



COLORADO
Department of Education

Colorado State Board of Education

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
BEFORE THE
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMISSION
DENVER, COLORADO
March 12, 2014, Part 1

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT on March 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 will call the roll, please.

3 MS. MARKEL: Elaine Gantz Berman?

4 MS. MARKEL: Jane Goff?

5 MS. GOFF: Here.

6 MS. MARKEL: Paul Lundeen?

7 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Good morning.

8 MS. MARKEL: Pam Mazanec?

9 MS. MAZANEC: Here.

10 MS. MARKEL: Marcia Neal?

11 MS. NEAL: Here.

12 MS. MARKEL: Dr. Scheffel?

13 MS. SCHEFFEL: Here.

14 MS. MARKEL: Dr. Angelika Schroeder?

15 MS. SCHROEDER: Here.

16 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Excellent. Well, at
17 this time we would like to welcome the Westminster 50
18 School District. I've made comments to everybody in the
19 room, we had hoped to reset the room so that we could all
20 sit together at the same level and not have quite the
21 formal feel that this has. But there just isn't space to
22 do that and to have the -- the capacity for the audience
23 as well. So the purpose of today is not formal, it's
24 more informal in nature, and I just wanted to call that
25 out for everybody to realize. And with that, I'll turn



1 it over to the commissioner.

2 MR. HAMMOND: Great. Well, first of all I
3 want to thank Superintendent, Dr. Pam Swanson for being
4 here today. I know this is the first -- you are the
5 first, as we experiment with this approach. But what
6 we've told the Board, it really is an opportunity for the
7 districts that are in the fourth and fifth year of the
8 accountability clock to come before the Board, before --
9 we hope that time never comes to the very end -- to
10 really give an overview as we said, of your successes,
11 challenges, your major improvement strategies, a vision
12 for how the district or schools will show significant and
13 sufficient improvement to get off the accountability
14 clock, and an explanation of how you're assisting your
15 lowest performing schools.

16 I have to say that in Westminster -- and
17 you have a book from them -- County School District 50 --
18 a notebook. When we first talked with Dr. Swanson and
19 some of her Board Members, when they went on the clock,
20 if you will, where they were on the clock, it probably
21 wasn't the most pleasant of meetings. You'd probably
22 have to admit to that.

23 MS. SWANSON: It was a hard meeting.

24 MR. HAMMOND: It was a hard meeting.

25 Maybe ugly. I don't know, it was hard. I felt sorry for



1 Pam. I have to compliment her and her leadership of Dr.
2 (indiscernible). You just have to know that they have
3 really worked hard and really trying to do the right
4 thing to get their schools and their district off the
5 clock. And so I do personally compliment you for that.
6 And thank you again for being here. And as the Chair
7 stated, this is informal. We do have other school
8 districts that I understand are here that may be making
9 presentations in the future, just kind of seeing how this
10 all plays out. And we'll learn from this as each time
11 goes forth. So thank you for being the first one.

12 MS. SWANSON: Thank you for having us
13 first.

14 MR. HAMMOND: Right now, we've designated
15 20 to 30 minutes -- kind of stay within 20. We have an
16 hour timeframe and we'll have plenty of time for the
17 Board Members to ask questions. So again, thank you.
18 We'll turn it over to you, Dr. Swanson.

19 MS. SWANSON: All right, thank you.

20 MR. PACHECO: Well, thank you,
21 Commissioner Hammond, Members of the Board, Commissioner
22 Hammond. I'm Rubin Pacheco and I'm the President of the
23 Adams County School District 50 School Board. And I -- I
24 -- you know, as you've already introduced Dr. Pamela
25 Swanson, our Superintendent, we want to thank you for the



1 opportunity to come before you to help you better
2 understand the hard work that's going on in our
3 classrooms and to share with you our progress to this
4 point.

5 We've made great strides over the past
6 several years and have many partners to thank, including
7 you, the State Board, and the Colorado Department of
8 Education.

9 MS. SWANSON: And as the slide tells you
10 that's up here, we have a commitment to competency. We
11 call that CBS, in our district, the Competency Based
12 System. It is system-wide. And this is the reform
13 effort, if you will. PK-12 and beyond, that is really
14 central to our improvement efforts and it is also a
15 critical component of our vision for the future as we
16 move forward. CBS is district-wide, it's an all-
17 inclusive approach that seeks to ensure that all of our
18 children learn at very high levels and their full
19 potential. And become competent at whatever they are
20 studying before they move on to the next level.

21 And the members of our school board, two
22 of are not with us today. Three are here. And you see
23 their names on the screen. And so to Mr. Pacheco's left
24 is Dino Valenti, he's the Vice President of our School
25 Board. And Mr. Ryan McCoy, who's the Treasurer of our



1 School Board as well, and so we appreciate, after a long
2 Board Meeting last night, their willingness to come out
3 early this morning.

4 And our board has really been committed
5 and made it very clear that social promotion and
6 shuffling kids along to the next level is not acceptable
7 in School District 50. And describing how CBS works at a
8 system-wide level and what it looks like is not easy in
9 just a few minutes time. And so what we decided to do is
10 to share with you a short video that earlier this year
11 the Colorado Legacy Foundation and the Rose Community
12 Foundation did. They brought in a film crew to one of
13 our elementary schools and produced a video that captures
14 the essence of CBS. And this was a turnaround school;
15 this is now a performance school in our school district.

16 MR. HAMMOND: We have the most
17 sophisticated speakers set up that you can imagine in
18 this room. Sorry.

19 (video playing)

20 MR. PACHECO: So the obvious questions is:
21 Is it working? We want to share with you what our
22 success is and celebrations are. Our district scores in
23 math, reading and writing have gone up for three
24 consecutive years. Our graduation rate is up and our
25 most district -- district-wide five year rate is 75.4



1 percent and is expected to be higher next August. Our
2 drop-out rate has declined to 3.4 percent and our latest
3 college remediation rates declined by 12 percentage
4 points, which is the most significant improvement of any
5 district in the Denver metro area.

6 MS. SWANSON: We use this slide a lot
7 that's up here, in our school district. It really tells
8 the story with the colors. The graphic has been shared
9 around the district as a way to not only honor our
10 staff's hard work and our kids' hard work, but also
11 remind everyone of the work that still lies ahead because
12 we still have a long way to go and we're very humble
13 about the progress to this point.

14 We have moved from a turnaround district
15 to a priority improvement district. And when all the
16 data are collected from the TCAP testing currently
17 underway, we are anticipating and we're really focused on
18 getting into that improvement category as a school
19 district.

