



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 1

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: State board will come
2 back to order. Staff, please call the roll.

3 MS. MARKEL: Elaine Gantz Berman.

4 MS. BERMAN: Here.

5 MS. MARKEL: Jane Goff.

6 MS. GOFF: Here.

7 MS. MARKEL: Paul Lundeen.

8 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Good morning.

9 MS. MARKEL: Pam Mazanec.

10 MS. MAZANEC: Here.

11 MS. MARKEL: Marcia Neal.

12 MS. NEAL: Here.

13 MS. MARKEL: Dr. Scheffel.

14 MS. SCHEFFEL: Here.

15 MS. MARKEL: Dr. Schroeder.

16 MS. SCHROEDER: Here.

17 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: So, at this time we
18 continue with our series of conversations with school
19 districts that may be returning to this board in a more
20 formal capacity in the future, and the purpose of these
21 conversations are, in fact, to be less formal. More, in
22 fact, a dialogue and opportunity for us to understand
23 some of the subtleties, the nuances, and get to know the
24 context of some of the issues that the districts are
25 dealing with. So, having said that, I will welcome the



1 folks from Sheridan School District, and turn it over to
2 the commissioner.

3 COMM. HAMMOND: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
4 And, Dr. Cluff (ph), welcome, along with your staff. And
5 I understand your president, Mr. Carter, is on his way.

6 MR. CLUFF: He's really close.

7 COMM. HAMMOND: Okay.

8 MS. NEAL: He's stuck in traffic.

9 COMM. HAMMOND: As the chairman said, these
10 are very informal and it's a great opportunity for --
11 even though we've talked to the board before, this is in
12 a different setting to really know what's happening in
13 your districts, where you're at, and, again, it's a very
14 informal kind of back and forth discussion. But, for the
15 first, I think, 20 minutes, I think that was the time
16 allotted, please feel free to say what you want. Okay?

17 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Absolutely, thank you.

18 MR. CLUFF: Thank you. We really appreciate
19 the opportunity to come and just have a -- hopefully a
20 great dialogue with the board about what's happening in
21 Sheridan. And we love the opportunity to show our
22 district.

23 So, I'd like to just start by introducing
24 the board of education. Ron is the president, and he
25 will be here shortly. He is here, but he's parking. And



1 we have Bernie, Bernadette Saleh, who is our Vice
2 President, Sally Daigle, our Secretary, and our newest
3 member, just a couple of months on the board is Melissa
4 Sylvia (ph), and we're very glad to have her as our
5 treasure.

6 Interestingly, we haven't had a full board
7 in Sheridan since 2006. We've had as few as three
8 members. We -- the board is wonderful and very, very
9 supportive, but we have yet to be able to full -- fill a
10 full complement of board members. Which is what --

11 MS. NEAL: Do you now have four?

12 MR. CLUFF: We now have four, up from three,
13 which is really good, because when you have three, if one
14 is gone the meeting we pretty much have to cancel,
15 because we don't have a quorum.

16 But they have just been absolutely
17 supportive. With me at the table is Jackie Web, who is
18 the Executive Director of learning services, but she has
19 just been named our deputy superintendent starting July
20 1st, so it's going to be kind of a combination of two
21 positions, because I will be retiring and going on a
22 limited contract starting July 1st, but I have signed a
23 contract with the Board of Education through 2017 to stay
24 on as the superintendent. So, I was asked by the board
25 and agreed to do that.



1 So, we want to be fairly informal today, and
2 what we have is I'd just like to talk a little bit about
3 our -- what's going on in our district to give you a
4 little bit of a history and a little bit of the flavor of
5 the district. We decided instead we would put pictures
6 behind, so that you can see our -- some of our programs.
7 There are pictures of our new school going up, which we
8 are absolutely so excited about, and a chance to see a
9 flavor of what it's like in Sheridan and get to see our
10 beautiful kids, which we're so very proud of.

11 So, Ron is going to have a portion, so just
12 as soon as he gets in I'm going to switch over and have
13 him, and if he repeats things I'll have to apologize, but
14 I'm just going to go ahead and start. So -- go ahead,
15 please.

16 MS. NEAL: Can I ask a question?

17 MR. CLUFF: Sure.

18 MS. NEAL: How many students do you have in
19 Sheridan?

20 MR. CLUFF: 1650 students.

21 MS. NEAL: Thank you.

22 MR. CLUFF: So, we are the metro area's
23 smallest district. And I know we didn't give you a lot
24 of context, because I've already been up here before, but
25 let me just kind of frame some things. We're the second



1 highest free and reduced, according to the financial
2 statistics in the state, second only to Center.

3 The per capita income in our community is
4 \$14,775, which has dropped by 9 percent since 2009, so
5 we've seen a dramatic, pretty dramatic, decrease in the
6 per capita income.

7 We estimate any time in our district between
8 15 and 19 percent of our children are homeless. And one
9 of my most alarming statistics is that one time I know
10 that one in four of my kindergarten students at Sheridan
11 was homeless. So, we see a greater rate of homelessness
12 with our -- with our younger -- our younger children.
13 But we make no excuses. We believe that our Sheridan
14 kids have to be competitive with their neighbors, and
15 that's the bar. And we have some very, very competitive
16 neighbors that achieve very well, so although we are
17 working very, very hard to break the cycle of poverty.
18 You'll hear that throughout some of our presentation,
19 breaking that cycle of poverty and offering post-
20 secondary options for all our students. And we are
21 gaining. That's going to be our message today. We are
22 definitely gaining.

