25 of that, so thank you very much for allowing us to come up



1 and visit with you today.

2 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And yay school nurses!

3 MS. CALDWELL: Yeah.

4 MS. LUNDQUIST: Hi. I'm Sandra Lundquist.

5 I'm the principal of the K-2 building in Rocky Ford, but I

6 also taught previously in the Rocky Ford School District.

7 Thirty years I've been in that district, so born and bred

8 there. Went to the school district, so I was proud to be

9 an administrator in that district.

10 MR. BEARD: And I'm John Beard (ph), I'm the

11 intermediate principal, grade 3 through 6, first year in

12 Rocky Ford, more than 30 years in education, so it took a

13 while to find home, but I'm finally did. Great

14 (indiscernible) be here.

15 MR. SNYDER: So, I thought it would be a

16 good thing to bring Don with us, but after the first couple

17 minutes here (indiscernible). So, hopefully it goes well

18 there. And, of course, these type of situations -- I'm

19 glad they informal setting. I can't imagine how we'd feel

20 in a more formal setting. I hope that we can avoid that

21 and certainly right now I'm kind of thankful that I'm in

22 marathon training mode, because I think my heartbeat's a

23 little bit quicker now, so -- but we don't have too many

24 slides here. We certainly meant it to be more of a

25 discussion as well, and just to give you an overview of



1 where we're at as a district, some of the work that we've
2 tried to do and certainly answer any questions that you may
3 have.

4 First, is to give you a little bit of
5 background about the school district. We are a rural
6 district, obviously. Approximately 850 students is what we
7 have, (indiscernible) to preschool all the way up through
8 12th grade. Three school buildings right now. We have a
9 primary building that houses the preschool through 2nd
10 grade, an intermediate building that's 3rd grade through
11 6th grade, and then a secondary building, 7th grade through
12 12th grade.

13 Our roughly 60 to 70 students per grade
14 level at the -- we've experienced declining enrollment,
15 approximately 2 percent per year for many years. I think I
16 put on there 20 plus years. And so we're talking about a
17 district that probably maxed out at around 1400 students at
18 one point, and we're down to 850 students now, so continues
19 to decline. We've experienced a little bit of
20 stabilization in the past couple of years, but really don't
21 anticipate it to grow at all. We'll be lucky to stabilize
22 with our enrollment.

23 Demographics-wise 80 percent of our students
24 qualify for free and reduced lunch, and 80 percent of our
25 students are Hispanic. And it's the free and reduced lunch



1 piece that seems to indicate the bigger challenge there.

2 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I'm sorry, I didn't
3 hear you. How many free and reduced lunch students?

4 MR. SNYDER: 80 percent.

5 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: 80 percent.

6 MR. SNYDER: Mm-hmm. So -- but along with
7 that background, it's one of the reasons why I wanted Don
8 here was to talk a little bit about the autonomy. I, you
9 know, our mascot is one of those that's a little bit
10 (indiscernible) across the state, we're the millionaires,
11 and our mascot just goes right with our main staple with
12 our economy. And in -- and that's taken a hit as well. So
13 hopefully Don can chime in a little bit and share a little
14 bit on information on that.

15 MR. BEARD: Sure. Okay. Quickly, most of -
16 - as you all probably realized, most of Southeast Colorado
17 is dependent upon agriculture, and that's what has driven
18 the different districts and their health, is how the
19 economy's gone and how agriculture has gone.

20 And we've experienced a number of years of
21 significant drought, and we still are there, though it's
22 not too far north that we -- things get a little greener,
23 finally. But that has had a devastating affect on our
24 ability to maintain agricultural jobs. And agriculture
25 jobs are what keeps the school district stable. And that



1 has been a real challenge as we've not been able to farm or
2 ranch -- that's -- folks have had to let go their help.
3 It's caused us not to be able to operate our packing sheds,
4 onions especially, thought the melons are coming back after
5 a devastating affair two years ago.

6 But all of the -- what all that means is the
7 infrastructure that is Rocky Ford, is Mansa (indiscernible)
8 Fowler, all the way down the line, Las Animas and -- it's
9 so driven by whether or not we're able to maintain jobs.
10 And as agriculture comes back we will -- we will hopefully
11 be in a position to stabilize the situation for us, but
12 that's -- and it's not just Rocky Ford, but I think you'll
13 appreciate that of the 25 or 26 rural school district out
14 in Southeast Colorado, they're all pretty much under the
15 same situation. And it just kind of (indiscernible) some
16 out -- other outside reasons is what we find ourselves in
17 the status that we are.

18 But, it's -- and I think that's pretty much
19 it. It's -- I -- if you've not been out to that area, we
20 invite you out. Bring a vehicle and we'll load you up with
21 melons this year. The crop has started up wonderful thanks
22 to the folks along the front range and the mountains north
23 of here.