20 Just as significant is the color change.
21 So if you look at red, representing turnaround, and you
22 look at green as performance, you can see we no longer
23 have any red schools in our school district. And green
24 is in, and we like to say, "And green is growing in
25 School District 50." And at the start of every school



1 year, we have a welcome back rally where we're able to
2 have every employee in the school district -- bus
3 drivers, custodians, teachers, administrators, our Board
4 of Education. And this chart, we keep updating it every
5 year. And so the year we moved out of the turnaround
6 status, there was a sustained and standing ovation by our
7 staff. They were really bought in. And we expect a
8 similar scenario at the beginning of next school year.
9 We did include in the notebooks we prepared for you --
10 light bedside reading -- charts that do compare the
11 district TCAP results also with those of the state over
12 time.

13 MR. PACHECO: We know that you as a board
14 are very interested in hearing about improvement
15 strategies and we have four themes: Deepening our
16 competency-based instructional practices, restructuring
17 to support P-20 education, involving stakeholders
18 differently, and focusing on systemic leadership.

19 MS. SWANSON: So what we mean by
20 "deepening instructional practices", you heard Oliver
21 comment on that on the video as well. It means focusing
22 on what is happening in the classroom. These strategies
23 directly address one of our major root causes in our
24 district Unified Improvement Plan, that I know your board
25 is familiar with. And it was one that identified



1 inconsistent instructional practices across the district
2 and I think the theme you'll hear across the whole
3 presentation and with our reform effort, is systemic and
4 aligned.

5 So early on we partnered with Dr.
6 Barmarzano (ph) and he helped us develop a customized
7 instructional model for use in a learner centered
8 competency-based classroom. And put more simply, we
9 support our teachers in becoming better at their craft by
10 using professional tools like walk-throughs, like
11 instructional rounds, learning walks, and you saw up here
12 data walls as an example. And many of these practices
13 are also embedded in the state teacher evaluation system,
14 and we have chosen to implement that system in our -- in
15 our district. We also adopted and subsequently
16 implemented the Colorado Academic Standards ahead of the
17 state schedule, because we embraced the rigor and
18 specificity they provide, and quite frankly we just
19 didn't have time to waste.

20 A response to concerns about a lack of
21 systemic curricular resources that are aligned with the
22 standards -- the Colorado Academic Standards, we thank
23 the Mortgage Family Foundation, because they helped steer
24 us into a partnership with the New Jersey Center for
25 Teacher and Learning, and something called the



1 Progressive Math Initiative. And that acronym, because
2 you know we have lots of acronyms in education, is PMI.
3 And so it's been critical in helping us to accelerate our
4 improvement in providing rigorous and engaging math
5 curriculum, and it's also generating instant feedback
6 about where our kids are in terms of their formative
7 processes.

8 PMI is a pre-K through 12 online resource
9 that utilizes free open source software, so it can
10 continually be updated, and it also involves hand-held
11 clicker devices; that technology for our kids, which
12 gives us instant feedback. So we are the only ones in
13 Colorado at this point in time using PMI at a district-
14 wide level. This is an example of a systemic curricular
15 resource we've adopted and other things we've used across
16 the system are things like thinking maps, right from the
17 beginning. Those to name a few. And we're currently
18 reviewing a line systemic resources now in literacy K-12.

19 In addition, Mortgage Family Foundation
20 also helped us pilot a technology-based reading plus
21 program in some of our schools too, as an additional
22 intervention.

23 MR. PACHECO: Restructuring has also been
24 a major part of our improvement strategy. We've
25 redefined district leadership roles and responsibilities



1 to better align with our student needs, which includes a
2 focus on early childhood education, English language
3 development, and post-secondary and workforce readiness.
4 Other examples of resource reallocation include free
5 full-day kindergarten, which is a critical component to
6 closing the achievement gap early on. Anywhere, anytime
7 learning is now available at Westminster Virtual Academy,
8 which we opened two years ago. We've expanded
9 opportunities through the use of flipped classroom
10 strategies and a Gates Grant partnership.

11 A focus on STEM -- science, technology,
12 engineering and math education by launching the Colorado
13 STEM Academy last August. You partnered with us by
14 granting innovation status for the school to help us fill
15 a need that was identified by both our families, and a
16 local business community. Colorado STEM Academy is the
17 only STEM school in the state to be given innovation
18 status. Our five lowest performing elementary schools
19 received about \$3.5 million in tier intervention grant
20 funds over the last three years. The district has also
21 received \$500,000 over the same time period as part of
22 targeted district improvement partnership funds. These
23 dollars have allowed us to work with the educational
24 advisor, the Evans Newton Incorporated, and offer
25 instructional coaches for our teachers. Our schools have



1 also received intensive support and oversight from the
2 chief education officers, and our partners at CDE.

3 In addition, we've changed our principal
4 leadership where appropriate.

5 MS. SWANSON: Another major improvement
6 strategy was to find a way to involve our stakeholders in
7 a different manner. And when I'm saying "stakeholders",
8 I'm really talking about of course our employees, but
9 certainly our parents and our students as well. In our
10 CBS model, students we believe have voice -- we like to
11 say "voice and choice" in their learning, and I meet
12 regularly with a representative group of students and get
13 their perspective. Our Board of Education also meets on
14 an annual basis with students and they've also sat at the
15 table with teachers and parents as well. And I think,
16 you know, teachers would tell you they also have a voice
17 for improving the effectiveness of our model, because in
18 fact this is really a teacher-driven reform effort,
19 because we started with 80 percent agreement among all of
20 our teachers as we were going down the path.

21 So we continually seek and act upon
22 teacher feedback and in 2012 we used a lot of this
23 feedback in assisting us in making over 20 changes or
24 adjustments to our system to help refine it further, and
25 continuous improvement is a big hallmark of the system



1 we're in. We're continually trying to get better. We
2 like to say, plan, do, check and adjust.

3 We have partnered with the Colorado
4 Statewide Parent coalition to involve our parents at a
5 different level academically. And one of the things
6 we've done is incorporate their help in 13 of our 20
7 schools and we also have had great success with revamping
8 parent/teacher conferences; instead of the one-on-one
9 like you'd see in a traditional conference, many of our
10 schools now bring parents in as a whole group and it
11 allows them to see where their children are with their
12 progress in groups of their peers, without violating
13 their privacy of course. But parents talk to each other
14 and say; how are you doing that? What are you doing at
15 home? Because we know the parent role is so critical in
16 making a difference for our kids.