23 So I've been with the district since 2008,
24 and a little bit of the flavor; when I was hired it was
25 narrowed down to two candidates, and the board president,



1 who I have great, great respect for and had a very good
2 handle on what was happening in the district, her name
3 was Dorine Christian (ph), said to the other candidate,
4 said, "We want you to be our superintendent," and turned
5 to be and said, "But we need you."

6 So, it was an interesting offer. I think it
7 said a lot about -- a lot about the story of what was
8 going on. I think one of the things that you'll hear
9 when Ron speaks is that the board -- the board recognized
10 -- Bernie was on the board at that time, a board member.
11 The board recognized that we were in a hole, and that we
12 really needed to dig out of it. The facility showed it,
13 the community was beginning to -- beginning to start to
14 see it, but fairly complacent. The staff was fairly
15 complacent, and scores were really indicating it, and so
16 were some of the practices, and we knew that we had to
17 take it on.

18 So, what we did in 2008, and I think it was
19 -- so one of the things I'd like to say is we were
20 turnaround when turn around wasn't cool, and that would
21 have been 2008. We were just coining, you know, when
22 Jacky and I were at the department in 2000 to 2000 and --
23 or 2004 to 2008. We had just started to use the word
24 "turnaround" for everything. We had turnaround grants,
25 we had turnaround at the state, we had turnaround -- we



1 couldn't keep track of all the turnarounds, but we were
2 definitely a turnaround districts, and we knew it. We
3 knew it, and I think Bernie and Ron will both attest at
4 that time that they knew it, and they knew it was time to
5 roll up our sleeves and get busy.

6 So, Ron, can I just -- I've done the
7 introductions and just talked a little bit, but if you
8 will -- want to share?

9 RON: (indiscernible) the board here?

10 MR. CLUFF: I introduced the board.

11 RON: Very good. Thank you, board members,
12 we appreciate the time and appreciate your interest in
13 our district. Thank you for the time that you're giving
14 us here today.

15 I'll be starting with a discussion talking
16 about the time our real reform started. I've been a
17 board member for the past 13 years and had served the
18 last 5 as president. Our real reform started in 2007
19 when we hired our interim superintendent, Rosco Davidson,
20 to come in and help us make a different while we did a
21 superintendent search.

22 He was extremely honest and forthright that
23 the district was faced with a host of challenges.
24 Despite what we might believe, there would be years of
25 hard work and very tough decisions ahead for this board,



1 and the district. Our demographics had changed
2 considerably in the district for the past -- over the
3 past 10 years, and our practices had not kept up
4 (indiscernible) the change.

5 Dr. Davidson did not sit still, but rather
6 began to put things in order, reinforcing that this was
7 just the beginning of the work ahead. We were a bit
8 stunned, because we had often been assured by prior
9 administrators that systems were in order.

10 Dr. Davidson set us on a course of
11 addressing our reality; one of low achievement, dismal
12 behavior, and neglected facilities. In 2008, after twice
13 opening the superintendent search, we hired Michael
14 Cluff. We knew we needed a change agent and later with
15 the courage to take on our problems.

16 As we started to take a deep look almost
17 every system lacked effectiveness and efficiency, and we
18 knew our students were paying the price. As a board, we
19 have stood shoulder to shoulder with Michael for the past
20 six years with one goal in mind, providing the very best
21 education possible for our students who share it. We
22 have a ways to go, but as I look back I'm so proud of
23 what this board had the courage to stand tall.

24 We're here to tell our story of reform, but
25 I want to fast forward to today. As a board of



1 education, we were faced with the possibility of Michael
2 retiring and leaving the district at the end of the 2014-
3 '15 school year. Since Michael has hired all but two
4 leaders, both promoted from the ranks, we knew this
5 retirement could translate into a direction change.

6 After some discussions we signed Michael on
7 for an additional three-year contract and I'm proud to
8 have (indiscernible) Jackie Webb (ph) as our Deputy
9 Superintendent. As a board we've weathered some tough
10 challenges. Turning over 80 percent of our staff and 90
11 percent of our leadership was a huge challenge for any
12 Board of Education. Although we knew it was the right
13 thing to do.

14 There were times that it was hard to stay
15 the course, but we have and will. We are now starting to
16 enjoy the fruits of our time and labor, to share in the
17 school district has improved tremendously, and I speak
18 for the entire board when I say we will never start
19 working to improve.

20 We recognize just how far we have come for
21 the student in the Sheridan community, and I thank you
22 for your time. I'd now like to turn it back over to
23 Michael Cluff.

24 MR. CLUFF: Well thank you. Thank you, Ron.
25 You know, it's a little understated when we talk about



1 standing shoulder to shoulder in some other tough times
2 when we came in. To have a community that was not that
3 disappointed with what was going on, but you know that
4 situation. You know it's very -- it's very difficult and
5 very challenging.

