

**DCSD School Board Meeting  
2-22-10**

**(Only the speaker's had microphones for this meeting so I was unable in some instances to hear what some BoE members and staff said)**

Agenda listed meeting to start at 5:30 p.m., in attendance at 5:30 p.m. were Ryan Stuart, Douglas Benevento, and Meghann Silverthorn. Not able to begin meeting because there was not a quorum until John Carson arrived at 6:09 p.m.

Present: Ryan Stuart, John Carson, Douglas Benevento, and Meghann Silverthorn.

**6:10 p.m.: Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge**

- Roll Call: Carson, Benevento, Stuart, and Silverthorn. Mr. Gerken just after roll call.
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Motion made, second, voice vote taken to approve a move up the STEM presentation on the agenda.

**6:12 Board Decisions: STEM Middle and High School**

- McGraw: by today (2/22) 373 students enrolled with proper paperwork. Panel Member: request of extension of charter for Fall 2011. Our ability to launch a successful release didn't come together for a successful (opening) in 2010. We feel extending the charter is the right thing to do. Way to open...partnership with community and BoE is that much more solidified. This is a strategic venture, not our approach to do something on a temporary basis...business partnership starts from day one and can be beneficial to the whole community. Mark Beasley: I am not currently a member of the STEM Board...to clarify. McGraw: I want to thank legal...in a resolution provided with the dates changed to meet the new timeline. The STEM folks have a proposal to an amendment to the resolution. Panel Member: Now that we are asking for an extension we want to go back and look at facility options...size of student body. We would like to ...verify that the combination, facility, student body and associated funding will give us a viable basis rather than having a student body number. Carson: I am supportive of this proposal...you have the support of the board in the months to come, whatever we can do to help...the most important thing is to get this done right. I am going to go ahead and recommend we approve that. Thoughts? Stewart: before we can act on a proposal by STEM, I would be curious to know is there a time you can come before us by such and such date? Panel member: Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> 2011, 525 FTE students...(instead) we recommend that the first sentence say...by Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> 2011 applicant shall provide a written...validated sources (of a viable business plan)...replace all but last sentence in item number 1: by 2011 the applicant will show written evidence of a sound business plan...McGraw: the number brought before us was the size and number of students...I think the language is what we need to tie down and Darci can do that. Stewart: do you have a problem with the "sound business plan" needing to be approved by the board? Panel Member: no. McGraw: the concerns that were brought up before have not been taken out...more time to deal with them. Carson: all of the public comment is on STEM...we will take 15 seconds each. Daniel Donaldson: I am thrilled the board is considering deferring to 2011. I am impressed by what they have done, I am thrilled to be one of the parents...Cindy: ditto if that helps (laughter). Cathy: I want to

vocalize my support of the school. Larry: I have a concern that is general and specific, in general I see a hunger for the technical training and specifically I have two grandkids who are candidates to attend it...I am offering my past professional expertise. Marybeth: we will enroll two children in 2011...it will have high parent involvement. We are excited to partner with industry and we are confident in the leadership. Christine: I mirror these thoughts as well. Gerken: first question on last page, paragraph F #9...last sentence...why is that in there? McGraw: it essentially means it is up to the board to make the decision. Reserves the right to the board to make the decision. Darci Mohr: intended that any denial (failure to meet) of a single condition is not a revocation. Not automatic. Stewart: as I read it conditional approval would be withdrawn...a revocation would bring other legal requirements. Panel Member: this wording still gives flexibility to the board to approve. In other words the board has to make an overt decision not by default. Stewart: I think the difference is in legal terminology. Carson: why don't we vote on that? Stewart: I move to vote on the resolution before us with the changes made. Gerken: second. Vote taken...all voted yes. Beasley: I want to thank three folks from the district, first Pat McGraw, Kindra Whitmyre and David hart.

- Carson: motion made to move into executive session to reconvene at 7:00 p.m. motion and move, accepted. 7:26 P.M. conclusion of closed session.

