

FOUNDATIONS

Managing Growth | Maintaining Excellence

Shareholder's Quarterly Update

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Survey gauges school safety, maintenance

Douglas County School District continues to see remarkable growth. Projections show the School District should add almost 2,500 new students in the 2007-08 school year. DCSD is constantly assessing and reviewing facility needs in an effort to serve our booming communities with safe, healthy learning environments for students, to manage growth effectively, and to use taxpayer money responsibly.

In this edition of *Foundations*, you will see updates on construction and capital improvement projects across the District. Currently, DCSD has 19 sites in varying stages of new construction and remodeling.

The process for facilities reviews includes safety assessments. As a District, safety and security of students and staff is a paramount, ongoing process. In a recent District survey, parents and students were asked a few questions about their perception of the safety and condition of school buildings and classrooms. Six thousand parents responded, while 17,000 students took part in the survey.

Responses were positive, with 93 percent of parents and 73 percent of students agreeing that school buildings and classrooms are clean, safe and well maintained. Eighty-seven percent of parents agreed that their students

feel safe at school, while 77 percent of students reported feeling safe at school.

In order to improve on solid performance and standards, a project to install intercom systems at all front entry doors of District elementary schools was completed during the 2006-07 school year. Some systems include a video interface for added security. Additionally, designated security kiosks have been set up at all middle and high schools to tighten access to these buildings.

Continued community support allows our school system to provide facilities that promote and improve student learning and achievement, and demonstrate an effective use of resources. ■■■



Did you know?

During the 2006-07 school year, DCSD completed a project to install intercom systems at all front entry doors of District elementary schools. Some new systems include a video interface for added security. Additionally, designated security kiosks have been set up at all middle and high schools to tighten access to these buildings.



An overview of Student-Based Budgeting

Budgeting moves closer to local schools

In Douglas County School District, management of school funds continues to move closer to local schools. With the adoption of a Student-Based Budgeting (SBB) process at all District schools, control of the majority of a school’s budget takes place where teaching and learning occurs.

Under the former budgeting method, staffing needs for each school were managed at the District level, while principals were only allotted dollars for operating expenses. Operating expenses include such things as textbooks, classroom supplies, computer and office equipment, and printing. Now, with Student-Based Budgeting, schools are provided a per-pupil dollar amount that principals use to meet their school’s operating needs, as well as staffing needs.

“We’ve tested this method over the past two years at several schools and have found it to be a more efficient way of budgeting school dollars,” says Director of Budgeting Shelley Becker. **“It is a way of getting dollars to where they are needed, providing sites with greater flexibility and increased accountability at the local/school community level.”** Currently, only three other districts in Colorado have implemented similar budgeting strategies: Denver Public Schools, Poudre Valley School District and Adams 12 School District.

At this time, each individual school budgets the following for their site:

- All regular classroom teachers
- Specials and electives teachers
- Classified staff
- Operating expenses

Principals, working in close partnership with the District’s Learning Services Department, identify their school’s particular student achievement gaps and

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District Quick Facts

\$13,000-\$400,000
Operating dollars managed by each school using former budgeting process.

\$300,000-\$8 million
Operating and staffing dollars managed by each school using Student-Based Budgeting.



Executive Director of Business Services named

The Douglas County School District is pleased to announce the hiring of Diane Doney as the new Executive Director of Business Services. Diane will oversee Budget, Purchasing and Finance Departments.

Diane comes to the District from Durango School District 9R, where she was the Chief Financial Officer for the past nine years. She was responsible for all financial transactions, the Instructional Technology Department, Student Information Services, Nutrition Services, Transportation, and the Facilities and Maintenance Departments in Durango School District. Diane has also worked as Controller for Durango Mountain Resort, and as a staff accountant for a CPA. She received her Bachelors in Business Administration from Fort Lewis College, and is currently seeking her Masters in Public Policy from the University of Colorado at Denver. Diane will assume her new role with DCSD at the end of October. ■■■

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curriculum needs. Under SBB, school leaders have the flexibility to determine how they want to adjust staffing and other expenses to address the needs of students and teachers at their school. Although principals still follow District guidelines for staffing ratios, they are better able to tailor their budgets to meet particular needs.

Funds managed at the District level currently include:

- Administrative staff
- Building Resource Teachers (BRTs)
- Counselors (at secondary level schools)
- Band/orchestra programs (at elementary schools)
- Volunteer coordinators
- Health assistants
- Instructional Support Services/Special Education
- Custodial and campus security
- Grant-funded positions

With SBB, accurate pupil count projections at each school have become crucial. While schools previously managed operating budgets of \$13,000-\$400,000, they now oversee operating and staffing budgets ranging from \$300,000-\$8 million, depending on student enrollment at their school. Principals meet annually with the District Planning Department to project student populations for the following school year. By March 1, final projected student counts are tallied and applied to the SBB Worksheets that schools utilize to build their budgets.