17 MR. PACHECO: Another critical improvement
18 action has been a focus on systemic and sustainable
19 leadership because we all know good leadership matters.
20 Two years ago, when I was elected to the Board of
21 Education, one of our first decisions was to find a
22 leader focused on improving the achievement of our
23 students and promoting the stability that our community
24 was demanding. I'm proud to say that there's a renewed
25 sense of pride and optimism in District 50. This is



1 reflected in improved retention rates among our teachers.
2 The turnover rate is now at 11.2 percent and has declined
3 three consecutive years, and is at its lowest point since
4 we became our reformed effort.

5 Teachers and principals are staying in
6 District 50 because they believe in what we are doing.
7 But I think is also reflected in the Board that we
8 currently have in District 50, as all -- as for the first
9 time in the district's history, all five members of the
10 Board of Education are products of Westminster High
11 School, and representing five different decades.

12 MS. SWANSON: We've titled our next slide
13 "Challenges and Hopes" and we certainly have both. And
14 in fact, they often overlap. The first challenge was in
15 framing a transition from a seat time model to a
16 competency-based learning system. As you heard in our
17 video, it's incredibly hard work. We've had educators
18 from across the country and in our state, and
19 legislatures in our state, and even folks from outside
20 the country want to come in and see how it's working. We
21 are pretty humble about that, because we don't have all
22 the answers yet. We think we've got a pretty good
23 trajectory going, but currently we are the largest K-12
24 system in the lower 48 states to have implemented a
25 competency-based system throughout the entire



1 organization.

2 We've also re-engineered our approach to
3 student learning. It means having a differentiated and
4 personalized learning strategy for each student,
5 regardless of their challenges and where they start.
6 More than 80 percent of our kids experience the effects
7 of poverty, and 45 percent of our students are second-
8 language learners, and we know all of them can achieve at
9 high levels, but we have to engineer a program that works
10 for them and doesn't force them to adapt to a traditional
11 model that we knew was not working from the past.

12 MR. PACHECO: Integrating student
13 information and our learning management system is a huge
14 challenge. In the competency-based system, we need to be
15 able to seamlessly track a student's educational progress
16 from kindergarten to graduation. When students change a
17 school or a teacher, that body of information needs to go
18 with the student. At the start of the school year, a
19 student needs to work from where they left off in May.
20 We are fortunate to be working with an innovative company
21 that is responsive to our requests to customize a system
22 for us that meets student, parent, and teacher needs.
23 It's a major undertaking.

24 Another challenge we are expecting, is
25 that our CBS system is not inherently compatible with the



1 state accreditation system. As you know, administrators,
2 principals and teachers are under enormous pressure to
3 test well, which means -- which makes it tempting to
4 expose students to material that will be on a test, even
5 though they don't have the foundational skills necessary
6 to be successful. That can be counterproductive for a
7 CBS model. At the same time, we understand we need to
8 measure progress and hold people accountable. We've
9 prepared a detailed description for you of three
10 challenges that must -- that must be overcome for
11 competency-based model to effectively integrate with
12 state accreditation policies, and that's included in the
13 information packet that we handed out this morning.

14 MS. SWANSON: And finally, under
15 challenges and hopes, is competency-based graduation
16 guidelines. In fact, we just went over this last night
17 with our Board of Education in a study session. As you
18 might remember, we came before this Board last spring to
19 testify in support of that requirement. One of our
20 mantras in District 50 is that a high school diploma has
21 to have real value for our students, and also for our
22 employers. We strongly support our state's direction in
23 this effort.

24 MR. PACHECO: Our last slide this morning
25 was our strategic partners who helped us better serve our



1 students. You're familiar with most of the names on the
2 list. As you may be aware, we were recently in Houston,
3 partnering with the Colorado Legacy Foundation, and the
4 Colorado Department of Education in pursuit of a Bill and
5 Melinda Gates grant to support next generation learning.
6 We recently learned that we've been selected to
7 participate in the next phase of the grant process.

8 MS. SWANSON: And the final partner on our
9 list is the Colorado Department of Education, and by
10 extension all of you, and we value our relationship and
11 appreciate the give and take that is needed to bring
12 about meaningful systemic change. So that's really our
13 helicopter ride, or our overview. And our Chief
14 Education Officer, Dr. Oliver Garnham (ph), and our Chief
15 Operations Officer, Dr. James Duffy, and other staff
16 members here, along with our other Board Members are
17 happy to entertain any questions you might have for us.

18 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Excellent. Thank you
19 very much for the presentation, and I would open the
20 floor for questions. Elaine has a question. Please go
21 ahead.

22 MS. BERMAN: First of all, I apologize
23 that I arrived a little bit after you started, but I
24 think I heard the majority of it. I have lots of
25 questions. It sounds like you're doing phenomenal work,



1 you have great partnerships, the fact that your school
2 board is all Westminster High graduates is pretty
3 amazing. All different generations. So hats off to all
4 of you for your hard work and focus.

5 You mentioned that you have all day
6 kindergarten for every -- all the kids in the district?
7 Can you talk to us a little bit about four year old
8 preschool and what's available since we know the pipeline
9 starts before kindergarten?

10 MR. PACHECO: Well, we do believe that
11 early childhood is a very important piece, and actually
12 that has its beginnings, if you will, back in CAP for K
13 with the P-20 alignment, which really focused on that.
14 We do know in our districts that the gap actually starts
15 before students come to school. So we want to get as
16 much early education in our system as possible. We do
17 have a early childhood learning center and we do have
18 satellite preschool programs at elementary schools.
19 Currently, we take full advantage of the Colorado
20 preschool program and have over 560 slots there. We
21 would like to expand that more. And I do have our early
22 childhood director here this morning who can talk about
23 some of those future pieces. Matt?

24 MR. OBERSHUN: Like Oliver said, my name
25 is Matt Obershun (ph), I'm the Director for Early



1 Childhood Ed for our district, and we do partner with
2 some of our community providers for pre-school as well,
3 so we have 570 Colorado preschool program slots. About a
4 third of those, give or take, go on to our community
5 providers as well, using Head Start and some of the local
6 (indiscernible) providers. But also sit in our CPP
7 Council and help us maintain quality in all of our
8 programs, looking at getting as many four year olds in as
9 we can, but also helping some of those identify three
10 year old students who may need an extra head start.

11 MS. BERMAN: What is your denominator?
12 You have 570 slots. What is your demand for four year
13 old preschool?

14 MR. OVERSHUN: I would think the four year
15 old preschool, where we could -- our waitlist is at least
16 100 at our larger site and then each one has probably
17 another 15 to 20 that would like to get in, with more
18 coming down the pipeline. Our (indiscernible) department
19 is extremely busy, booking out sometimes out to three,
20 four months out with referrals, so that the need is
21 there. We are doing our best with (indiscernible).