6 But what we did in 2008 to start out, was we
7 started with a series of audits. Many different audits
8 of the systems, because although Jackie and I, after
9 being there a few weeks, we knew we could tell what was
10 going on, but we knew we needed to bring in the
11 credibility of people that had some names and titles to
12 really take a deep look at things. I mean, many, many
13 different systems.

14 One of my favorite stories, it's a little
15 sad, in fact, that we hired the transportation director
16 from Estes Park to come in and take a look. And they
17 were very simple, to be very quickly done, but look the
18 best you can over a couple of days and give us a sense of
19 what's going on.

20 So, he calls me on my cell, and I answer,
21 and I said, "Well, how's it going?" And he says, "Well,
22 it's going pretty well," but he said, "I need to let you
23 know, we just have eight kids on the bus, we just passed
24 the boat store for the fourth time, and we haven't
25 dropped anybody off."



1 So, what that as telling us, is that it was
2 the most important thing was to make sure that we banked
3 a lot of hours. One of our highest paid employees at that
4 time was a bus driver, and so we knew that, you know, that
5 it -- just a lot of problems in the system, systemically.
6 The one good thing that we did have, is because 15 years
7 ago the district couldn't make payroll, the one system
8 that was really fixed was finance.

9 And we became definitely a district of
10 thrift, so that was a real benefit to us to have some
11 available cash on hand to put some things into place.
12 But we looked at those systems, we took a lot of the
13 recommendations, and we move forward. And we knew one of
14 the things, keep in mind, I think in our last
15 presentation we talked about Sheridan is the fastest
16 demographic change of any city in Colorado.

17 So, we had a staff that was used to teaching
18 a population that didn't look like the staff, or the
19 children, that were now starting to show up to the
20 school. And it was not uncommon for teachers to come and
21 confess to me that I used to be a great teacher until
22 those kids showed up. And it broke my heart, but it was
23 -- it was -- it was the sentiment, and they were
24 absolutely speaking their heart, but it was a dangerous,
25 a dangerous speaking of the heart. And we knew that we



1 had to make some changes.

2 One of the best things that happened was the
3 absolute support of the board knowing that we needed
4 desperately to make some staffing changes. And that's
5 very, very, very hard in a community. Personnel
6 decisions on a Board of Education, a local board of
7 education, are very hard, and some of these people had
8 been with the districts for a long time. And we knew
9 that -- we knew we had to do that, and we started in
10 early and the board set 300,000 into a fund totally to
11 help and support in helping us entice higher-quality, but
12 also to move along some teachers that maybe could be in a
13 BETTER FIT. In a district that looked like the Sheridan
14 of the past.

15 Also, very quickly, one of the things that
16 the board dealt with is the old Sheridan versus the new
17 Sheridan. We had a community lamenting the loss of 108-
18 piece band that won state awards and state championship
19 football teams. We had a population that that wasn't
20 where their interests lie, and that was one of the things
21 that was very, very visible as the quality really and the
22 instruction was not as visible, but the same thing was
23 happening throughout the district, so we really had to
24 take that on.

25 We put in 90 days plans and we adopted a



1 mantra, a mission and a vision, and that is that we must
2 begin to look at post-secondary options for all students,
3 and I don't care if you're starting in the early
4 childhood center, if you're at the elementary schools, or
5 you're teaching a senior in high school. Our kids need
6 and deserve post-secondary options, whether it's the
7 military trade school, those options are going to open up
8 the world, and that has been something that we have
9 brought forward, and we're going to do it through the
10 improvement of instruction.

11 So, just really quickly, I'm going to ask
12 Jacky to pass -- we have very, very few handouts, or --
13 oh, you already have them? So, this is -- this has --
14 this has bene the plan. You're going to hear a lot about
15 the plan, and this is the plan that we really move
16 forward.

17 And you can see it's about instruction, it's
18 about high-quality literate engagement. It's about a
19 culture of feedback, and it's about a culture of data.
20 We're going to end our presentation today with a video
21 where we've just asked -- we've just brought teachers,
22 administrators, students in, just to talk a little bit
23 about Sheridan. We thought it really gave a flavor, but
24 you're going to see this referenced over and over again
25 in the plan, so this has been the plan for six years. It



1 started with 90-day plans.

2 90-day plans were brought forth by the
3 military, that, you know, it's great to plan for three
4 years, but when you're really -- when you've taken a
5 house down to the studs, 90 days is about all you can see
6 out. And we took 90 days at a time, we went back, and we
7 revisited, and truly, in 2008, as the superintendent of
8 the Sheridan District, and I know the board that was with
9 me at that time felt that way, was like peeling back an
10 onion.

11 It was one story after another of one
12 problem begetting another problem and so it was -- it was
13 very challenging.

14 And then, in the end of 2008, 2009, one of
15 the most challenging things for the board, and I want to
16 talk about the meeting just a little bit, but we removed
17 most of our principals at that time. We knew wonderful
18 people, but we knew that we needed instructionally
19 focused principles that had a real idea about how to move
20 instruction forward very quickly. And that is when the
21 community really took off and almost revolted against
22 both the board and me. We had 150 members, which is
23 absolutely unheard of in our community, at the board
24 meeting. We had to eventually call for some backup from
25 the police department, and it was raucous and out of



1 control, and everyone was very, very, very upset, and
2 could not understand this decision.