Budgets are shared with School Accountability Committees (SACs) to allow for local community input and oversight. If you are interested in learning more about your neighborhood school's budget, contact the principal or SAC at the school. ●●●

Students continue to outpace state averages on CSAPs

Douglas County School District (DCSD) students continue to do very well in the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP). 2007 CSAP results show that DCSD continues to outpace state averages in every grade and every subject tested.

When comparing the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency, DCSD students exceeded the state averages by 10-19 percentage points.

"Although DCSD students continue to perform exceptionally well on the CSAP exams, it is important to remember they are only a piece of the 'body of evidence' used to determine student proficiency," says Executive Director of Assessment, Curriculum and Staff Development, Dr. Jed Bowman. "Administrators, teachers and support staff continue to have high expectations for all students as we focus on a quality liberal arts education."

"We are so proud of our students and their continued excellence," says Superintendent, Dr. Jim Christensen. He adds, "Outstanding results like these can only be accomplished with hard work and through strong partnerships among students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators."

The CSAP exams measure the District's effectiveness in delivering Colorado Model content standards in mathematics, reading and writing in grades 3-10 and in science in grades 5, 8 and 10. ●●●

CSAP Quick Facts

- Bear Canyon Elementary, Northridge Elementary, Pine Grove Elementary, Summit View Elementary and Wildcat Mountain exceeded the District and state averages on all 13 tests.
- 100 percent of Northridge Elementary 6th grade students scored at or above proficient.
- Cherokee Trail Elementary maintained or improved in 11 out of 13 tests.
- Parker Core Knowledge*, Mountain Ridge Middle School, Platte River Academy*, and Rocky Heights Middle School students exceeded the District and state averages on all seven tests.
- Rock Canyon High School exceeded the District and state averages on all seven tests.

*Parker Core Knowledge and Platte River Academy are K-8 charter schools; results shown in the middle school section represent students in grades 6-8. These schools are not solely middle schools.

Technology in the classroom

Say goodbye to pocket calculators, typewriters and grainy filmstrips. Hello to the internet, interactive whiteboards, clickers and computers everywhere! Today, technology in the classroom introduces students to collaboration on a worldwide scale through podcasts and blogs, and integration of digital media throughout their learning. The District continues to look for new methods of teaching in an effort to meet the changing needs of today's technologically savvy students.

With more than 14,000 computers across the District in teachers' toolboxes, software and technology popular in the marketplace, such as GarageBand, iMovie and Comic Life, are commonly used to enhance the classroom lesson.

Not only is technology amplifying student learning, it is also changing the way students are learning. At Trailblazer Elementary, for example, teachers create podcasts with students on subjects they are learning in class. Students often write the scripts and create original

artwork for the production using GarageBand and iMovie, which can be posted to the school website. A recent podcast on a science lesson in electricity contained several chapters, each produced by a different team of students. The chapters illustrated the concepts of static electricity, insulators and conductors, series circuits, and switches. The podcast now functions not only as a teaching tool for future classes, but as a showcase for parents to see what their children are learning. It also serves as a demonstration of planning, expository writing and organizational skills.

Comic Life allows students to create cartoon strips dramatizing classroom lessons. The comics are turned into PowerPoint presentations or Quicktime movies which can be played at home. "It's more fun and creative, yet teachers can see that students comprehend the material," says Kim McMonagle, Educational Technology Specialist. "Kids retain more information when they use both images and words; it's a powerful medium."

In addition to software, the District is using many different kinds of hardware to further classroom learning. Interactive whiteboards – and the related slates and tablets – are in more than 30 DCSD schools. They have replaced traditional chalkboards and whiteboards in many schools, allowing teachers to project lessons, examples, even test

questions directly from the teacher's computer to the screen in front of the class. With slates and tablets the size of a notebook, a teacher can walk around the room, no longer tied to the computer or the board itself.

Handheld technologies are the latest thing to enter the classroom. At ThunderRidge High School as well as 20 other District schools, teachers are utilizing wireless clickers to log student responses to questions instantly. This creates an interactive learning experience that keeps students engaged. Mountain Ridge Middle School is using science probes, which allow for experiments in the field and support data collecting and graphing. GPS units are being taken on geocaching hunts at Castle Rock Middle School, where students are using GPS coordinates to complete scavenger hunts that also teach geography in a hands-on, interactive way.

Much of the technology-driven work is completed during class time, since not all students have access to computers at home. Teachers offer choices on how to complete particular assignments so students can opt to use software to create a presentation, for example, or to use good old paper-and-pencil. School labs and libraries are also equipped with the same software so students can access them during study times.