22 MS. BERMAN: Okay, great.

23 MR. PACHECO: And unfortunately it comes
24 down to funding that need. The Board has committed to
25 funding the need in terms of providing the full-day



1 kindergarten, because as you know, the state provides
2 point five, or point five two funding for every
3 kindergarten student. So we have committed to that in
4 our district for the last several years.

5 MS. BERMAN: I have a lot more questions,
6 but I will let my colleagues go and then I'll -- you can
7 come back.

8 MS. NEAL: Sorry, just add on -- because
9 Elaine and I have this discussion all the time, and I'm
10 very interested in your preschool and what you're talking
11 about. Would you say that because of -- and I know how
12 that works with the -- you get the slots and you get to
13 fill them. Are most of the children in your preschool
14 and all day, are they -- are they lower income?

15 MR. OVERSHUN: Yes, for sure.

16 MS. NEAL: Okay. And this is a
17 theoretical question: My point is I -- a lot of people
18 really push for us to have early childhood for everyone,
19 and I know this sounds weird to all the people that are
20 listening -- if you had early childhood for everyone, it
21 seems to me like you would just be perpetuating that gap
22 and that's -- when I see early childhood, I'm very
23 supportive of it for these kids who, you know, need it.
24 Particularly when we have the financial problem. I mean,
25 if you could have it all. But if -- if we don't and



1 we're focused, then that's where it should sit.

2 MR. PACHECO: I think (indiscernible)
3 research will support your argument there, because what
4 happens is, you see preschool scores are washed out by
5 third grade. So when you think, well, why does that
6 happen, that's because we're putting those students that
7 have been in preschool in classes with kids that hadn't
8 had that area of experience.

9 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (Indiscernible).

10 MR. PACHECO: So from a teacher
11 perspective, you're now dealing with kids that have more
12 school that -- and some kids have less school, but you
13 have to teach them in the aggregate, and that's where a
14 competency-based system helps alleviate that problem.

15 MS. NEAL: I appreciate that.

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: We agree.

17 MS. NEAL: Yes, we -- well we partially
18 agree.

19 MR. OVERSHUN: I also think that we should
20 note that we have two Board Members currently who have --
21 who have students in the preschool program. So it -- you
22 know, it's -- it's not like we're saying -- it's not like
23 we're saying to our community, you know, we want you to
24 send your kids to preschool, while -- we'll -- while we
25 won't believe in our own program. We do believe in our



1 program. I believe greatly in my program. And this year
2 my niece entered a preschool program at one of the
3 elementary schools and so what we're seeing -- what I'm
4 seeing with her is just a growth in social, but also the
5 beginnings of a love of learning. But also getting to
6 see where she can -- where she can excel in different
7 areas, but also where she can help her peers in a way
8 that it doesn't even really feel like school for her most
9 of the time.

10 MS. NEAL: Yeah, thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Jane?

12 MS. GOFF: Yes, thank you. Related to
13 that, and actually I'm going to -- I have two questions.

14 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Sure.

15 MS. GOFF: Two parts of questions. One is
16 at the early childhood end and the other at more at the
17 high school end. I'm looking at a lot of information
18 these days and I have found -- first of all, thank you
19 and congratulations. I have been very proud to be a part
20 of representing and cheering all of you along and
21 congratulating you on great work over the last few years.
22 So thank you.

23 Early childhood in relation to the parent
24 coalition contributions and other types of things that
25 you have in mind for the future in that area. The



1 community resource -- to me, community resource involves
2 all of those types of groups, so I -- and realizing that
3 probably overall it is still a little too soon to have
4 full data. As you said, Rubin, until kids are moving
5 through at a little higher rate and get them to the third
6 grade level and we -- we find out where -- where that
7 impact is. But I would be interested in knowing where
8 you are on -- if you can see definitely right now some
9 connections between, for example, the work of the parent
10 coalition, the Colorado Parent Coalition. I'm actually -
11 - our state level (indiscernible), which is the advisory
12 committee that was created recently for more parent
13 involvement and information. But also then taking that
14 to the high school end.

15 And I know that I -- I know at least two
16 individuals in this room who are very experts -- very
17 much experts and experienced in the -- from the time that
18 I kept was fashioned and developed and put into place,
19 and I noticed that on some of your information -- I
20 didn't see it -- if it's there, I would love to know.
21 How Westminster 50 has taken up opportunity to become
22 involved in, or apply for, such things as the counselor
23 core, some of the counselor core advantages and grant
24 money. And the whole idea of the -- the career planning;
25 the path planning attempts that you're having. And when



1 you think you might be -- there she is. When you think
2 you might be able to start seeing how that is paying off,
3 or -- or if it has already.

4 MR. PACHECO: Thanks for your question.
5 It's a long -- it's a long one, so I will try to
6 summarize. And it does follow on the other end of the
7 spectrum in terms of the P-20 alignment and that is an
8 area in terms of our restructure that we've been focusing
9 on in terms of building up the entire high school, plus
10 the transition to whatever college or career for a
11 student. And we did add that department this year, but
12 to get to the parent part, I'm going to ask Mike Lynch,
13 who's our high school principal, to talk a little bit
14 about his involvement and the school's involvement at the
15 Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition.

16 MR. LYNCH: Yeah, the coalition has been a
17 wonderful addition to our work. We knew that was missing
18 from the beginning, so when we saw other schools in the
19 district with this partnership and it was presented to
20 us, we were the first in line. The high school is pretty
21 large -- 2,378 kids. You can see with our demographics
22 and our -- our ELL population, we have many parents that
23 don't speak English. And so reaching out to them,
24 creating that trust and that pipeline for them to be a
25 part of the process, has been frankly magical this year.



1 It's not enough, but it's -- you can see right away that
2 that gap was there for sure, and to see it start to begin
3 to fill, is exciting. In terms of the data, there's lots
4 of other people here that could answer that, but most of
5 it's anecdotal at this point in term of seeing it at the
6 end. But when you grow in five out of seven categories
7 two years in a row and you begin to see those other data
8 points that are exciting, like the decrease in
9 remediation rate, decrease in drop-out, increase in
10 graduation, they are exciting.

11 MS. GOFF: Good.

12 MR. LYNCH: And we're -- we're going to be
13 green. We're -- we're moving. We're moving the needle.

14 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I have every faith in
15 that too.

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And (indiscernible)
17 and if you want to talk a little bit about your work on
18 some of the ICAP pieces and the connections you're
19 making?