3 And I -- it's one of the most interesting
4 moments I've ever had in education when a woman was
5 wanting to be heard, but she wouldn't fill out the form,
6 and wanting to be heard, and really why the police had to
7 be called was because of that ruckus.

8 And the story -- the story bears out. So,
9 by this time, everybody's wanting to hear what she's got
10 to say. So, Jacky did a great job of calming her down
11 say, "All you've got to do is fill out the paper and
12 they'll hear you, but Dorine's not going to let you speak
13 if you don't fill out the paper.

14 So, they finally filled out the paper and
15 the lace finally went silent, because they wanted to hear
16 what this lady had to say, and it's -- her story was
17 this, she said, "My son, I went to his third-grade
18 conference and I looked at his report card and he has all
19 A's and B's. And they told me how nice my son was, and
20 what a joy he was to have int eh class. And I got some
21 reports that I couldn't understand. And I went to the
22 fourth grade and the same thing. He had all A's and B's,
23 and I heard, 'Wow, your son is such a nice boy. It is
24 such a joy to have him in class.'" And she said, "This
25 time, the copies were so smeared if I could have



1 understood what was on, I didn't know what was on it.
2 And I went to the fifth grade, and I got to thinking."
3 And she said, "You know, I borrowed \$4700 from my mother-
4 in-law. I don't have \$4700, and I have no idea how I'm
5 going to take it -- get it ever paid back, but I took my
6 son to Sylvan, and he can't read."

7 And it was the telling moment for our
8 district. Absolutely everybody just stopped, and I
9 thought, you know, "Here's the moment where we move our
10 reform efforts forward." And everybody looks to me and
11 looks to the present of the board and I said,
12 "Unfortunately, ma'am, your story is repeating itself
13 hundreds of times. And that's why we're here tonight."
14 And the whole tenor changed at that moment from "Cluff's
15 got to be fired." to, "Come on, let's do this. We're
16 trusting you."

17 When you work in a high level of poverty,
18 the families are so absolutely trusting. They really
19 believe that you will do the right thing every, single
20 time. And they trust that. We get virtually no
21 complaints, almost no complaints, of our educational
22 system, because that is the trust. And sometimes that
23 trust is very warranted, and sometimes, you know, a
24 little push is something that is really needed. And that
25 is one of the things you're going to hear in our video,



1 is that the level of understanding of our parents has
2 really, really increased.

3 So, just kind of moving through, we looked
4 at culture and really fixing the culture. We fixed up
5 the facilities. That's one of the things that I said is,
6 "We need to look good. We need to look good from the
7 street. Our kids deserve clean facilities." We hired
8 just an amazing director of facilities transportation and
9 maintenance and just over-the-top, excellent in terms of
10 getting our facilities up.

11 We instilled a sense and, you know, I want
12 to thank the board, and I really want to thank CDE,
13 because we were the first district to go to the UVA
14 leadership, and that just taught us so much, but the one
15 thing it taught us, and we knew this all along, but when
16 you see it in practice it's unbelievable. When we went
17 to our UVA training, we were there with four-star
18 generals from across the country. We were int here with
19 the Chinese ambassador team. I mean, this is beyond
20 anything that we've ever had the ability to be a part of.
21 Just really, really high-level executive training, but
22 what we looked -- and the Dartan (ph) motto is
23 "Excellence in everything." And so, we adopted that in
24 our district that, you know, the best that we can, what's
25 the best way that we can really put our foot forward?



1 And so, we have really, really worked very
2 hard at that excellence. We've also worked really hard
3 at the instruction. One thing that Ron said, we have
4 turned over approximately 80 percent of our staff, but we
5 only have two remaining leaders in our district that were
6 here in 2008, and both of those districts have been --
7 both of those leaders have been promoted from within the
8 system.

9 But it's really what we -- what we have
10 worked on. We're -- and what we learned at UVA was about
11 Paul Bambrick Model, and I think you've probably heard
12 something about it, but we are a data-rich district, and
13 we used that district data and we use that individual
14 student data to really move instruction forward. We use
15 a system of pre and post-test, we use three-week cycles,
16 we can -- when the gap is this large it becomes
17 overwhelming for children, their parents, and their
18 teachers. But if you can look at this much, and you can
19 begin to take learning and look at in -- excuse me --
20 incrementally, that really makes a great different for
21 our children. And I think that's one of the things we
22 attribute our growth in scores.

23 I'm going to ask Jacky to talk a little bit
24 more about scores, because I could -- I could really go
25 on and on, but I definitely want to leave time for you to



1 ask the board. Or -- we have a lot of our leadership is
2 here with us, and so we would really like to leave some
3 time, but we also want to -- I've asked Jacky to kind of
4 highlight some of our data, and look at different ways
5 that we can show our trajectory is definitely up. We
6 definitely have some areas where we need to work, and we
7 have some focus on those areas, so we'll talk about
8 those, but I would like to start with the data.

9 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you. And thank
10 you for allowing me to be here. I'm really excited, the
11 -- I just want to touch upon, very briefly before I go to
12 the data, talking about the plan that's in front of you,
13 this is actually a visual of the UIP.

14 The State of Colorado has really let -- led
15 the planning efforts, and it's really a tremendous
16 approach in being very, very focused in what you're going
17 to be doing in terms of moving your data.