**7:27 P.M. Rick Hess (as part of the innovation series)**

- Carson: introduction of Mr. Hess. ([Please visit the DCSD Website, under agendas and minutes, and click on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and select this portion of the agenda to access copies of articles by Mr. Hess](#)) Hess: rather than give an opening remark of what you should or need to do. I think one of our profound problems in education is that we try to super size or super impose it on (a lot) of districts. Rather than innovation and reform being good things we have turned them into bad things. Innovation is something a superintendent rolls out every four months and hammers on teachers until they close their door. What I would prefer to do is talk about challenges you all have...some of the challenges on the radar. I know less about what is going on in classrooms than the teachers out here. However I get to talk to a lot of people...I will try to come up with some ideas/ways of addressing the problems. If we initiate that kind of analysis I think the time will be well spent.
- Carson: the biggest policy issue is changing the compensation for teachers and other employees including the new Super with some sort of measurement of student performance. It has been tried and has not been super successful. I am interested in cases where it has worked, places it has failed. Ryan is the board member working with the federation on that. We have a very cordial relationship with them, we (DCSD) are the largest local with the AFT not NEA. We just signed a MOU with the union...so I will throw it out at that. Hess: a lot of what I am going to say is going to seem unconventional...again that is why people bring me in. First thing I would suggest...the way we are talking about merit pay...if we step back...what is the problem we are trying to solve. We have a teaching profession built around qualities not longer in effect. Early on it was a male profession...teachers taught for a few years and then moved on. In the 20/30s we had a huge wave of Irish Catholics...we needed to build out and make it "woman's work" and make it a woman's job. The great thing was that they only had to pay women 50% of what a man made. The birth

of the salary schedule was from this. It seems to make sense. There was no way to track performance or value and the pay system needed to work. The problem is that we no longer have that pool of educated women who needed to teach...now in a labor force looking at a 22 year old willing to commit to a job for 30 years. We are thinking about the job...trying to attract talented people...the job they would be doing at 22 would be the same as 52. A bonus doesn't actually solve any of the root problems. It is also the type of advance for encyclopedia sales man...but not how companies recruit. There is not a problem with talking about merit pay...but it is our entire game plan. We are now in a highly mobile labor force...we need to rethink the teaching job. If in an elementary school one teacher is an excellent reading teacher and another is a crappy reading teacher...they are both teaching reading for 60 minutes with the same lunch. Highly effective reading intervention teachers should be paid (more). One, how do we figure out which roles are the most significant, second, which teacher is the most effective, third, hazard pay...are they in schools that they are most needed to be in, fourth, how well are their kids doing? I am a huge fan of merit pay, however when we start we get ourselves in a box. Carson: thoughts (asking the rest of the Board)? Carson: what about the track record are there any cases that are working we should look at? Hess: it goes back to what I opened with. In the 80's we had a career ladder...hospital, everyone comes in and does the same job but over time through seniority and more work they move up. In the Kipp Schools (Team Schools) <http://www.kippdc.org/> they are trying to figure out the strongest (teachers)...trying to figure out who are the most effective, about diagnosis, as opposed as those teaching writing. I would suggest you look at the (Kipp) folks. Herzog: private, public or charter system? Is Kipp for profit? Hess: not for profit but charter. You will find some districts doing some of this...some is what you are already doing...not talking about something that doesn't exist. If we sat down and looked through I would guess most people would fit in categories...find the school-staffing regime is similar. Fairfax County has 7 schools trying a version of this. In 1964 the average college grad has 5 jobs in lifetime, now 4 (different jobs) by the time they are 30. (Reference to Citizen Schools (Boston) why don't we provide a way for them (others) to teach in an area that (they have expertise in)...bring adults into schools with a structured curriculum pro bono. When getting more ...try thinking about leveraging the talent we have more fully. Herzog: when you are diff. compensation...(no microphone so I was unable to catch the entire comment). Hess: terrific point, but I need to be clear...we are not talking about a plan (yet). Either someone bitterly defends the salary schedule or (someone else) goes over the trench to impose a merit pay system. Particularly if you have a trusting relationship with employees and their union you can leverage that trust (to create a good system). How do you build a system that doesn't undermine...Fante: you mentioned not just those things we know how to measure...can you elaborate? Hess: when looking at value added assessment...they will point out that there are 8 or 9 viable models. There has to be an assumption...this is true when we evaluate anyone in any line of work. We need to be thoughtful and smart about the rhetoric...as with NCLB (No Child Left Behind)...it is easy for our enthusiasm to get away from us. There is a question of what we call "end size" ...to get any reasonably stable idea you generally want to have a minimum of 90-100 observations. If your sample size is 30 the confidence