20 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I think one of the
21 best things that happened was the PWR high school
22 (indiscernible) because that is the bar we're aiming for.
23 And so it brings every single piece, including ICAP and
24 all the rest of the preparation into one clear focus for
25 us. And so we are now aligning all of the efforts across



1 the district to be able to make sure that kids as young
2 as sixth grade actively do now start preparing their
3 individual career and academic plans and that we
4 ultimately plan to bring that down to the elementary
5 level, because you know that some of these aspirations
6 require much longer period of time for students to
7 adequately prepare for them. And so it is our plan to
8 create the pathways for every single career cluster that
9 we can offer a student to pass right through and we have
10 very good (indiscernible) community college offering our
11 concurrent enrollment right up the street, and then also
12 able to offer course work within our high school and we
13 intend to expand that as well.

14 We are already establishing industry
15 relationships where these folks want to be in deep, they
16 want to be broad, and they want to be long term. And so
17 in conjunction with all of those different industry
18 clusters, we are creating as many of those partnerships
19 as possible, and create certificates that students can
20 earn while they are still in high school. So they are
21 actually demonstrating their industry competency long
22 before they actually graduate from high school. We
23 embrace the notion that neither work or post-secondary
24 education, the requirements are the same, and these
25 students need to be as prepared for either of those. And



1 so we are going down that pathway and not distinguishing
2 as one being good or bad with our kids. And so to the
3 extent that we can prepare them for the passion that they
4 have and make sure have access to all the resources that
5 they need, that is exactly what we're doing right now.

6 And so it was a matter of bringing
7 together a lot disparate things that needed to be
8 aggregated under one roof and with one clear vision, and
9 so that is the purpose of the district right now. And it
10 actually is the next logical step to the competency-based
11 learning model, which mirrors everything that happens in
12 business and industry. You don't get the next promotion
13 until you're able to demonstrate competency at an earlier
14 level. And so to me that's a total logical next step to
15 think about, what is the industry application of
16 everything that's already being instituted in the
17 district? So it's a great time to be a part of this
18 district and be able to create this bridge.

19 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And you had
20 specifically asked about the counselor core. The
21 district does take advantage of opportunities to enhance
22 our effectiveness and support for our needs. We have a
23 (indiscernible) for that grant in Aspen, unfortunately we
24 have not been awarded. You know, (indiscernible).

25 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Dr. Scheffel I think



1 had a question.

2 MS. SCHEFFEL: Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: You wanted to follow
4 up, Jane? Go ahead.

5 MS. GOFF: No, I just want to say "yes".
6 All of that is fabulous.

7 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: That's a very succinct
8 follow up.

9 MS. GOFF: I love to have them tell those
10 stories.

11 MS. SCHEFFEL: (Indiscernible) the great
12 presentation, then the deliberate, purposeful, relentless
13 work you're doing is hard work, but it sounds like you've
14 got a great plan in place and you're very committed, and
15 we really appreciate it. You had intimated that there is
16 a great partnership with CDE, which is excellent. Of
17 course the Department wants to partner with districts and
18 do all this kind of support. You also kind of suggested
19 that maybe your competency-based approach isn't quite
20 aligned with how CDE used the whole -- the whole five
21 year clock and what -- it's underpinnings. Can you speak
22 to that? How could we help (indiscernible)? How can the
23 plan be adjusted or tweaked or reconsidered so that it
24 aligns with what you're trying to do. The best support
25 system (indiscernible)?



1 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I think as one of the
2 laypeople at the table who's not an educator by trade,
3 one of the biggest challenges that I see is everything
4 keeps changing. In the two years I've been on the school
5 board, we've had CCEP, TCAP, now we're transitioning into
6 PARCC. We have CMAS. We have an appendix of acronyms
7 that I can't keep up with. And to me, it seems very
8 frustrating that we've started a clock under one model
9 and we're now into our third model of testing. We're up
10 to 27 different tests, and I was stunned when Jenny
11 Goddard, our Director of Assessment, gave us a piece of
12 data a couple of weeks ago that showed that 5.5 days out
13 of each student's calendar year is consumed with nothing
14 but mandatory testing. That's a lot of lost seat time.
15 Give us fewer tests and stick to one model, would be my -
16 - what I think you can do to help us.

17 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Actually, included in
18 your packets under Tab 2, a couple of suggestions there
19 and I know there's some appetite here at the State
20 Department to help with some of this work too in terms of
21 developing an accountability system that really aligns
22 with the competency-based model. But I've outlined those
23 challenges in three areas.

24 One is really around a guaranteed viable
25 curriculum. We really applaud the new Colorado Academic



1 Standards in terms of their rigor and specificity; I
2 think that was a big plus. However, the number is a
3 challenge and when you look at research to find out how
4 long it takes to actually teach one of those evidence
5 outcomes -- and that's where we focus our instructional
6 effort -- because you need to be able to collect evidence
7 to see if the student really did achieve that outcome or
8 not. And that creates a big data burden in the
9 competency-based system where you're collecting those
10 data points. But it's also a burden in terms of the
11 time. Is there really enough time in the system to teach
12 the number of evidence outcomes that are there? So there
13 is a rationale in there that kind of explains that there
14 really isn't enough time. So there needs to be some
15 focusing in terms of what are really the essential
16 learnings we're going after as a state? And how do we
17 help schools that implement that? So there's not even
18 enough time for a student who is on track -- and I will
19 let you read that at your leisure.

20 There is a second one around assessments.
21 Assessments are -- you do need assessments to really
22 track to see if learning is happening, but I think they
23 can be administered in a probably more thoughtful way.
24 And in a competency-based model, you need to be able to
25 administer that assessment at the point in time where the



1 student is demonstrating their evidence of what it is
2 that they're learning, and I think with the new online
3 assessments, there is some opportunity to be able to do
4 that in terms of administering it throughout the year to
5 students in the different contents, rather than all
6 during the three weeks of March before spring break, and
7 then people are struggling for computer time and
8 struggling for access to rooms where the testing is
9 happening. So there is some suggestions in there as well
10 and we'd be able to engage with the Department to really
11 talk about how to implement some of that.

12 And the last one is really just around how
13 do we establish an accountability system that really
14 focuses on competency and incentivizes the learner in the
15 classroom as well as the teacher, as well as schools and
16 districts, and doesn't have what some people would
17 perceive as penalties in there. So we do have some of
18 the suggestions around those big level challenges. We
19 still have other challenges in-house which are -- which
20 are documented in our UIP, and I think you've got some
21 information on that too.

22 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I really appreciate
23 (indiscernible) thank you.

24 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Can I follow up on --
25 ?



1 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Yeah.

2 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Did you want to stay
3 on the same thing?

4 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Go for it.