18 And so, I want to point back to that this is
19 the focus plan that we've went with, and we've refined it
20 each year as we've went. And if there's questions later
21 that you wanted to ask me about this, I would -- I'd love
22 to talk more about it. But I do know that we're limited
23 on time.

24 Want to go to the data points, and I really
25 thought about this. I've been involved with data for a



1 long time, but honestly, sometimes it can just get
2 confusing, it can get muddled, because you'll just put up
3 so many numbers. So, I really tried to keep this just as
4 simple as I possibly could.

5 So, if I can direct your attention to the
6 slide that's on the wall, that was on the wall, this is a
7 representation of where the schools have fallen over the
8 last -- since 2008 in terms of accreditation. The first
9 one that you see on the far left is Sheridan Elementary
10 School. The scoring starts at third grade, and so that's
11 the Fort Logan 3 through 5 portions of the school
12 district.

13 This school was -- the -- I was in the
14 lowest 0.5 percent of elementary schools in the entire
15 State of Colorado. They were turnaround. The school was
16 absolutely a disaster. And upon bringing in the
17 leadership of Barb Johnson, you can see that -- how that
18 data is changed. They went up in one year from being
19 accredited as a turnaround school to being accredited as
20 a school on improvement.

21 When you take a look at the performance
22 framework there's actually 20 different areas in which
23 you score, and of those 20 every, single one of those
24 data points is up. So, really excited to see that,
25 especially when we know what third grade literacy and how



1 that impacts students for their future. As a matter of
2 fact, probably our most exciting data point is that many
3 of you may have seen the news release that Fort Logan had
4 went up substantially this year up to 65 percent
5 proficient and advanced.

6 One of the things that's notable of that
7 score is that over half of those students are second
8 language learners. The state average for third graders
9 that are second-language learners, is a 50 percent. The
10 second language learners in Sheridan were 61. We
11 exceeded the state average by 11 percent with that data
12 point. Some really exciting things going on there.

13 At the middle school there's 22 indicators,
14 and the reason for the difference is that they have a few
15 more of the subgroups that were counted, so of 22 they're
16 up 15. They've moved up -- they were a priority
17 improvement school as well, and they have also moved up
18 into improvement and continue to improve.

19 The high school. We've not -- we've not
20 changed in terms of the priority improvement at that
21 school, so what are the data points that are positive
22 there? We've seen ACT increase. We've seen the dropout
23 rate go from 4.6 all the way down to a 0.9. Soar
24 Academy, which is our alternative school, hitting
25 performance last year as a first-year program. We're



1 really proud of the data and the things that are showing,
2 but I wouldn't be honest if I sat here and I told you
3 that we had arrived. We haven't. Our biggest challenges
4 are in the areas of math across the district. Other
5 areas that are impacted are achievement. The scores are
6 moving up but they're not meeting state average yet.
7 That's a piece that we're looking at with our plan this
8 year, to move up the rigor.

9 So those are the data points that we -- that
10 are the general data points. Here was another piece,
11 because I think when Michael was talking about the reform
12 of the teachers, the staff surveyed -- we've bravely put
13 this out each year, and that first year that it came back
14 was not very positive.

15 The January survey that we sent out, 90
16 percent of the staff indicated that the district is
17 headed in the right direction and doing the right things
18 for students. It's an exciting time.

19 The local data that we have right now is
20 showing an indication that the district will move on its
21 own to improvement this fall.

22 So, with that said, I'm going to turn it
23 back over to Michael. We really thought, who would be
24 the best people that you could hear from? And they're
25 the people that I'm most proud of in the district right



1 now, and that's the principals and the teachers that do
2 the work every, single day, and are committed to
3 students. So, we have a very brief video so that you can
4 see from folks that are involved every day in the
5 education of what's going on in Sheridan. So, Michael.

6 MR. CLUFF: So, if we could go ahead and
7 queue up the video and I also want to thank Elaine, you
8 know, for your service. Been a wonderful representative
9 for us as a state board member and has been in our
10 district and we really appreciate it. And Chairman
11 Lundeen. I just greatly appreciated you taking your
12 morning and spending some time in our district. I think
13 it really helps. You know, one, I just enjoyed our
14 visit. But, two, I think it's really good for you to get
15 to see what we're doing, and I appreciate that very much.
16 So.

17 (Video playing)

18 So, just so you know that we just selected
19 different people from the district, and we just filmed
20 them and just let them talk. And kind of the message of
21 consistency, you know, I think really rang true.

22 It's just a different place, and I think the
23 other message that I hope comes through in that video is
24 what a wonderful group of people I get to work with every
25 day. So that's, you know, it is just really a -- really



1 a joy. We are very, very focused on the data. We are
2 focused in improving. And when we have a problem, we take
3 it on.

4 I also want to just mention one other thing,
5 I think you saw some pictures of our new Fort Loga, North
6 Gate going up that's just real exciting. Just a real
7 show from the community.

8 In 2011 it failed 61:39, dismally. Turned
9 around the next year and it passed 51:39 by the exact,
10 same measure, which I think is just very telling of our
11 community. So, imagine a community that has a per capita
12 of 14,775 voting for a bond issue to support a new
13 school, along with the best money.