24 MR. SNYDER: So, with the status of that
25 economy in mind, think about this district that's declining



1 in enrollment and then we were hit with the period of years
2 where there was a cut in school budgets as well, and so
3 when I first applied into the district I remember doing my
4 homework on the district and reading that one of the boasts
5 of the district was that they were able to maintain a ratio
6 of students at 15 students to 1 teacher. I can tell you
7 that's not the case. In fact, not only were we not able to
8 do that, but we had to close down a school. And so,
9 consolidating down from four school buildings to three
10 school buildings, and so now we're looking at more like 25
11 students per teacher. Still a little bit better than what
12 I experienced when I taught in Aurora Public Schools, but
13 still it's more students than what we were used to with
14 Rocky Ford.

15 Other changes, personnel changes. So, our
16 building that has struggled the most is intermediate
17 building, Jefferson Intermediate School, grades three
18 through six. The Rocky Ford Junior-Senior High School;
19 it's on priority improvement this year. The first year
20 that it's on priority improvement. It dropped down from
21 improvement, and mainly because of ACT scores which, by the
22 way, were -- we've got ACT scores in, and that won't hold
23 us back anymore. But -- they look good this year.

24 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Okay.

25 MR. SNYDER: But the intermediate school,



1 though, continues to struggle and was on that turnaround
2 status this last year. It was the first time that they
3 came out of that turnaround status. They're now on
4 priority improvement, and that staff -- we have experienced
5 turnover there. Some of that is definitely intentional on
6 the part of the district, and another part of it not
7 intentional, just losing teachers to bigger districts, but
8 over 50 percent of our staff has changed, and in just the
9 past couple of years, including leadership. Mr.
10 (indiscernible) being the first year that he's
11 (indiscernible) that filled.

12 So, some definite challenges there, but I've
13 also tried to make some intentional moves there to put the
14 right staff in place.

15 We were, with the TDIP Grant, that
16 partnership, we're able to partner with the vendor. The
17 vendor that we selected was the Flippen Group. Yeah.
18 Yeah.

19 Yeah. That helped a little bit with the
20 change process, I think, because it was okay for the
21 teachers to say, "That Flippen Group".

22 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: That's probably their
23 entire (indiscernible).

24 MR. SNYDER: Probably was.

25 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: They were (indiscernible)



1 on that (indiscernible) twice today.

2 MR. SNYNDER: Yeah. And we brought in their
3 founder. He came and -- to speak with us, Flip Flippen,
4 and (indiscernible) provided a keynote speech for us one
5 year. But I, you know, with that vendor what we did is
6 bought into several strands. So, we had taken the KD
7 reports and had compared that with a preliminary review of
8 the district that the Flippen Group provided, and from that
9 selected what the priorities should be for the district and
10 bought into a few different strands.

11 That one of those was curriculum development
12 and that was by far and away the biggest need. We did not
13 have a valid curriculum in place. That needed to be done.
14 So, they were going to help us with that. In addition to
15 the curriculum there was a lesson planning format, a design
16 and delivery, a way to help teachers to focus on the
17 research-based instructional strategies, but not only to
18 plan, but to follow up on the other end with conducting
19 regular classroom walkthroughs for every classroom every
20 week, and providing some good, solid feedback on that with
21 the teachers.

22 In addition to that, and so we bought into a
23 leadership strand, and leadership blueprint is what it was
24 called, and then also a climate and culture piece for
25 students called Capturing Kids Hearts. So, we bought into



1 those strands, and received professional development from
2 those.

3 And continuous (indiscernible), so the
4 partnership with the Flippen Group has ended, the three
5 years of the grant ended. We did have a little bit of
6 carry-over for our fourth year, and then we had applied for
7 a grant specifically for Jefferson Intermediate School,
8 received that, and continued to work with the Flippen Group
9 this past year.

10 This (indiscernible) goal marked at the end
11 of that partnership with the Flippen Group in terms of
12 having that direct service to us. Now we've built in ways
13 to continue that work and make sure that we have the
14 leadership in place so that we can continue forward with
15 those initiatives. So, that's the plan moving forward. In
16 addition to that, we've got some work going on now that
17 we've started with the University of Virginia, and so
18 that'll take us the next step, so the one piece that we
19 felt was certainly missing with our work with the Flippen
20 Group was, yes, you're holding teachers accountable to
21 stick with those curriculum documents, but how accountable
22 can you hold them if you're walking through once a week,
23 you get one snapshot of four minutes, and so -- and then
24 when you meet with them at the end of the quarter, to
25 determine how well they're stuck with that information



1 that's on that curriculum document. And it's tough to make
2 sure that that accountability is there.

3 So, we'd already been thinking of trying to
4 increase that, either one of two ways, either to take
5 lesson plans and you review every lesson plan that comes
6 your way and make sure that it's all aligned, or you look
7 at it on the back end of things, and at the end of the
8 quarter you have some sort of benchmark that's aligned to
9 those curriculum documents and then conduct some sort of
10 (indiscernible) analysis off of that.

11 As we've began our work with the University
12 of Virginia, that's the route that they have really
13 encouraged us to grow. That seems to be the bulk of that
14 program. Really data-driven, digging into those benchmarks
15 that are aligned to those standards and conducting an
16 (indiscernible) analysis within 48 hours so instructional
17 changes can be made if needed.