5 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Yeah, timeframe, we're
6 about 15 minutes to wrap on this part of the
7 conversation, so let's keep moving.

8 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So I think you just
9 addressed in some ways a discussion we had about what is
10 assessment in the future, as opposed to where we are
11 today. I think you've also -- at least for me --
12 identified a reason why Smarter Balance would have been a
13 more interesting assessment for a system like yours,
14 because it looks to more of where is the child, as
15 opposed to, this is what we want to know in third grade.
16 So this is a transition time and it brings me to my --
17 actually to my biggest worry about competency-based,
18 which is when -- there's probably some standard that we
19 think that a seven, or an eight, or a ten year old
20 student ought to be. There are going to be some who are
21 ahead and some who are behind. How can we be assured
22 that the kids that are ahead are being challenged in
23 order to stay engaged? To equally important: How can we
24 capture the time necessary, and the resources necessary,
25 to hope to get those kids caught up much faster than we -



1 - I mean, we have the same problem in every system, but
2 yours is the system that we believe is going to do it.
3 But where are the resources and how can you generate that
4 extra time?

5 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I think we've had a
6 deeper understanding along the way as we've been going
7 through this implementation of what it means to move from
8 a time-based system -- seat time -- to one where you
9 demonstrate competency. And I think of it like a
10 pyramid, and this is kind of simplistic in my mind, but
11 it makes sense. You know, time is a much bigger variable
12 when you're three years old.

13 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yes, it is.

14 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Than it is when
15 you're a ninth grader. And Mike will tell you this, at
16 the high school, I mean you think about that. And so
17 what we've had to do is really do a lot of wrap around
18 kind of interventions at the high school, because when we
19 first implemented this, it was K-8. And then we started
20 growing it. And so the kids who are in the elementary
21 schools now have never known another system. But we had
22 some angry kids on the other end when we first moved,
23 because all of a sudden they changed from passive
24 learners to -- oh my goodness, I've got to demonstrate to
25 you that I know this before you let me move to that next



1 level. So we have had a lot of learning in that area.
2 I'm not going to say we have all the answers to it -- but
3 I mean, every year, that's why we're making adjustments.

4 It's like, okay, so what can we do next?
5 Encouraging email from -- from Mr. Lynch this past week
6 to us. We did some foundational and concepts courses
7 this past year to help our ninth graders who have only
8 been in the system this amount of time, compared to the
9 elementary's, to catch them up. But the in-coming eighth
10 graders now, or the in-coming ninth graders for next year
11 who are current eighth graders. What we're seeing are
12 those numbers reducing now at the high school for those
13 level of interventions, and our kids are coming more
14 prepared. So we know it's growing, but it's got to have
15 time to do it.

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And I think one of
17 the things that is important to mention -- as was
18 mentioned earlier, this Board of Education and the last
19 Board, for at least the last two years since Mr. Valenti
20 and I were elected to the Board, have made it a priority
21 to really talk to our parents, and most importantly our
22 students. The kids who were there every day. And to get
23 a temperature check and to say, you know, how do you feel
24 about this? Because we know that one of the things when
25 -- when you change a system or when you change an idea or



1 change the philosophy of how education is delivered, you
2 know, we always -- we always hear from the adults, and we
3 had a hard time explaining it to the community. We feel
4 like we're at a point now where the community is starting
5 to understand it.

6 But what about the kids? What about the
7 child who in tenth grade had his world rocked? Who sees
8 -- who sees, okay, so if I have an older brother or
9 sister and this is how they got through and they are at a
10 point where they are like, okay, if I just hit these
11 marks -- if I just do these things, how do I get through?
12 And then we've changed the system on them. We've said,
13 okay, well, you don't necessarily get to hit those marks.
14 We want -- we want you to prove to us that you are
15 competent in these things and how does that -- how does
16 that feel? You know, we talked to -- in our
17 presentation, about making sure that we're picking up at
18 the same place that kids are leaving off. What we heard
19 -- what we heard was a pretty sad story -- it was very
20 sobering for myself and Mr. Valenti. We've talked about
21 it numerous times about how sobering it is when -- when
22 you feel like there -- when you feel like the bar has
23 been raised and the hope starts to diminish.

24 You know, so I hear -- you know, I hear
25 and I see things like the Foundation's courses. Like



1 trying to get people to understand, you know, we're doing
2 this because we want you to be competent. We want a
3 District 50 diploma to mean something out in the real
4 world. If you go into the workforce, we want to know
5 that you have the skills to work in the -- to function in
6 the workforce. Mr. Valenti is a small business owner and
7 he will tell you about the quality of students that have
8 come through systems in the past years and how we're
9 working with business -- with business from the smallest
10 of businesses, to the largest of corporations, to make
11 sure that our students have that. You know, when you go
12 to university, we want to make sure that things are going
13 in.

14 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: You've got to let me
15 ask my questions -- I'm sorry. Because I'm watching the
16 clock. Did you want to get something on the assessments?
17 Please, go ahead, and then I have some more questions.

18 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Is that okay,
19 (indiscernible)?

20 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Yeah.

21 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So we had a big
22 discussion yesterday, so this is terrific having you here
23 today and following up from a district perspective. So
24 you said that you are -- currently have 27 different
25 tests. Who spoke to -- I don't remember who spoke to



1 that. And if -- is that true? And of those 27 different
2 tests, are those all state mandated? Or are some of
3 those district mandated? Or do you want to get back to
4 us on that?

5 (Indiscernible -- many people speaking at once)

6 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I think the tests
7 that were mentioned were the state assessments. We
8 definitely have some additional district assessments. We
9 use Scantron in the fall and winter as we're struggling
10 with no longer being able to do spring testing because of
11 the PARCC online assessments that are coming in the
12 future. So we've eliminated nearly any district
13 assessments, just because of the large number of state
14 assessments that we have on the table now as we increase
15 the --

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Is that for every
17 grade; 27 assessments?

18 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: No, no, no. That's
19 the entire spectrum.

20 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah, so you're
21 looking at 13 grades?

22 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah.

23 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I'm sorry, not 13
24 grades.

25 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Right.



1 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you, so that's
2 over -- okay, that's -- that's a different perspective on
3 it.

4 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Expand if you would on
5 the fact that you're walking away from some district
6 assessments to accept these state-mandated assessments.
7 What does that mean to you?