14 So, it's really exciting times, and we just
15 believe in Sheridan that the sky is the limit. So, thank
16 you.

17 MS. NEAL: Thank you. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Excellent. Questions.
19 Angelika?

20 MS. SCHROEDER: So, I have a lot of them, so
21 I'll try to restrain myself.

22 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Yeah, we're short on time
23 here.

24 MS. SCHROEDER: I know.

25 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: So, if we could go one



1 apiece and then we'll come back around for a second
2 round, perhaps?

3 MS. SCHROEDER: Wow, viscous.

4 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Sorry.

5 MS. SCHROEDER: Your homeless population.

6 Are there shelters inside your community, or do these
7 kids live outside of Sheridan at night?

8 MR. CLUFF: Mostly I think -- the board
9 might be able to answer this also, but I -- most of them
10 are outside the community. One of the things that we
11 have experience lately is single fathers, and it is an
12 absolute challenge.

13 I know that this year we had one of our
14 honors middle school student who was with a single
15 father. There are almost no opportunities for a single
16 male with a family. If you are a mother with children
17 there's lots of shelters around, and so I know that that
18 family was living in their car. So, we have all sorts of
19 homelessness. Most of our homelessness is doubling up.

20 MS. SCHROEDER: So, when I looked in your
21 statistics and noticed that there's a lot -- there's a
22 lot of churn. A lot of kids are coming and going. Very
23 high turnover.

24 MR. CLUFF: Absolutely.

25 MS. SCHROEDER: But I wondered if there's a



1 way to work in your community with those shelters to help
2 with the school support for those kids so that they don't
3 feel as ignored.

4 MR. CLUFF: We do have -- I think Angelika
5 is right. We -- it is an area we need to do a little bit
6 better job, but we do have a lot of supports, and one
7 thing is, believe it or not, most of our children don't
8 even know. I mean, it's --

9 MS. SCHROEDER: It's what they know.

10 MR. CLUFF: Yeah. It's not like having one
11 or two. It's what they know.

12 MS. SCHROEDER: Right.

13 MR. CLUFF: It's what the group knows, that,
14 you know, Johnny's living here for a while and then he's
15 living here for a while, and then he's living in the
16 motel over, you know, on Broadway. And it is what they
17 know.

18 One of the things we do struggle with, and I
19 think it's something for the board to consider; our
20 ninth-grade class has -- is 40 percent different than it
21 was as 8th graders. Now that's the highest, but it's
22 never below 25. So this group of teachers -- you got to
23 commend them.

24 When you're looking at data you're not
25 always looking at the same kids. I mean, those kids are



1 very different to us. And we take all, and we work and
2 we look at building from where they are. And that's
3 what's so good about the data with our -- with our
4 children that move so much, because the teachers are
5 really good about getting in quickly and assessing where
6 the -- where the students are and where they need the
7 most help.

8 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: One of the things, too,
9 that we really didn't have time to address is the many
10 community partnerships that we've had to build to make --
11 to be successful. And I'll just briefly talk about a
12 practice that they've put in at Alice Terry. We have our
13 data team meetings, but now we've even put in one that's
14 called a wrap-around PLC, and that's to really address
15 some of the more emotional needs and those types of
16 things, so that we keep that conversation separate from
17 the achievement conversation.

18 MS. SCHROEDER: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Elaine. And we'll try
20 and make a second round and give people an opportunity.

21 MR. CLUFF: A PLC is a professional learning
22 community. Thanks. We love acronyms as educators. We
23 love it.

24 MS. BERMAN: Do you want to rotate?

25 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Yeah. Yeah.



1 MS. BERMAN: I had questions about your high
2 school data and your high school growth data, and I
3 understand that you may not be comparing apples to apples
4 and the kids might be changing. Oh, I'm sorry. But can
5 you talk to us a little bit about what strategies you're
6 implementing specifically in the high school, because it
7 looks like the growth data is going in the wrong
8 direction.

9 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Absolutely. What we
10 are -- we're putting a lot of resources next year into
11 that, Elaine. We've just completed a diagnostic review
12 that was provided by the state in January to really come
13 in and identify the needed changes. One of the biggest
14 things that we face there is a little over a 50 percent
15 novice staff. And so, to be supporting the training of
16 these teachers, in a couple of weeks we're actually going
17 to be taking a team to be trained in Abbot Strategies to
18 really bring up a -- to really accelerate the
19 professional development to support these teachers for
20 the growth. Because we do recognize that that is our
21 most needed building for supports.

22 So, couple of things there, the one thing,
23 to increase those high-yield instructional strategies,
24 and the second piece is to be bringing in training to
25 support second-language learners around sheltered



1 instruction.

2 We'll also have the same supports that we do
3 across the district, but those are two areas that we're
4 going to be even putting more energy and more resource
5 into this next year.

6 MR. CLUFF: And, Elaine, if I might add,
7 this is also a partnership for CDE. We received a grant
8 for a diagnostic review to come in and really do a deep
9 dive into the high school and help us look. And, again,
10 we make no excuses, but the data is what the data is.

11 One of the impacts of a low drop-out rate
12 with a high free and reduced, is we are keeping kids in
13 school that ordinarily would have opted out. And so,
14 those -- many of those kids are overage, under credit,
15 and there's a huge gap of working very hard to catch them
16 up.