that you have accurately captured it is really only 1 in 10...to really capture...you really want 3-4 years of data. To make sure the data is actually associated with the teacher. How do we get more point of information on a teacher? One way is to capture assessments, if the district is testing quarterly...problems of tracking. The problem is...I am unenthusiastic of the notion that we can clearly define a teacher on assessment. When you try to come up with one size fits all...if you are talking about your student population is there a way to judge how students are...problems of it is at a policy level if the board believes to drive these...you don't need to go in for portfolios, you as a board are in a position to talk to vendors and integrate what you value...is it expensive? Potentially. Is it feasible? Yes. Carson: do you (Brenda Smith) want to come up here to be able to ask questions? Brenda Smith moved up to a seat with the staff. Silverthorn: how would you suggest overcoming the stigma of this and having people buy in? Hess: a hospital decides the cardio vascular surgeon is more valuable than an RN...second to keep in mind is in Greek city-states archery teachers made less than a philosophy instructor. First we need to become more comfortable talking this way. One of the advantages that corporations have...we have to figure out how to make old institutions work in profoundly different ways. The reality is that it has to be done in partnership with 85% of budget and 100% of the workers. In other areas we don't talk about this...my understanding is that due to a high quality relationship and due to a level of community support...it has an opportunity to do important things if approached thoughtfully and constructively Brenda Smith: where do you recommend starting? Where do you begin having this conversation? I agree you need everyone on board. Hess: pick somewhere you all sense you could do better...a grade level configuration and ask for volunteers...good working relationship with principal, school district. Elementary, for example we are doing a lousy job of allocating time. Try to do this in a way where we don't have too many bruised egos. Sit down with a handful of teachers and say, "look, we are not where we want to be, 85% on CSAP, we can be 100%, what can we do differently?" Right now even the most forward looking districts are trying to get money to free up their successful teachers to mentor...but maybe we should be freeing up their time to work with kids at the same time. District HR, teachers, union leadership...say our goal is over the next 6 weeks to meet a dozen times to figure out within this window maybe we figure out how we fiddle with the schedule to reconfigure the time and track it for performance. Smith: I am looking out there in the audience and I see teachers that know where their strengths lie...looking at a science teacher who teaches only science. Hess: I would agree...a lot of how we are talking about...rather than try to keep these structures in place, how do you make it easier and rethinking the box you are putting these people into. When law firms go out they try to find a way to leverage the best available talent. We are holding fast to a system in education that doesn't make sense. Herzog: in high school? Hess: yes, when looking at the difference in high school and Mines, we don't try to break up high school classes too 300 kids instead of 24 kids because the qualitative difference isn't there. We try to look at the different roles teachers are to play, we don't have faculty working in a way (to maximize potential)...(local) newspaper stories of growing class size. Some district will grow class size across the board. Research on class size is far less compelling (referring to the impact of larger sizes)...on the other hand class size