8 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: In a big area that
9 we're still struggling with, is with our AEC's. Our one
10 AEC, our Alternative Education Campus; they've always
11 used our Scantron assessment to show their growth rating,
12 for their performance framework. And that is looked at
13 fall to spring growth. And we are still struggling to
14 figure out how we can maintain any kind of district
15 assessment when those are all done on the computers, when
16 we'll start this year with science and social studies
17 being online, and then next year with the end of the year
18 PARCC assessment, there's -- we don't have the capacity -
19 -

20 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: It's the technology -
21 -

22 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: -- to continue to do
23 the Scantron assessment. So that will have to come off
24 of the plate as well. We've had district writing
25 assessments and district reading assessments in the



1 district, and this is not all a bad thing, but now moving
2 to really apply the tenants of the READ Act, doing
3 progress monitoring and requiring (indiscernible) fall,
4 winter and spring, we've eliminated some of the DRA
5 assessments, our District Reading Assessments, to leave
6 more room for -- for the state assessments, which has
7 been tough. It's been a struggle, our IOP's used to be
8 billed solely on our district reading assessment, so it's
9 been a break from the past traditions for our teachers,
10 but we're -- we're working through some of those
11 struggles.

12 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: What do you think that
13 means? Look ahead and tell me what you think the result
14 of that is going to be in the mid-term, long term?

15 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I -- I think the --
16 the pressure on our teachers now to really dig in to
17 progress monitoring, which has been part of our district
18 unified improvement plans, is good pressure. And it's
19 focusing teachers on really meeting those individual
20 student needs. PARCC -- I think some of the things we'll
21 see next year with having two rounds of PARCC at 75
22 percent and 90 percent of the year where it seems like
23 maybe the 90 percent of the year, or maybe point in time
24 testing would be more beneficial than having two rounds
25 of testing, plus another round of science and social



1 studies in April and then a year later doing access on
2 the computers in January.

3 Our entire instructional technology usage
4 in our buildings in second semester is basically gone
5 because our -- our labs and computers are going to be
6 used solely for testing all through the spring semester.
7 So I -- I think there will be some loss, but we need to
8 focus with our staff and again, in our UIP, we talked
9 about usage of data to really drive individualized
10 instruction for our kids.

11 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Okay, so Angelika had a
12 question, come back to Jane, and Pam hasn't had a chance
13 to ask. So --

14 MS. SCHROEDER: So we were giving the
15 unified plan. I guess my main question is: Do you agree
16 with some of the feedback that was given for the
17 preliminary?

18 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: We've not actually
19 seen the feedback yet in terms of what we submitted in
20 January, so I've just been cruising through that sheet
21 there. We've been very open and frank about our
22 condition as a district. We do a large root cause
23 analysis every year, in fact I invited CDE personnel to
24 help us with that, as well come watch how it's happening.
25 They applauded our efforts in that area in terms of how



1 inclusive that process was. But we are at a stage in our
2 evolution as a district and our model, that we need to
3 put everything on the table in terms of what we perceive
4 to be a barrier both in district and outside of district.
5 And then we've very open in the conversations in terms of
6 how do we make this better? So we are very focused on
7 ensuring that improvement is happening in the right way,
8 and in a thoughtful way. So we will take the feedback
9 that comes from the state and use that to help us.

10 Last year we got feedback to say our UIP
11 was one of the exemplary ones that was viewed. So I'm
12 not sure what -- what's --

13 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So I think we might
14 be raising the standard on you, because you're doing such
15 a good job. And I --

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I would hope that's
17 the case.

18 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I'm hesitant - I'm
19 hesitant to apologize, because we want to see you really
20 grow. Real quickly, one more question, you talked about
21 all of your partnerships -- do you think those are long
22 term partnerships? Do you feel that the money is going
23 to totally run out on you and you're stuck in some way?

24 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I do think there are
25 long term partnerships, because there is a huge curiosity



1 and a need for folks to feel that our model would be
2 successful. In fact, Dr. Rasano (ph) has said, if we
3 quit doing this model, he will probably just quit his
4 work. We get a lot of phone calls every day and we try
5 to make sure our focus is on the work and not just
6 talking about the work. But we do entertain
7 conversations with funding partners as well as policy
8 partners.

9 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Good, that's --

10 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Jane?

11 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: -- important, thank
12 you.

13 MS. GOFF: Real quick, back to assessment
14 range. Are you -- are you using as well district
15 assessments in the non -- non-state assessed content
16 areas? Is that a widespread practice?

17 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: We have some, in some
18 content areas. We do not have all that we would need
19 there.

20 MS. GOFF: Okay. That's it. Thanks.

21 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Pam?

22 MS. MAZANEC: Thank you for the
23 presentation. I've been doing mostly listening, but I'm
24 curious about your parent and business buy-in. I would
25 like to hear a little more about that. Do you feel like



1 you're getting more parents who are interested,
2 enthusiastic -- and the business partners?

3 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I guess as the
4 business person at the table, I can speak to part of
5 that. Let's start with the statewide parent coalition.
6 When Mr. Pacheco and I and our previous board members
7 were confronted with some things in the budget, including
8 money in a TDIP grant for board development, we looked
9 for the best way to spend it. And we had this pilot
10 going on with the Statewide Parent Coalition, and we
11 said: It's better to spend it on a program like that,
12 which was within the purview of those dollars being
13 spent, then it was for us to have some sort of a social
14 get-to-know-each-other thing. We know each other; we
15 work together a lot. But what it's done -- when you have
16 a district with 84 percent free and reduced lunch
17 eligibility, when you have a district that has such an
18 influx of non-English speakers, parents feel alienated.
19 What it's done is it's brought them in.

20 So in a school that used to see maybe
21 eight parents come through conferences for all the grades
22 because the parents were afraid of the language barrier,
23 now we're getting rounds of 30 and 40 and 50 parents
24 coming into one meeting. These parents are now becoming
25 PTA leaders. It is empowering them. They are growing



1 with the system. They are becoming involved, and we are
2 starting to see the results, which is why we said, let's
3 get it into every possible school we can, again, starting
4 with some of those schools where we had some of the most
5 challenges.

6 As a business owner, my family has been in
7 business for 61 years, in school district 50. I'm the
8 third generation. We have hired hundreds and hundreds of
9 students through District 50 and the surrounding
10 districts over the years. I knew that things changed a
11 few years ago when students could not make change for
12 retail. They could not count backwards. These are 17
13 and 18 year olds. If the bill was \$4.63 and somebody
14 hands them a ten, they could not in their head come up
15 with \$5.37 and count the change back. I knew the skills
16 were lacking. I'm starting to see, with the system
17 that's in place in District 50, as an employer -- and
18 yes, I employ McJobs (ph), I am not -- I am not Ball
19 Aerospace. I am going to teach you how you survive Ball
20 Aero -- how you get better so you can go to work at Ball
21 Aerospace.

