

**TOWN HALL MEETING  
WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL  
Oct. 12, 2006**

**The following list contains the question and the department(s) responsible:**

**QUESTION**

**RESPONSIBLE**

**1. Why did you take away the weighted grade scale for advanced classes, especially for the senior class. It would be more appropriate to change with incoming freshman.**

**2. I understand that you are doing away with the weighting of grades for honors and AP classes. Aren't you discouraging students from working harder by doing this? Why wouldn't students take regular classes in order to get a better grade?**

**3. Why did you do away with the weighted grade program at the high school level? APS needs to keep our high level students here and not transfer to other districts. This is an incentive.**

William Stuart, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction replied that the issue of weighted grades does not apply to the senior class this year but will return in 2008. With the honors program, AP and IBP programs, the GPA will be by an un-weighted formula.

**4. You have commented that the coaching model is good solid practice. If that is the case, why aren't Specialists, especially 1<sup>st</sup> year Specialists included in the coaching model?**

There are limited resources and the element of teamwork is critical. We are focused on student achievement and we must have the ability to enhance student achievement. We will support all teachers at all buildings to make sure this is accomplished.

**5. Does your vision for APS call for a different school year calendar? If so, what will that look like, K-12?**

We are focusing on the school year calendar and this will be revealed in the strategic plan Oct. 17. When the plan is revealed, there will be a three-week review process for comments on the plan. There will be website access with three major questions: 1) What don't you understand; 2) What can you not live with; 3) What is missing. The new deputy superintendent will take a look at how all of this will work and what is best for instruction.

**6. Why can we not have full time, dedicated police officers in our middle and high schools with marked vehicles?**

There are SRO's assigned to all schools internally in order to keep the buildings and students safe. Here are two SRO's per high school. The elementary and middle do not have SRO's but the principal can call on someone and security at any time. The board of education and the superintendent's first and foremost concern is for the safety of our children. This is a sensitive issue and one that we will remain focused on daily. We have moved Christine Hoppe to an elevated position in our cabinet and she is in charge of security for the entire district. On Nov. 1 there will be a functional exercise to find our strengths and weaknesses. I have also appointed people to go around to randomly selected schools to try to gain entry into the buildings. We will continue to review our security plans as well as our lockdown plans and there will be functional and table top exercises on safety and security. We will retain the highest level of awareness and continue with a year round focus to make sure we take care of our children.

Cook stated that we are working with city council, APF, Cherry Creek Superintendent Moses, APD Chief Oates and we are constantly re-evaluating resources for the most effective response and will continue to maintain these relationships.

**7. (Originally in Spanish) How can we support my child's learning?**

The parent's involvement in schools is the key element. The parents are by far the key element in a child's learning. Parents must partner with their children, come into the buildings, join the PTA's and the PTO's. We must reach out to all community members to get the families into the schools. With the large number of diversity in the district, we must go to the families, to a comfortable setting for them. There are challenges too; not enough certified ELA's. Our biggest challenge is to have all children at grade level in five years or less but this will require family effort as well.

Tabacheck stated that we have excellent teachers who can be equal partners in the children's learning experience. Their doors are always open and she urged everyone to go into the schools and work as a team.

Edberg also stated that what happens at home reflects what happens at school. She suggested reading one on one at home, doing homework together and supporting the children at school as well as at home.

**8. What more can be done for discipline and bully proofing in all schools?**

Barry stated that we must have trust and compassion for the students and they must not be afraid to tell someone if they are being bullied. He stated there are district policies on bullying and severe consequences including phone bullying and website bullying where the perpetrators can remain anonymous. The new cyber/electronic bullying clearly has as much of an effect as physical bullying and the district takes a very distinct approach to discipline.

Barber stated that the children must tell a teacher or counselor and not be frightened to talk to them. Cook stated that the board of education is committed to the town hall meetings and the radar is out there every day.

Barry reported APS is looking to have a speaker on bullying at the next town hall meeting. He stated that the discipline must be fair, consistent and persistent and that the concern is to make sure that we apply all three at every school. There is a zero tolerance for weapons including expulsion and that we are reviewing the policies to include the most current guidelines.

**9. Why do elementary physical education students only have P.E. one time per week?**

**\*Especially since all research demands otherwise.**

The district is working to assure that there are some levels of P.E. and again we would love to have all schools have more but currently the focus is on the four academics and we are aware of the issue.