18 So, we'll start that work. We've already
19 visited the campus once, just three of us, and we'll be
20 headed back this summer to do that. There are a few other
21 things that we're going to continue to do, and so that
22 includes -- so I talked a little bit about the
23 accountability for adhering to the curriculum. We'll
24 continue definitely those walkthroughs in the classrooms,
25 that's super important to us. With the quarterly benchmark



1 assessments aligned with the curriculum, the continuing
2 through our work with design and deliver.

3 We -- Jefferson has adopted a PBIS
4 (indiscernible) their (indiscernible) culture to help
5 support the Capturing Kids Hearts piece, so we're
6 continuing to make improvements there. And then on the
7 couple of bigger programs; one is our JumpStart program.

8 So, what this is, is in part of our efforts
9 are to find out what is it that we can do to help to move
10 (indiscernible) along. And what is it that other districts
11 have done that are in our same type of circumstances that
12 have had success. So, as we stretched out to beyond our
13 district boundaries to see who is in that same type of
14 position, really Center School District seemed to be, you
15 know, the closest in terms of the size and demographics to
16 us. As we reached out to them, they've been -- it felt
17 like one of the things that when (indiscernible) the most
18 for them was this JumpStart program.

19 So, JumpStart, in regard to students are
20 being held accountable for how well they perform on the
21 assessments. If they are not proficient, they're then
22 required to attend JumpStart. If they do not attend
23 JumpStart, there's some very severe consequences there.
24 So, at the elementary grade levels, age (indiscernible) to
25 10, we will actually retain that. At the secondary level,



1 if they are asked to -- required to attend because of the
2 certain content area, then if they don't attend, they will
3 lose the credit for that content area. And we'll ask them
4 to make up that credit, either by retaking a class
5 physically, or we'll provide a -- or if there's also a way
6 for them to take it online with extra support to do that.

7 And so focus is in this environment that's
8 been created with accountability, not just for districts
9 and school buildings, but also now for teachers with data,
10 so as you go through the classrooms and just listen to
11 students, you know, you run into these situations where the
12 kids would say, "I know that teacher's going to be
13 evaluated based on my test scores, and so I'm going to
14 perform poorly, because I don't like that teacher." And
15 when you're talking about a school district as small as
16 ours and you have a few students that do that, it hurts us.
17 It's a big percentage. And so, by finding a way to help
18 students understand the importance of these things, that's
19 why we -- our goal with this (indiscernible) the JumpStart
20 program. We had a summer school in place, but as you can
21 see from the data, we just weren't seeing the
22 (indiscernible) from summer school.

23 With the JumpStart already with our
24 benchmark data, with our (indiscernible) testing at the end
25 of the year, we saw increases. And again, as I mentioned



1 with the D-ACT scores, our -- I think our composite average
2 last year was 16.7, on average right now is 18.1.

3 Now, yes, we put in place some additional
4 supports to help get students up and (indiscernible)
5 schoolers, but we feel that this JumpStart Program is
6 already starting to (indiscernible) kids and helping
7 (indiscernible) them in the right direction there.

8 In addition to that, we thought a youth club
9 that has experienced some success, an after-school program.
10 But when we take a look at the numbers there, there were --
11 we were missing quite a few students from an area of the
12 town that we really needed to address. So we've got an
13 area of the town where there's some -- a subdivision with
14 subsidized housing, and it's on the other side of town, so
15 on the far (indiscernible) the north side of the tracks,
16 and so we took a look at our attendance numbers, only 4 of
17 those students out of the 220 that live in that area were
18 attending our extended day services.

19 And so, it would -- taking a look at that,
20 how can the parents -- transportation was an issue. They
21 needed to cross a highway to be able to get over to that
22 after-school program. Even if they had the transportation,
23 they were still reluctant with that, and so we -- or had
24 this opportunity to work with, again, another outside
25 organization, El Pomar, in this case, and approach them and



1 talk about this possibility of doing some services on that
2 side of town as well, and so they are going to provide an
3 additional \$330,000 over the next three years to help
4 support us in starting up a program over there. And that
5 will look very similar to our current youth club. And so,
6 we hope to experience the success there.

7 Like I said, only four of those students
8 were attending. Out of those 220 students that live there
9 the attendance rate was 81 percent, versus the average
10 attendance rate for the district, which was just over 95
11 percent.

12 Achievement numbers, just over -- close to
13 50 percent of those students were not proficient in
14 reading. Over 60 percent were not proficient in math.
15 Still a -- so those numbers are worse than what the
16 district's averages were, so we were missing a big
17 demographic there that we needed to address somehow. We
18 were doing it during the regular school day with
19 intervention supports. We got (indiscernible). We're
20 never going to catch up by keeping the same amount of time
21 that every other school district has. We need to extend
22 that day somehow, extend those services somehow. So that's
23 the intent with this after-school program in
24 (indiscernible).