17 The culture of the high school is amazing,
18 so we do have that solidly in place, but the growth of
19 the high school has not taken off, but the other thing
20 that we're seeing, is the high school is also kind of,
21 you know, for that instructionally, they are still
22 serving the students that have gone through the system
23 that Barb Johnson talked about, where students were
24 exiting buildings totally unprepared. And that's really
25 the high school. Whereas in the elementary schools we



1 had this much of a gap to catch up. By the time they're
2 in high school the gaps were like this. And we're not
3 narrowing the gap enough.

4 So, the strategies, you know, I'm confident
5 that they're going to work. I think Avid is a great
6 choice for us.

7 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Jane.

8 MS. GOFF: Thank you. Thank you all for
9 coming again. Nice to see you.

10 You talk a lot about data, the four-letter
11 word in some circles these days.

12 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Absolutely.

13 MS. GOFF: I guess I'd be interested in
14 knowing, first of all, that they -- the persuasiveness of
15 being able to use data and talk with others about why
16 it's a good idea to look at it, and it can be very
17 helpful. Is that primarily with your teaching staff,
18 your instructional staff, or --? I guess my question
19 would be has that been out in the parent community as
20 well, and what are some tips and techniques you might be
21 able to share with other communities who are -- who could
22 be doing that in a very productive way?

23 MR. CLUFF: That's a great question.

24 Because I know data can be a four-letter word. In our
25 community it is -- it is very much embraced, and I think



1 one of the reasons is because our parents really, again,
2 talking about the story of the parent in the group,
3 really felt like we weren't always being very honest with
4 them. And so, they have really embraced the data.

5 One of the things that I think we have done,
6 especially in some of our schools a little better than
7 others, is we had data sessions whereas each parent will
8 come in with a folder and their child's data will be in
9 there. There will be just a sample put up there, so we
10 teach parents what they can do with the data and how that
11 data can really help them assess what their children are,
12 where they can help us, and really, one of the things,
13 and this is a very tough things, but it's about honesty.

14 And it is very hard sometimes for classroom
15 teachers to be very honest about children that are not
16 doing well. It is a little bit in a doctor's office like
17 getting very bad news. The same thing should be
18 happening in a parent-teacher conference. And so, our
19 parents are beginning to ask for the data. Our children
20 are beginning -- the Barb Johnson, unbelievable
21 principal. Just, she was the one that ended the session.
22 She said she had the neatest thing happen.

23 Two days before the end of school she had
24 six third graders come in and say, "Mrs. Johnson, I need
25 my data. I need to know where my reading levels are, and



1 so do my friends." She said, "Kids, come on in."

2 You know, so we've just have a culture that
3 just embraces wanting to know, and I -- wanting to know
4 so we can do something about it. And, as a parent, I
5 want to know. And that's where we are really finding it.

6 Some of the issues around, you know, the
7 security and knowing too much; it just hasn't come up in
8 our community, because the data scene is so valuable.
9 Great question.

10 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Dr. Scheffel.

11 MS. SCHEFFEL: I really just want to thank
12 you for your leadership and your dedicated, relentless
13 effort. I know how hard this work is, and with your
14 turnover rates and all the challenges you're facing,
15 you're taking it on, you're facing it, you're embracing
16 it, you're owning it, and I really appreciate the work.

17 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you.

18 MR. CLUFF: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Marcia, and then I'll
20 come to you, Pam.

21 MS. NEAL: And I would agree with Dr.
22 Scheffel. I'll -- and mine is not so much a question as
23 a comment, and its enduring theme of mine, when you raise
24 the expectations, in the past, sometimes that meant to
25 the teachers just raise the grades. I remember, you



1 know, to have to do a failing list and then they come in
2 and ask you what you did.

3 But by tying it to the data, I think
4 probably that's what made that -- made that work for you.
5 And it's easy. In the past, teachers have had a tendency
6 to, you know, give good grades. Okay, what did my kid
7 get? He got a B. Oh, what does it, you know, what does
8 that mean? And I really appreciate the work you've done.
9 Because that means something to, you know, or I certainly
10 is beginning to mean something to the students when they
11 ask for their data. Instead of what grade did I get.
12 So, I appreciate that.

13 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you.

14 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Can I?

15 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Sure.

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I actually started on
17 the board right after the big turn around at the school
18 board meeting where there was 150 people. I was elected
19 soon after that. I've had children in the district for
20 22 years. I moved in as a single mom. I raised all of
21 my children. I've graduated all of them from Sheridan
22 High School, my youngest is a junior.

23 And the data, when I started, my oldest son
24 is 27 years old, and he was -- started kindergarten. The
25 data that they're talking about not only -- all of the



1 sudden we've got all this data, and what was all this
2 data? And your kids are coming home, "Mom, my data is
3 this." And, "Mom, my scores are this." And then -- and
4 parents start asking, "Well, what is this? What --?"
5 And then, they've -- we've had meetings where they
6 actually break down -- this is what the data is, this is
7 what it means, and I'm talking about to the minute
8 details of what my scores are in algebra, what I'm
9 missing, this is what I need to know, this is what I do
10 know. I mean, and these are children that we -- because
11 in my household we watch a lot of kids, and I have a
12 third grader there who knows what he needs to work on for
13 reading. Who knows what he needs to work on for math.