matters with kids who are struggling. Harder to connect with seminar classes...part of the same puzzle of figuring out class size is teacher strength. Carson: we are close on that one. Hess: parents are well equipped to judge (teachers on) communication with students and parents, updating, good at reporting new technology. What that suggests is that at, particularly, the elementary grades parental feedback is enormously important. I am not worried about the teachers getting the raw deal; I am worried about the students. I don't want teachers to have concerns about the parents evaluating them...other professions rely on customer satisfaction, (but not on content) makes sense to systematically integrate that in teacher evaluation and compensation. I think there is a lot of common ground here. Professionals take pride in communications with parents. I don't see any reason districts can't use this. Reason many district don't use this systematically is because they are doing a crappy job of collecting it (data). Carson: we have a search for Superintendent, we (the BoE) have a culture of not meddling in the details. We want to set the general direction of the ship but the person we hire is going to run it lock stock and barrel. What should we be looking for? You talk a little about the debate of conventional and non-conventional...I am not sure that gets us anywhere. What drives some of use to look at non-conventional may find it easier...(read an excerpt from Hess's paper). We are looking for innovation, more parental choice, merit pay system, we want to really set the bar high...which we are already there...we are the highest...one of the two...rated districts (in the state), but when you look internationally we are...Hess: again, it is always an enormous advantage to be thinking of improvement from the front of the pack. Districts that don't do as well don't tend to be engaged in these conversations. The fact that you are avoiding rushing into this or that fad is very encouraging. The Colorado assessment...in an analysis of 26 states to the nationally normed progress. Colorado proficient is 25<sup>th</sup> out of 26<sup>th</sup>. You need to test at the 7<sup>th</sup> % to be deemed proficient. Any Colorado district is doing nationally...you deserve to take pride, but important not to get too comfortable. There is no magic in non-traditional. What matters at the end of the day is the context you bring that leader into, the teams they build, and the systems they are exposed to. If you get the right leader is one important piece of the larger puzzle. Partly, the right leader will be what you want that context to be...if you want it to be growth and measure, you want for K-12, value in picking someone who has utilized the tools of what is familiar to K-12 leaders. Second thing, Michelle Rhee...when she was brought into D.C. the one thing we had heard about was the impossibility of removing teachers. She removed 100 (teachers) out at the end of the year, of low-performing evaluated teachers. It had (always) been written into law and just wasn't used. She is an unusual person; she came from a mindset of how to change this. (Superintendent) wanted to institute Prince Georges County and Montgomery County Merit pay and resign teachers into where they were needed. 750 teachers resigned and instituted merit pay. We (that county) are not being creative. We (that county) can give up to two months extra pay...how do we give that for teachers who move to struggling schools. We need people who are saying what's the problem, how do we solve? The danger of traditional leadership...superintendents moving into larger districts...part is not the superintendent but is the board and community. The other piece is that supers that haven't been exposed to other thinking are prone to "faddism." Among the 1,800