25 So, we've got a lot of things going on there



1 that's to try to continue improvements there, and sure --
2 and Don and (indiscernible) anything else on that, that I'm
3 missing?

4 MR. NAPPA: Think that covers most. I just,
5 one quick anecdote, well, you know, we put in the JumpStart
6 program, started getting this going, and had some pretty
7 unique comments. Like, one of my sixth-grade students
8 said, "Why did you wait till now to make us care?" It
9 really does have an impact directly for those -- for those
10 kids. Like, "Wow, this is important to me now."

11 MS. NEAL: Is the JumpStart is a just before
12 school (indiscernible), what (indiscernible)?

13 MR. NAPPA: Two weeks.

14 MS. NEAL: Two weeks out of (indiscernible).

15 MR. SNYDER: Yeah. Two weeks. We'll start
16 on August 18th, and then the rest of the students will come
17 in in on September 2nd.

18 MS. CALDWELL: But we'll have our entire
19 staff there, so they'll be smaller classes, but hopefully
20 they'll get more intensive with learning.

21 MS. NEAL: Yeah, (indiscernible). And if
22 you're able to do it without spending a whole lot more
23 money (indiscernible).

24 MS. CALDWELL: Right. It should -- it stays
25 right within our general budget.



1 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah. We were able to
2 find a way to keep the same number of contract days for
3 teachers, and so we're not out a lot on salary expenses
4 there. So, we think it'll be something that should work.
5 Spent some time in Center (indiscernible) and Center
6 (indiscernible). So, Don and Cindy and other -- the
7 assistant principal that we have (indiscernible) this
8 summer to figure out all the details on that.

9 And they -- from what I hear other districts
10 are certainly interested in that, but right now they want
11 to wait to see what happens in Rocky Ford.

12 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So the JumpStart is,
13 like, just an intense -- (indiscernible) intense for the
14 students who are needing -- have (indiscernible) certain
15 (indiscernible) get them ready (indiscernible) the end of
16 the school year.

17 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. If they're proficient
18 or advanced then they don't have to attend, but it's for
19 those students that are not. And they will know before the
20 beginning of school who has to go, we'll be sending out
21 notices, you know, letters to the parents.

22 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And this is the first
23 year that you'll be doing it, though?

24 MS. CALDWELL: Yes.

25 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So what -- how will you



1 do that? Like --?

2 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Well, we'll be crunched
3 for time, because we do -- while we do have ACT scores
4 back, and we do have our own benchmark assessment scores
5 for the primary-level students, we can already begin
6 planning there, but for the bulk of the students we don't
7 have the scores back yet. We don't know if they'll be
8 required to or not.

9 MS. CALDWELL: We can't tell.

10 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So it'll be a quick
11 turnaround from when we receive those state assessment
12 scores, taking a look at where the students will
13 (indiscernible), grouping them by weaknesses and strengths,
14 and then planning some lessons for that, all before August
15 18th.

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: But you'll be looking
17 at the data personally, too.

18 MS. CALDWELL: Right.

19 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Since (indiscernible)
20 your instruction around that.

21 MS. CALDWELL: Right.

22 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yep.

23 MS. CALDWELL: Yeah. And they'll be grouped
24 according to their need. So, yep.

25 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Okay.



1 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah. We'll need to
2 take advantage of all the teaching staff, and so in doing
3 that we're going to take advantage of a P.E. teacher to
4 teach a two-week math class that we need to provide some
5 support there with the lesson planning and any sort of
6 assessment to formally assess what will happen there.
7 Yeah.

8 MS. CALDWELL: And it's been well received
9 by our parents. You know, we've had community meetings to
10 discuss it. We've handed out fliers, and parents are very
11 supportive of it. They're -- they are anxious to see how
12 well it works, and so are we. But we do have a good
13 support for it.

14 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So, do any of them ever
15 (indiscernible) interest in sitting in, observing, doing --
16 parents? None?

17 MS. CALDWELL: We do have a few parents that
18 volunteer in the school district, but it seems to be always
19 just the same ones. But they'll help out as much as they
20 can.

21 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Will you
22 (indiscernible)?

23 MS. CALDWELL: (indiscernible). Yep.

24 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And that's part of the
25 intent with this after-school youth program, is to get some



1 parents involved with that and help them to come to
2 understand what sort of routines need to be in place so
3 that that kid has a good environment to be able to study
4 and to finish up their homework at home.

5 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Please, go ahead.

6 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (indiscernible).

7 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Oh, okay.

8 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Just a couple of
9 overall questions. One, I'm assuming you know what it's
10 going to take to get off the clock.

11 MR. SNYDER: Pardon?

12 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: How close do you think
13 you are, and then my follow-up would be what else do you
14 think you still need to get there?

15 MR. SNYDER: So, one of the successes that
16 I'm just going to mention that we experienced is starting
17 to -- starting to see those scores increase, but it starts
18 with those lower grade levels, with third grade and fourth
19 grade. So, by fixing this universal issue that we have,
20 this tier-one issue of curriculum, students that are
21 already two years behind in curriculum, we're not able to
22 catch them up in time to see an increase in the state
23 scores. And so -- but we do have a (indiscernible) time
24 for our third graders and fourth-graders and that'll build
25 up as they grow through the system.