22 But I'm starting to see the growth. Those
23 -- those gaps are closing again, which is good to me,
24 because quite frankly, I don't have the time or the
25 resources as a business owner to have to educate them. I



1 have to get the job done.

2 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Excellent, so --

3 MS. MAZANEC: Thank you, I appreciate
4 that.

5 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Can I have --

6 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: So in the -- one -- and
7 then I've got kind of a summarizing final question.

8 MS. NEAL: Well, I do too, I just wanted
9 to summarize -- thank you so much for the presentation.
10 A couple of things that I took away from it: Both Dr.
11 Swanson and Dr. -- is it Grantham?

12 MR. GRANTHAM: Yes.

13 MS. NEAL: Made some really interesting
14 comments. And particularly when you talk about moving
15 away from a passive learning. I'm a retired teacher, in
16 case you didn't know. I know all about passive learning.
17 They took no responsibility for -- you're supposed to
18 teach me and pour it in or something. So I really
19 appreciate that.

20 Also, though, Dr. Grantham was talking
21 about the challenges, and -- and I have always seen
22 education as -- presently, our education is a box, and
23 it's nine months long, and it's five days, and it's seven
24 hours and 45 minutes. And I think our real challenge is
25 to push -- as a state, and as districts, to push outside



1 of that box. And I really would love to see how you do
2 that when you have a room full of third graders and some
3 of them are, you know, reading up here, and some of them
4 can't read at all. And how you -- how you are able to do
5 that. I'm just -- I'm very excited about what you're
6 talking about. It sounds really -- really exciting to
7 me. So good work, and I appreciate it.

8 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: So I'm going to bring
9 you back and give you an opportunity to summarize and to
10 close in a broad way. I want to do it -- the question
11 essentially is: Tell me about your roots. The root of
12 the problems that you had and the roots of the solutions
13 that you're coming up with. And I'm going to ask it in
14 the context of I'm looking at your draft UIP for '13-'14,
15 and on the achievement -- this is on Page 8 of your UIP -
16 - the achievement piece is flat over three years, and
17 you've got a dip in the last year in your post-secondary
18 and workforce readiness. So given the trend of the lack
19 of progress and achievement and this dip in post-
20 workforce secondary readiness, please speak to me about
21 the roots of the problem, and the solution.

22 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Let me address the
23 dip in post (indiscernible) workforce readiness first.
24 That is actually caused by an increase of one point in
25 our dropout rate, which actually translates to 6.2



1 percentage points in the overall scale of the district
2 performance framework. So that's where we lost points
3 there. In investigating why did we lose points there, it
4 basically boiled down to not tracking sufficiently well.
5 So we have since put in place a standard operating
6 procedure to address that issue, and our dropout rate on
7 the new -- on next year's district performance framework,
8 would actually be 3.4. This past year it was 4.3. So
9 that was a clerical --

10 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Let's take more of
11 those.

12 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah, that was an
13 easy one. In terms of the instructional pieces, when you
14 -- when you put that factor aside, we do see that our
15 achievement has been growing over time, although not at
16 the rate that we want it to grow. So when we look at our
17 root causes, they really boil down into three major
18 areas. One is truly the instructional practices that
19 happen in the classroom. So improvement -- school
20 improvement happens in the classroom. It doesn't happen
21 in the boardroom.

22 The other is data practices. We have a
23 lot of data in our system, but it's really helping
24 teachers understanding how to use that data to drive next
25 instructional steps. It's not about collecting data, or



1 making it look pretty and presentable, it's about using
2 it at the individual student level. And that's why we're
3 interested in really looking at those assessments, doing
4 them differently, so we really drive that, incentivize
5 that assessment for the student, rather than something
6 that they dread to do -- it's something that they want to
7 do.

8 And then the other root -- root cause, is
9 progress monitoring. As we implement things at a
10 systemic level across the district, then really
11 monitoring that to make sure that it's implemented with
12 the fidelity, and we talk about it in our root causes
13 there, that we have inconsistent practices or it started
14 and it stopped and it really providing the motivation to
15 continue that implementation. And sometimes when I'm
16 asking schools -- Pam and I, every year, we go out to
17 visit the schools in the springtime to talk about the
18 importance of achieving high on these tests, but then
19 it's also when you have students at different
20 instructional levels or performance levels, that's where
21 the incompatibility comes here and the teacher will say,
22 well, which thing do you want me to focus on? Do you
23 want me to focus on getting hard test scores, or do you
24 want to focus on really getting the kids where they are
25 at and moving them? And that causes me a lot of



1 cognitive dissidence right there.

2 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: If I could add one
3 thing to that -- sometimes we talk about it with our kids
4 at different performance levels. If we could do point in
5 time assessments, that would really help us. Not all
6 bunched up at once. So if you look at third grade, our
7 third grade is not a traditional third grade. So we
8 might have a kid at -- one kid at level two performance
9 level -- second grade level in math, and level four in
10 literacy. But we give them all third grade assessments.
11 So if you think about getting your driver's license, all
12 of us, at the DMV, we don't all do it on the same day.
13 We do it at different points in time to demonstrate our
14 proficiency if we go to get a driver's license. So if we
15 could think about it that way, it would help us.
16 Simplistic, but --

17 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Thank you very much.
18 We appreciate the time and as I said at the beginning,
19 it's kind of a shoulder to shoulder effort. We can
20 understand more of what your challenges are, and
21 understand how maybe we can tweak the system to in fact
22 help you instead of impede you where we possibly can, we
23 would love to do so. With that, I will give the
24 commissioner the mic to wrap up. Thank you for being
25 here.



1 MR. HAMMOND: I thank you very much and I
2 think as Dr. Swanson stated, the interest in this
3 district from various people around the country is really
4 growing and the reason why they got the grant that they
5 did in conjunction with us on the next generation of
6 learning, really a part of that is a part of our looking
7 at what should be the next generation of account --
8 accountability and assessment systems. Because this is
9 where things are moving.

10 And I just have to say in closing, the
11 2010 -- and with the four performance categories, 12 of
12 their 19 schools were priority improvement turnaround.
13 2011 had changed to only 10 and 2012 that moved to six,
14 and 2013 had moved to four. Again, I appreciate the --
15 it's not been an easy journey, as we know, but I
16 appreciate everything that you're doing and I look
17 forward to your continued progress. Thank you all very
18 much.

19 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Thank you very much.

20 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Really, really
21 impressive.

22 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: We'll take two minutes
23 to reset the room and then we'll come back to speak with
24 the folks from Vilas.

25 (Meeting adjourned)



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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 April, 2019.

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

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