readings not included... (they are) not unconventional thinkers but because they can filter in different kinds of thinking. Stahl: the sound bites... how do you frame your team? You can learn a lot from professional sports teams and how they structure their organizations. The key to the success is what Pat Bolen has done (with the Broncos)... One of the things Michelle Rhee had was the full backing of the mayor, no dogs in the fight... but you are not looking for someone to dismantle, to drive mediocrity out of a troubled organization, but a dynamic leader to come into... you are not looking at what they offer. Don't let the public put you in the boxes. What are the 3-4 core roles, cost structures? Need hands on experience. Can't just be "I have been a general"... if you are looking at someone to communicate the mission... then look for that. A lot of people who are in the educational world are non-enthusiastic communicators. You want someone who can translate... You will be in the position to make them more successful. You can say "take an 8 week sabbatical before you start, we want you to go out and spend time with 6 (other) districts." Or if it is an internal candidate... we want you to take three weeks every summer. Gerken: Michelle Rhee, what was she doing before that? Hess: the New Teacher Project, "Teach for America." Michelle launched that. He (the mayor?) needed someone who would swing a pickaxe. Gerken: if you were given the assignment to come up with a measure to measure teacher performance where would you start? Hess: you need to start with the assessments again however those only apply, in a typical district, to 30-35% of the teachers. Even for elementary, you don't want to gauge only on math scores. Recognize that it is a tool, and seek out appropriate academic compliments. It is a value judgment, what do you think raises to the value? Makes less sense outside of the urban core to define so narrowly. A number of observations and formulative assessments. A lot of teachers work where there is no assessment... certainly fine arts, music, some contents, as a district make one of two choices: some type of portfolio, other teachers in the district, professors, outside evaluators, trained professionals used to study the schools, teacher professional behaviors that seem to be causal to learning. Portfolios and some kind of other professional judgment. Are they good in the classroom? Assessments that are in place, seek out other assessments, portfolios, professional assessments. My preference is in numbers and concrete data points. But we are not yet at a point that we can do that for all subjects or contents... if nothing or basing it on professional evaluation I pick evaluations. Gerken: where? (what about) Harrison? Hess: I don't think anyone has looked at Mile's (referring to the Harrison Plan) project yet. If you look there has never been an article stating that paying good employees better than bad ones has never been proven to work. What we are trying to do is interesting, what I would suggest... the whole point of merit pay is not to figure out if pay bonuses make test scores go up. It is a way to reward good teachers to stay in the profession. I worry that every system doesn't look at it that way. It would be a mistake to say it doesn't work... how do we get merit pay to get the types of teachers that Douglas County wants? Gerken: if one were to reduce seniority as a major component of the schedule... out come? Hess: professionals are at 95% of their peak by late 30's. The problem with education is that you are not at (max pay) until 50. Even if salary and the rest weren't driven by seniority... the way it is set up encourages teachers to hang on. Move away from benefits systems that lock teachers

in place. State law. The easiest way is cash balance...if teachers leave they can take the cash value with them. The issue to move away from seniority...rather than on step on pay scale 26-41 K there is a set of factors...once receive tenure...the other part if moving away from seniority...you start to use pay to make people want to stay. If teachers want to for the rest of their lives. If you free up those dollars, part of effective teaching is technology, engaging parents...if people in central are in year 15...reconfigure those jobs and crack the FTE into two...(so they are) also in classrooms and will start to create new careers and still stay in their classroom and can pay more. Not just to shift money from seniority into PFP. Smith: what about mobility across systems, I think that creates problems...after X amount of time those who choose a certain area (can't switch to a different district) where they may be more successful. Hess: exactly. Modeled after women who stayed in the same area for 30 years. Smith: allowing that increases competition. Benevento: how does that cost come into play? How often does that happen when you have a teacher with 20 years wanting to move into a different district? Smith: you have to look at how people fit in different systems. Carson: Brenda mentioned competition...we have 7% of kids in choice schools. I have heard you say that (couldn't catch what Mr. Carson said)...some on this board have said that there is not a noticeable difference in performance between our neighborhood and charter schools. Hess: school choice got in the way...the same reason anyone strives for choice, we like choices. When you talk about competition...it is why America works so well. One piece is demand, parents can choose what they want to get. That is not the action...the action is on the supply side. You really want to increase the supply of good choices. Competition is a mechanism...what I would suggest is that charter schooling hasn't really done much in the concept of competition. Districts mirror charter schools...that is not competition. Competition is when self-interested people wake up and say they have to do things differently. Schools of choice, charter, magnet, is a mechanism for allowing parental decision to have a direct impact on behavior. The general impact on the school leader is nil. We think about choice as ways to solve problems. Second, the extent to which a district is interested in using competition. One of the great things that choice does is that it lets you get out of a catch all environment...choice lets kids and educators choose and get into an environment where they are a good match. Back in Washington even the most radical people say you still get to choice (reference to health care). In education we think the leading edge is you get to choose A or B. People don't necessarily want to leave A for B, but may want a different music program. There are ways we can give families choices, how do we start to unbundle the serves while still allowing them to stay at A. Stahl: STEM is one of the most unique...the STEM thing is interesting that it is a unique opportunity. My third grader gets very little science...but if I really want to change that...choice allows this. Hess: Rosetta Stone, when someone cooks it up they sell it...they are free to do one thing well. 4,000 + that are unexceptional...they look more or less like district schools. That tells us there is nothing magic about charters. If you think about Rosetta Stone...if they say they want to start a school...and they go recruit reading, math, etc. teachers by the time they were up and running they would no longer be doing what they are good at, but doing everything else. One way to think about unbundling...running a great school is very hard. They are good