1 So, this last year third grade and fourth
2 grade both beat the state averages in math. Math of all
3 things. We thought that was our biggest weakness. But we
4 beat the state average in math first, before we did it in
5 reading. Now, taking a look at third-grade scores this
6 year, with the reading scores already returned, 83 percent
7 proficiency, which beats the state average there by quite a
8 ways, only 4 percent are unsatisfactory, which again, is a
9 lot better than the state's average of 10 percent. And so,
10 we're seeing success there, so we feel that we fixed that
11 curriculum issue. Now as we grow those students through
12 that system, we'll start to see those scores increase.

13 Now the performance frameworks, with the way
14 those calculations work with more weight being placed on
15 growth, that's going to be the big issue. So, third-grade
16 scores were already fairly high last year from our
17 benchmark assessment scores. We don't anticipate a huge
18 increase, we anticipate that we will maintain from third to
19 fourth, but to see the additional growth points off of
20 that, I don't think so.

21 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: But in the areas where
22 your kids are way behind there is a great opportunity for
23 growth. If, in fact, you're focusing on it. I mean, I --
24 we don't have -- (indiscernible) wanted to say, we're not
25 being able to (indiscernible) about (indiscernible) your



1 (indiscernible) that you'd (indiscernible) higher. We
2 particularly (indiscernible) from what you describe,
3 significant.

4 MR. SNYDER: And that's why our junior-
5 senior high we're not beyond turnaround or priority
6 improvement, because they do experience those growth
7 scores. Except that intermediate school where achievement
8 status is already higher, and so is there really the great
9 capacity to turn those growth scores? Maybe at the sixth-
10 grade level. Yes, at the sixth-grade level.

11 MS. CALDWELL: In our JumpStart
12 (indiscernible).

13 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Or you could raise the
14 bar. There's nothing to -- we don't have a ceiling in
15 Colorado. (indiscernible) we have one in (indiscernible)
16 hopefully our assessments don't create the ceiling.

17 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Right.

18 MS. CALDWELL: Right. Yeah. And I think
19 our JumpStart program will help those kids in the higher
20 grades, so that we can raise that bar for them and that
21 they will be more successful. And I think once they start
22 experiencing more success, they will do better on classes
23 to start off with. So --

24 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: How's the one-on-one
25 (indiscernible) implementation (indiscernible)?



1 MS. CALDWELL: Oh, they're excited.

2 MR. SNYDER: Yeah. This is going to be
3 brand new this next school year, and so the Chromebooks are
4 the devices that we're going to use, they've been ordered,
5 so they're coming in, and we'll do orientation with
6 students that are first getting involved, and they'll have
7 them in their hands ready to go.

8 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: and really that was
9 part of this overall notion of we know where we need to get
10 to, and how. Let me step back just a second. We put
11 together a foundation several years ago, foundation for
12 Rocky Ford Schools, and it was preliminarily based upon us
13 trying to get a settlement out of the City of Aurora coming
14 out to Rocky Ford and purchasing a lot of water. And --

15 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Stealing.

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And we all know the
17 effects of that on the school district. Completely
18 devastated us. So, we started into some soft negotiations
19 because of the lost of per-pupil funding. And ultimately
20 after about three years of working through that with the
21 city we received -- we received substantial dollars, but
22 not even close to what our own economic analysis had said
23 the damage was. But that's -- so that's led to a
24 foundation that we built upon in Rocky Ford, and this is
25 one of the big foundation's contribution to trying to turn



1 this thing around. The computer and technology part of it.

2 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Is there a training
3 piece for (indiscernible)?

4 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yes. I would answer --
5 Jane had a wonderful question about outreach. And it
6 always seems to come up about what's the parental
7 involvement when we've got challenges like this. And,
8 clearly, that has been a big challenge for us, and we've
9 tried -- we've tried a number of different things, like
10 some special Spanish kinds of (indiscernible) gatherings,
11 and things. We've tried some teacher -- teachers getting
12 into the homes and -- would you say kind of -- kind of
13 mixed, but those are kind of efforts in a district like
14 ours where there isn't a whole lot of volunteering that
15 occurs.

16 So we're excited about this afternoon
17 program and getting what originally started as Boys and
18 Girls Club out of Pueblo, and they had to pull out of
19 Southeastern Colorado and we tried to continue it on our
20 own resources, and now to be able to take it to an area of
21 the community that has challenges, and is pretty exciting
22 piece of this, also.

23 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And that's probably
24 going to be a big piece to that growth -- that growth
25 question, but because of you. With the growth being always



1 compared back to all the other students across the state,
2 but if you look at our amount of instruction time, we're at
3 171 names, 1080 hours of instruction which is
4 (indiscernible) that at minimum, so other school districts
5 across the state, other students, were receiving just the
6 same amount of instruction time.