Teachers are using the Internet more and more, creating virtual drop-boxes on the school servers where students can go to pick up assignments, find links to information and drop off completed work. Some teachers are creating interactive assignments where students find video they must watch, then

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There are more than 14,000 computers in schools across the District. Every school has an Instructional Computer Resource Teacher (iCRT) on-site to assist with incorporating technology into the classroom. ☐☐☐

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answer questions about content by typing in answers or even recording their voices. Sites such as www.unitedstreaming.com and www.streaming.discoverededucation.com provide online information sources that teachers can link to, providing a more controlled source of information than students might find if left to wander the web unguided.

Each District school has an Instructional Computer Resource Teacher (iCRT) on-site, who leads the way in integrating current technology into classroom instruction. District teachers are also taking part in the Digital Educator Program, which provides tools and intensive training on how to turn traditional classrooms into digital learning environments that improve student motivation and achievement.

Technology is transforming the learning landscape in ways that few could have imagined a few years ago. Yet one thing remains the same: ultimately, it's the material that matters. "Learning is still the most important thing," stresses McMonagle. "Technology just enhances and supports it." ■■■

Career and Tech on the move

High wage, high demand careers motivate learners

The mission of Career and Technical Education (CTE) is not only to prepare students for meaningful high skill, high wage and high demand careers, but also to connect students with careers in their field of interest. Thanks to the support of Douglas County voters, District students will receive expanded career opportunities when two new CTE wings are built over the next three years.

Data analysis and extensive discussions with businesses statewide have helped DCSD determine which CTE programs to offer at each of the two new sites. CTE wings are planned at the new High School #9 in Parker, which is currently under construction, and at Rock Canyon High School (RCHS). HS #9's CTE wing, scheduled to open with the school's second phase in January 2009, will be dedicated to six centers leading to careers in:

- Transportation, distribution and logistics (e.g. automotive repair/maintenance)
- Law, public safety and security (e.g. criminal justice)
- Environmental science and agriculture (e.g. landscape design/management)
- Information technology (e.g. Oracle, A+/Net+ certification)
- Manufacturing (electronics)
- Health sciences (e.g. certified nursing assistant)

The second wing, planned for Rock Canyon High School, is scheduled to open during the 2010-11 school year. The RCHS wing will have four CTE centers focusing on:

- Management and administration (business technologies)
- Arts, audio visual technology and communications (digital media)
- Architecture and construction (construction technologies)
- Science, technology, engineering and math (pre-engineering)

"These programs will give students a great head start in careers they are interested in while they are still in high school," says Glen March, coordinator of CTE. "Learning within a career-oriented context also helps students understand the true significance of their high school course work." This connection between school and business will enable students to successfully transition from high school to post-secondary education and/or employment.

To connect students with career opportunities, area businesses will partner with DCSD by providing resources, field trips, instruction and facilities to enable students to get hands-on experience in each program. Students will have the opportunity to graduate from high school with industry certifications or, at the minimum, entry-level employment skills. They may also receive either dual credit or articulated college credit. In addition to career-specific skills, students will gain foundation knowledge skills in ethics, teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking and legal responsibilities related to a particular career area.

For additional information about CTE programs and the new building wings, contact Glen March at 303.734.3871. ■■■

School construction continues



Construction Updates – October 2007

Construction and remodeling projects abound in Douglas County School District. Thanks to voter approval of the November 2006 Bond and Budget Override elections, the District is in the process of providing new educational facilities for its growing student population and upgrading older facilities. Following is a brief overview of the District's projects and timelines for completion.

- At **Mammoth Heights Elementary (#42)** in the Stonegate neighborhood in Parker, site work continues with soil amendments, retaining walls, irrigation, plantings and playground equipment. Exterior building finishes such as metal accents and entry soffit trim are nearing completion. Building floor finishes are being placed and trim work is being installed. **Scheduled project completion: November 2007.**
- At **Stone Mountain Elementary (#43)** in Highlands Ranch, the building's exterior and interior are both in final finishing stages. Landscaping and installation of playground equipment and the synthetic turf sports field are nearing completion. Installation of kitchen equipment started the second week of October. **Scheduled project completion: December 2007.**
- At **Elementary School #44** in the Antelope Heights neighborhood in Parker, earthwork is nearly complete and site utilities are in progress. Caisson drilling for the building's foundation is progressing well. The project should be presented to the Parker Planning Commission in November. **Scheduled project completion: July 2008.**
- At **Elementary School #45** in The Meadows in Castle Rock, rough overlot grading and excavation of the crawlspace is complete. Drilling and pouring of the concrete foundation caissons continues. Installation of foundation walls has begun. Construction and paving of the parking lot is scheduled to be completed before November to allow material storage through the winter months. **Scheduled project completion: July 2008.**
- At **Roxborough Intermediate School (#46)**, final site work is in progress and is scheduled to be completed by early November. Structural steel construction is complete. Exterior masonry veneer continues. Installation of roofing has started and is scheduled for completion before the end of October. The building envelope is scheduled to be "dried-in" by early November to enable the finish trades to work through the winter months. **Scheduled project completion: February 2008.**
- At **Middle School #8** in Founders Village in Castle Rock, exterior wall framing and masonry veneer have been completed. Construction of interior drywall and the ceiling is underway on the first floor. Framing is nearing completion on the second floor. Glazing is nearing completion and is underway in the clearstory. Mitchell Street, leading to the school from