because they have a good pool of people. Music Maker...(can provide a) full music studio in an elementary for \$1,300. Gerken: we are looking at 70 mill in cuts over the next two years...85% of budget is compensation and benefits...do you have any suggestions? Hess: I share my comments knowing you are smart people...I am trying to be a thoughtful partner for you all...so there are a couple ways to think about this. One, generating additional revenues, that is a community discussion. Two reduce staff, another to address expenses that may not be productive to attracting quality staff...benefits, the cost of benefits...what is the average (teacher's) salary? 33,000 +. Hess: with benefits, more like \$40,000...you are spending money, but you are not getting credit for it. This just makes the same compensation more transparent, it helps us make our sales pitch better. One thing to look at is the "Council of Great City Schools"...they have a benchmark looking at a variety of methods...historically, failure to look at benchmarks. CTCS...maybe a useful mechanism to identify some opportunities...Herzog: we already do this. Hess: good, also...24/7 tutoring service, they sell to community colleges..."smart thinking" one on one computer tutoring for 12\$/hour (people are) from Sri Lanka and New Deli. Students who need intensive remediation. Third, opportunity to generate revenue. High Tech HS (San Diego), is a fully accredited teacher prep. system. High Tech High student teachers are on campus 40 hours per week...have a full team of Para professionals for free. State and federal dollars for this...say they will train teachers on site. You have 250-300 new hires, the district could decide this could add up to channel teacher prep dollars into Douglas County...one of the best things about being a reforming high performing district.... Carson: I am just interested, you have spent your whole life studying public education...how are we really doing? Maybe we are not doing that good...what you said about CSAP was really disturbing. Fante: when looking at NCLB, basing how our school district is doing CSAP for the purposes of meeting Adequately Yearly Progress as defined by NCLB includes students partially proficient through advanced which is a much lower accountability bar for the federal law. That's what they were illuminating. However, our state accountability for district accreditation and school ratings only included students proficient or advanced-a much higher bar. Hess: o.k., also keep in mind it took us 12 generations just to get all of our kids in schools. It wasn't until the 1960 that more than 90% were attending school. At almost the exact moment we decide that schools are the key to the future. The model schools we constructed are not doing what we ask of them to do. You cannot point out any evidence that our schools are worse than they used to be. We have systems where you pump in new resources. On international assessments, our kids are unimpressive. In math we get schooled by Singapore and South Korea, but these are very homogenous societies. We as a people have done very good, I don't think we can emulate what in other countries work for them. We have decentralization, localism, part of the challenge is how we figure out educational solutions that fit our strengths. Internationally, they (other countries) are envious of parts of our system like freethinking; China and India are looking at American schools. This means we are trying to refurbish a house, they (other countries) can cut fresh turf. Tutor.com, they get to just do it because there are no stakeholders to work around. Not to imagine our schools are abysmal, or fine. We spend more PPF than any other country. How do we not throw the baby out with the bath water? It is trying not how to patch the

system together? How would we start to solve these problems? **9:43 p.m. Motion to Adjourn**

**\*Notes taken by Courtney Smith, DCF Office: [Courtney.smith@dcsdk12.org](mailto:Courtney.smith@dcsdk12.org). If you have any questions on the content of the notes feel free to contact her.**