7 Somehow we've got to accelerate that, so
8 either we've got to be much better at our jobs than
9 everybody else, or we've got to find a way to get more time
10 in there so that we can be more effective. That's why we
11 look to these extended-day type programs to get that more
12 time in so that we can try to affect that growth more and
13 more.

14 Of course, we do have those intervention
15 programs during the day, like I said. We do get students
16 that double-dose or sometime to triple-dose and
17 (indiscernible). But that's a tough balance, as well, just
18 like (indiscernible) had the core instruction time that's
19 going on as well.

20 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: On a -- on another note,
21 if I might, is we've tried to -- like, we've seen this
22 thing get more challenging every year. We've tried to
23 reach out to other districts, as we said, with Center, but
24 we've also been significant time with CASB and Randy Black
25 has over recent years spent a lot of quality time with our



1 board (indiscernible) and we realize and certainly
2 appreciate that there's a -- there's a strong leadership
3 need for the board to be as effective as we can towards
4 student achievement. But there is a direct correlation,
5 and that's something that we've worked on with CASB's help
6 pretty diligently.

7 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Other questions? Elaine,
8 go ahead.

9 MS. BERMAN: The student population, you
10 have a decline (indiscernible), which is (indiscernible).
11 Do you have a lot of mobility of your students, or are they
12 pretty stable?

13 MR. SNYDER: No. We used to have a
14 continuance of migrant workers, but with the drought that's
15 been in place and actually we were down to, I think, just
16 one (indiscernible) and (indiscernible) that's considered a
17 migrant family, so this seasonal workers, you know, we
18 don't see them anymore. I don't know --

19 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: No. That's exactly
20 right, and it's clearly a function of the lack of ability
21 for us to have enough agricultural jobs. They're just
22 gone. Because we had to let most people go and then -- but
23 there -- there is a quality effort to try to bring some of
24 that back through a now a marketing order. With the Rocky
25 Ford Melons, and that we hope to make that grow jobs and



1 sustain what we've got as a district, and so there's some
2 excitement about that, and we've got some folks up here in
3 the metro area that are diligently helping with those kinds
4 of things, and they realize that the schools are a vibrant
5 part of whatever effort we (indiscernible) to come back.

6 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So I (indiscernible)
7 question. What additional systems would be valuable to you
8 from a (indiscernible)?

9 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: No we were kind of
10 running through our (indiscernible) trying to brainstorm on
11 that. We thought that question might come our way. Of
12 course, at the bottom of our list and I understand that
13 there's other influences involved in it, but it is
14 finances. If there was some (indiscernible) where we could
15 have enough to where we could start to address teacher
16 salaries and thereby extend the school year, or the school
17 day, that would be super helpful for us.

18 Already salary-wise we're in about a quarter
19 of (indiscernible) with our average salary (indiscernible)
20 teachers

21 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: What's your starting
22 teachers get?

23 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: 29,000, and we top out
24 at 47.

25 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: You top out at 47?



1 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Mm-hmm.

2 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And I'm sure when a
3 neighboring district has higher teachers' salaries
4 (indiscernible) teachers (indiscernible) better scholars?

5 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: It's Pueblo that we
6 seem to lose teachers to. Yeah. Some of its salaries,
7 other -- yeah. Some -- but young students coming out of
8 college, the city life seems to (indiscernible) a lot.

9 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Are you on a
10 (indiscernible) school week?

11 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: No.

12 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: You've never been.
13 Wow. That's great. (indiscernible) usual.

14 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: We've had a lot of
15 pressure --

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah. We've got a lot
17 of people asking if we would consider it, but we have not -
18 - we have not done that.

19 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Is that being
20 considered, or --? Parents?

21 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Parents. Parents like
22 it (indiscernible) research in (indiscernible) testing is
23 not (indiscernible) for (indiscernible).

24 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Right.

25 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: It's not working like



1 (indiscernible) would.

2 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Right.

3 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: That's certainly
4 (indiscernible).

5 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Why (indiscernible)?

6 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Somewhat because, as
7 you mentioned, it is -- it is a bit of a trend in the rural
8 areas right now. I think there are a couple of school
9 districts that (indiscernible) around four days
10 (indiscernible) four day school days around us, and so we
11 have got families where they work in different districts
12 and maybe parent works in our district but kids go
13 somewhere (indiscernible), for everybody all to get on the
14 same page with (indiscernible). Seems like four-day week
15 is more of the preference, but --

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So, if you were to have
17 more resources and you had money to (indiscernible) people
18 would love it if (indiscernible) --

19 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Wouldn't that be
20 wonderful?

21 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: We (indiscernible) --

22 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: What would your -- top
23 priorities would be teacher salaries and (indiscernible)
24 the school (indiscernible)?

25 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah, we'd love to be



1 able to do that.