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Mikelson Street, is completed and the first lift of asphalt has been placed on the east and north parking lots. The design has been modified slightly from Rocky Heights Middle School and the other prototypical middle school designs in the District with the addition of two more classrooms. **Scheduled project completion: May 2008.**

- At **Middle School #9** in the Idylwilde neighborhood in Parker, the design team is finalizing the site layout with the Town of Parker. The project will bid to contractors in spring 2008 and will use the same school design as Middle School #8. **Scheduled project completion: Spring 2010.**
- At **High School #9** in the Idylwilde neighborhood in Parker, work continues on masonry, joists and deck, roofing, interior stud walls, fire protection, plumbing, mechanical and electrical systems. This school uses the District's prototypical high school design, with the layout similar to that of Rock Canyon High School and Castle View High School. The gym wing has been modified to allow for more flexibility. **Scheduled project completion: HS #9 will open in phases. The first phase for approximately 1,000 students will open in August 2008, and the second phase will open in January 2009.**
- At **Douglas County High School**, planning is underway to relocate the Grounds Department from the South building complex to the newly purchased O&M East building in Franktown. Also, two phases of development have been funded: Phase 1 will relocate the baseball and softball fields at DCHS to the east side of the site. This phase is under design and is scheduled to bid to contractors in March 2008, with a completion date of August 2008. Phase 2 includes a new main and auxiliary gym. Construction of Phase 2 is scheduled to start in January 2009 and will be completed in June 2010. Additional renovation components will depend on voter passage of a future bond. **Scheduled project completion: June 2010.**
- A replacement facility for **Plum Creek Academy** is in the preliminary design stage. Program and space requirements are finalized. Design will continue once a site is secured. Negotiations for a possible site are in progress.
- A new **Early Childhood Center**, to be located on the Renaissance Magnet School site in Castle Rock, is in the schematic design stage. The program and space requirements have been finalized for this new 16,000 square foot facility that will house Child Find, the Audiology office and, potentially, three preschool classrooms. Specific site and building details are now being designed. Design and permitting will be completed in the spring of 2008. Construction will begin in May 2008. **Scheduled project completion: May 2009.**
- **Bear Canyon Elementary** is receiving a preschool and special needs classroom suite addition, office remodel, bathroom remodel, roof replacement and numerous building, mechanical, plumbing and electrical system improvements. The project will bid to contractors in spring 2008. **Scheduled project completion: Fall 2008.**
- **Summit View Elementary** is receiving additional preschool and special needs classroom space. The project also includes a roof replacement, and numerous building, mechanical, plumbing and electrical system improvements. The project will bid to contractors in spring 2008. **Scheduled project completion: Fall 2008.**
- Additions and remodels are in the planning stages at **Coyote Creek Elementary, Fox Creek Elementary, Pine Grove Elementary, Roxborough** and **Cresthill Middle School**. **Scheduled completion: 2010-11.** ■■■

District Quick Facts

59 capital improvement projects are in various stages and are scheduled for completion from 2007 to 2010.

Three Board of Education Director seats are open in the November election:

District A Northwest Highlands Ranch

District C North Central Highlands Ranch

District F Northeast Parker

It's in the mail!

Douglas County will use only mail ballots in November

Are you ready to cast your ballot in the upcoming 2007 election? Election Day, Tuesday, November 6, is fast approaching. In this odd-year election, Douglas County is using only mail ballots! The Douglas County Commissioners passed a resolution in July authorizing a Mail Ballot for this election.

For voters, that means a single ballot will be delivered to all active, registered Douglas County voters along with instructions. Voters will not have to travel to polling places to cast their votes.

Douglas County School District has three Board of Education Director seats open in this election: Districts A (Northwest Highlands Ranch), C (North Central Highlands Ranch) and F (Northeast Parker). Voters countywide may vote for Board candidates in any district. However, candidates will only represent the District to which they are elected.

Recent legislation allows Colorado voters to take advantage of permanent mail-in voter status. Formerly, in order to vote via the mail-in or absentee option, voters had to reapply for a mail ballot each year. Now, voters who choose to use a mail-in will continue to receive their ballots until they decide to vote via another option. For more information, go to the Douglas County Clerk and Recorder's website at www.douglas.co.us/clerk/elections. ■■■

Election Day is Tuesday, November 6.

If you have comments or questions about stories featured in this issue of *Foundations*, or have suggestions for future issues, please contact:

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