14 There's a soon-to-be fifth grader, and she
15 did the highest reading CBQM score for her class, and
16 came home with a certificate, "And this is what this
17 means. This is what grade level. I am reading
18 (indiscernible). I am reading on a ninth-grade level.
19 Ninth grade! Can you believe that! I'm just going to be
20 in the fifth grade!"

21 And I'm like, "You know what? I do believe
22 that." The data is spelled out not only to the children,
23 but to the parents and to the community. We've had
24 meetings with the community leaders, with the mayor, the
25 city council, everybody in the community knows that we're



1 talking about data, knows what data is, and knows exactly
2 how important it is. The other thing that is -- that has
3 been different in the last few years is the college.

4 Every, single kid at graduation is -- has a
5 plan. I remember in 2006, when my son graduated, they
6 announced their names, and there was only a few that were
7 being announced that were going to go to this college, or
8 to that college. My son, they announced that he was
9 joining the Marines, but about 60 percent of them, they
10 just announce their name.

11 When we're announcing names, we are
12 announcing their names and what college they're going to,
13 and what scholarships they've gotten. The two that were
14 speaking, or the children, all of those children, were
15 offered scholarships. The young man that spoke, that's
16 going to CU Aerospace Engineering Program, he's received
17 \$28,000 for his first year in pre aerospace engineering,
18 and he went to Sheridan.

19 I mean, these are the differences that I've
20 seen. I have seen not only my own children, but the
21 entire community's children. I have children constantly
22 coming up to me, speaking to me, "Hey, miss, how are
23 you?" "Hey, miss, did you hear I'm going to college?"
24 In 2006 you didn't get that. You were lucky to have a
25 high school student speak to you as an adult. They will



1 stop you on the street. "Hey, did you hear I got a job?"
2 "Hey, did you hear that I'm transferring from Arapaho to
3 CU Denver?" That's the difference in this community, and
4 the difference that this data has made.

5 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Pam, have a question?

6 MS. MAZANEC: Thank you. I just wanted to
7 echo what Dr. Scheffel said, and I was wondering about
8 your turnover rates. I see that they're still greater
9 than the state average, but are you -- are you seeing
10 your --

11 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Oh, it's not on.

12 MS. MAZANEC: Sorry about that. I'm
13 wondering, is that getting better?

14 MR. CLUFF: The turnover rate for staff?

15 MS. MAZANEC: Your staff turnover rate.

16 MR. CLUFF: Yes. It is getting better. And
17 it can be both a plus and a minus, but we are really to
18 the point that we need to level off. One of the reasons
19 we have a wonderful professional development program.
20 You know, the leaders were able to get in and to work
21 with our staff are absolutely incredible and all that
22 professional development walks out the door. So that's a
23 negative.

24 So, I will say, too, we hold a high
25 standard. Our kids don't deserve a good teacher, they've



1 got to have a great teacher. And we have teachers that
2 we do not renew that are successful in a different
3 environment, because we hold a very high bar, and so that
4 increases the turnover. But the rate right now, my
5 personal goal for my key performance indicators, is below
6 an 18 percent in the district. So we're getting -- we're
7 going to make that this year, and I think that's much
8 better in line with where we need that, but we don't
9 always see staff turnover as entirely negative.

10 MS. MAZANEC: Okay.

11 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you.

12 MS. MAZANEC: Well, thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: And we're essentially out
14 of time. I'm going to, however, use the prerogative of
15 the chair and actually ask a question. But before I do
16 that, I want to thank you for the work that you do. I
17 would echo Deb's comments that this relentless pursuit of
18 excellence is key. Thanks for the work that you do.

19 And I'd like to acknowledge some of the
20 familiar faces I see in the room from when I had the
21 opportunity to come out to the district. So, describe,
22 if you would, principally in just physical terms the
23 geography of the district. How you're bounded, how your
24 surrounded size, physically, of the district.

25 MR. CLUFF: Sure. Again, 1650 students.



1 Dartmouth, on the north, so we boarder the Denver School
2 District on our north boundary. Basically Lowell (ph),
3 again, Denver, on the East, and some Jefferson County --
4 I'm sorry, on our west Boundary, our south boundary is
5 Littleton, and then our east boundary is Englewood.

6 We're two and a half miles by two miles, and
7 we're landlocked, so we have about 400 students who exit
8 our district who choice out of Sheridan. We have about
9 400 that choice in. Most of our kids that choice in,
10 most of our students, choice in from Denver, and many of
11 our students go to Jefferson County and to Littleton,
12 predominately from the south side of our district.

13 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Excellent. Well, thank
14 you again for coming in.

15 MR. CLUFF: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: We look forward to
17 continuing the dialogue. Mr. Commissioner, any final
18 comments as we wrap up? And then we'll be inviting the
19 folks from Julesburg to come to the table next.

20 COMM. HAMMOND: Great. Thank you, Mr.
21 Chair. Thank you very much, Michael and Mr. Carter.

22 MR. CLUFF: Thank you.

23 COMM. HAMMOND: So, that's all the questions
24 I have.

25 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Thank you. And the board



1 members want to take a minute, we'll take a minute to
2 reset the room here.

3 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you.

4 (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
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Certified Vendor and Notary Public

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