2 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: We -- I might add also
3 that had -- you having (indiscernible) like this is just a
4 great start, and we feel very privileged under horrible
5 circumstances to be able to be listened to a little bit,
6 means an awful lot, but he won't say it, but I -- but I
7 can, and that is certainly not your primary responsibility,
8 but the continued mandates that we increasingly feel in a
9 district with essentially three administrators for 800
10 kids, and it's a challenge. Ever year it seems like it's
11 more of an -- of a challenge for small district and
12 districts around us have part-time superintendents, or
13 superintendents that have -- where do we figure? Up to 40
14 districts in the state now have dual responsibilities for
15 superintendents, and that's become a real challenge for our
16 administration to keep up with the -- (indiscernible)
17 coming at us, mandates.

18 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: How about your BOCES?

19 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: What's that?

20 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: How about your BOCES?

21 Oh, (indiscernible) are you feeling (indiscernible)?

22 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah, BOCES is pretty
23 strong. I --

24 MS. CALDWELL: I've got a very strong BOCES,
25 Santa Fe Trails BOCES, and, you know, they service our



1 students well. We've got other -- there are other
2 districts that are not in our BOCES that are wanting to be
3 in our BOCES and so, yeah, we've got a very strong BOCES
4 and they're very helpful.

5 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: A specific example is
6 with our Race to the Top Funds we combined all the funds
7 with all the districts in the BOCES, and then also applied
8 for a grant from the Colorado Legacy Foundation. And with
9 that we're able to together a support team for Senate Bill
10 191, so we've got somebody that provides support on just
11 the evaluation process itself, the rubrics. Got another
12 person that's the data person because all (indiscernible)
13 measures the student learning for us, and then a third
14 person that's over professional development. So that's our
15 BOCES (indiscernible). It's been a good help. So, I'm
16 (indiscernible) to your --

17 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: That's what I was going
18 to speak to. That as a principal it was helpful. BOCES
19 pretty much helped us with gathering the data, it was less
20 stressful to that piece of (indiscernible), so we were able
21 to, I feel, do the teacher evaluations a lot easier than, I
22 think, a lot of people found them to be. Without their
23 support I'd be not here. So, I -- this year I really,
24 truly, felt a big support.

25 And then, they also combined a principal's



1 meeting once a month, so we were able to have a discussion
2 about those things in our needs. So, I think it's the
3 first time since I was acting as a principal that there was
4 something like that, that we had a resource that
5 (indiscernible) we didn't feel alone. So, I strongly feel
6 that they were really supportive.

7 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Kind of along those
8 lines is whatever efforts in leadership at this level to
9 help the community college system to be helping our smaller
10 schools to have continuing credits while still in high
11 school has allowed us to offer some things out of Otero
12 Junior College in our case, that we look -- otherwise would
13 not be able to. And that work with -- that particular
14 junior college, and I know others cross the state, has just
15 been tremendous. I hope we can continue that relationship.

16 MS. CALDWELL: No. We've had some students
17 graduate with their associates before they get their high
18 school. So --

19 MS. NEAL: (indiscernible) go Carol
20 (indiscernible) drive (indiscernible).

21 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Ten miles, eleven
22 miles. To La Junta?

23 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Mm-hmm.

24 MS. NEAL: Nothing.

25 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: It's a straight shot.



1 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: How's your broadband
2 connection? (indiscernible) along okay with that?

3 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: No. Not too bad, at
4 least for the school district anyway. We had a -- the
5 power company out there in the Southeast Region that really
6 jumped on board early with trying to make sure that we have
7 internet connection out there and broadband, and so that's
8 helped out the school district quite a bit. So, for
9 example, we (indiscernible) all the online assessments and
10 everything that happened this spring, we were able to
11 handle that just fine.

12 Our biggest worry now is going to be with
13 those Chromebooks, these one-to-one devices for kids, is
14 when they go home will they have access to the internet.
15 So, we're trying to find a solution for that right now, and
16 begin -- it's (indiscernible). It's the other network
17 provider through the power company there. They're the ones
18 trying to find the solution for that. They think they can.
19 WE think we'll sometime in the near future be able to
20 filter through what computers are trying to hit that
21 network, identify which ones belong in the school, and let
22 it on through. So, yeah, pretty exciting thing there, I
23 think.

24 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Helpful (indiscernible)
25 the place, and so (indiscernible). So (indiscernible). So



1 which ones (indiscernible). Well, Eagle meant
2 (indiscernible) which is over here.

3 MS. NEAL: (indiscernible) the eagle
4 (indiscernible).

5 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: The eagle
6 (indiscernible) eagle was on the (indiscernible), but they
7 -- does that -- does that go as far south as, like,
8 (indiscernible) area? Because --

9 MS. NEAL: It went down the road, but I
10 don't know -- (indiscernible) communities it --

11 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Right.

12 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: At one point it was
13 spreading out our way and ran into some conflicts there.
14 We're trying to double up on services and lay some fiber
15 optics that we did need --

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (indiscernible) not
17 needed.

18 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: You know.

19 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (indiscernible) a
20 public library, like hook ups now, (indiscernible) look up
21 some of the community colleges and universities
22 (indiscernible) the public building (indiscernible) so, I
23 mean, that's --

24 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Right.

25 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I think it'd be nice if



1 we kind of, oh, that (indiscernible) each other
2 (indiscernible) just like, oh, no. It's not the
3 (indiscernible).

4 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Right.

5 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (indiscernible) the
6 department and you all (indiscernible) work (indiscernible)
7 checking in with the (indiscernible).

8 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah. The kids know
9 where to go to access the internet and so they'll even sit
10 outside of my office, because they know that the wireless
11 reaches outside of the building. And we don't
12 (indiscernible). That's fine.

13 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Well, they'll probably
14 be the ones to figure it out.

15 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah.

16 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: (indiscernible) do the
17 Starbucks you're going to have to start serving coffee.

18 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah. Yeah.

19 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Dr. Scheffel, questions
20 down there?

21 MS. SCHROEDER: No. Thanks for coming.
22 Appreciate your reports on (indiscernible) the things in
23 place, those (indiscernible) successes.

24 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: We are trying, and we -
25 - and we do take this extremely seriously. We know that



1 our kids need to do better, and we are doing everything
2 that we know to do to help them. Our staff has been very
3 supportive on a, you know, we've asked them to do so may
4 things, and they hop in there and they try to do it. And
5 it's nice to see their input on it, because they have taken
6 it and run with it. So, it's --

7 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Any questions from
8 (indiscernible)? (indiscernible).

9 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Just one final
10 question. I want to come back to my question. How CDE can
11 be more helpful as you (indiscernible) the finish line here
12 and (indiscernible) that we cannot provide more resources,
13 that it's not within our purview. Are you getting all
14 these systems you (indiscernible) to help? Is there
15 anything on that (indiscernible)?

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: No. I think the only
17 other thing we had thought of was the, of course,
18 (indiscernible) and everything involving assessments,
19 (indiscernible) gotten (indiscernible) continue
20 (indiscernible) to grow and -- at this point, and coming
21 from my background assessments were already in place,
22 statewide assessments, before I ever started my education
23 career. So, I'm not one that has ever been opposed to
24 that. I think accountability does need to be there.

25 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Correct.



1 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I think we've reached a
2 point, though, where it is starting to encroach on that
3 instructional time, and so in particular this last year we
4 did not have these extra computer devices in the building.
5 We had just the one computer lab, and yet it got tied up
6 for a large portion of that last quarter, and really
7 prevented a lot of other instructional activities from
8 happening.

9 So not only at the -- for those state
10 assessments, but now we're mandating kindergarten
11 assessments with the (indiscernible) and School Readiness
12 and (indiscernible) that one's going to be a big burden as
13 well for a kindergarten teacher who has 25 kids in the
14 classroom and you've got to, you know, take the time to do
15 those observational assessments, which take a lot more time
16 than sitting down and doing a computer or paper and pencil
17 assessment. We're taking away from that time that direct-
18 instruction services can be had.

19 That piece worries me. That we're going a
20 little bit too far with that.

21 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I would -- I would
22 offer a couple of things that the department has done in
23 recent time which I think are beginning to be real helpful,
24 and that's designation of a -- of a rural liaison person.
25 And she is spending significant time with us, as well as



1 continued -- continue to support the rural education
2 council, commissioner.

3 We have the opportunity to have a voice of
4 these collective kinds of issues, and we hope that you're
5 in a position to allow those kinds of things to continue.

6 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: So, I'll give you an
7 opportunity to (indiscernible) question to bring
8 (indiscernible) high-level define, in summary, give us a
9 nice (indiscernible) to the (indiscernible) the root cause
10 challenge, root cause problems, and the direction you're
11 taking this (indiscernible). And then maybe close with a
12 summation.

13 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Root cause challenges
14 for us were that -- the root cause was we did not have
15 instruction that was aligning with the standards that we
16 were being assessed on. So, we had done plenty to address
17 that, and I don't know about plenty, but we've done quite a
18 bit and we'll continue to address that further with the
19 work (indiscernible) we continue forward. So, as we align
20 that instruction and make sure that we're teaching what we
21 need to be to help those students be successful, then our
22 work will continue to find more time in order to -- and
23 continue to teach those students more and more along the
24 lines of those standards. I think that's basically what it
25 comes down to. Teaching the right things and have enough



1 time to be able to do that.

2 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: (indiscernible). Well
3 thank you all very much for coming in.

4 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you.

5 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you.

6 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you, sir.

7 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you.

8 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you for giving us
9 the opportunity.

10 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: (indiscernible) before
11 the board at this time we will (indiscernible) a recess for
12 our next regularly scheduled meeting, which is in the
13 eighth month of the year.

14 (Proceedings concluded)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberly C. McCright, Certified Vendor and Notary, do hereby certify that the above-mentioned matter occurred as hereinbefore set out.

I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT the proceedings of such were reported by me or under my supervision, later reduced to typewritten form under my supervision and control and that the foregoing pages are a full, true and correct transcription of the original notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 25th day of May, 2019.

/s/ Kimberly C. McCright
Kimberly C. McCright
Certified Vendor and Notary Public

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