Edberg stated that the P.E. teachers are great and the programs are wonderful too and these teachers go beyond the normal to ensure that students get the best P.E. programs to promote wellness.

**10. (Originally in Spanish) How will you help our children learn English?**

The respect for diversity is our main focus and as the strategic plan will point out our commitment is insuring that ELA continue to provide their skill and knowledge to bridge the gap between ELL's. Our goal is to have 50% of our teachers ELL certified, which will go a long way in helping students speak English and enhance and accelerate student achievement.

**11. If reading is a critical piece in student achievement, why are the media centers being staffed by unlicensed staff?**

Stuart stated that the consequences of where we need to put licensed staff is based on data at each site. The strategic plan exercises the capability of getting quality people.

**12. Why are there a limited amount of AP classes in our high schools. I know the students have an opportunity to attend Community Colleges while in H.S. but the colleges look favorably on classes taken in their H.S. Should I consider removing my student from APS or will there be a reform upon this issue in the near future?**

There are AP classes in the high schools. We are committed to offer all students who are interested the opportunity to attend college. We are committed to having students participate in courses to have college credits. We encourage students to reach out and take college courses. Our challenge is to get every student, both pre and post-secondary to go to college without remediation.

Cook responded by saying absolutely do not take your student out of the district. We need parents in the buildings and you are your child's best advocate. Stuart stated that our teachers build advocate minds for kids to go on to college.

**13. (Originally in Spanish) If my child's physical well-being is at risk at the school which he attends, am I able to enroll him to a different school even though he does not belong to that school's attendance area?**

We would encourage you as parents to talk with the principals, deans and counselors about any specific concerns regarding security. If you have specific concerns about security and would like to meet with someone individually, that can certainly be arranged.

Tabacheck stated that the first person who should be contacted is the principal. The children need to be reassured that they are safe. This involves teamwork.

**14. (Originally in Spanish) Why does my child’s teacher give students homework for the whole week on Monday’s to turn in on Fridays, but the homework is not what is taught every day by the teacher? (First grade child)**

Barry stated that we are aligned with state standards and are implement a pacing guide, which will be coming out shortly.

**15. The changes to special ed. Are becoming more fragmented, why?**

Tabacheck stated that there are changes currently taking place.

The board of education and the school staff members acknowledge that each student has needs that must be met. There is a unified effort on special education and how we treat each child in a respectful manner. With the no child left behind, special education will receive maximum attention and the commitment is indisputable. You will see an organization change announced on Tuesday that will enhance the ability to give the children the special attention they deserve.

Edberg stated that this is on the radar of the board of education and the special education staff is the best that it can be.

**16. Will you be providing a more structured reading program for the elementary schools? Is so, when?**

Barry stated that this will also be brought up in the strategic plan. We are committed to this and concerned about the unique challenges. There is a 40% mobility rate and with children moving from one building to another, only 73% stay in the district. If a child moves he/she should be able to recognize something they have seen in a prior school. There needs to be more structure by teachers and with 19% of our teachers being new, this is a challenge.

**17. Where are the crossing guards for 17<sup>th</sup> St. near Paris or stop signs or school zone?**

Cook stated that city council makes those decisions by using a formula and he had heard that it costs \$45,000 to put in a stoplight and that they are always looking at traffic and safety patters within the school district. APS has no direct control over where stop lights go. Barry and Mayor Tauer have met and discussed these issues.

**18. With 65% being spent in the classroom on instruction, how many classified employees must be cut to balance the budget?**

Cook stated that there are two items on the ballot for the upcoming election and stated that the board has opposed both. We meet both of the requirements for Amendment 39 and Referendum J. He also stated that Amendment 39 does not include bus drivers, food service workers or counselors. He also stated that Amendment 39 could affect us if it goes into the constitution and asked the audience who they would go to with questions. Barber also stated that the educators are lobbying against the amendment and referendum.

**19. If you have any plan to give more safety to students, how parents can help?**

Talk to the students, caution them about predators who try inviting them into cars and that they should immediately talk to an adult. Tabacheck stated that parents need to education their children. At the end of the month, there sill be stickers and magnets sent home and that we need to open the channel of communication.

Cook stated that the biggest things parents can do is make sure the children know it is okay to ask question. Keep the lines of communication open and also be very perceptive.

Tabacheck said the best way to make children feel safe is for parents, teachers and counselors to make them see we are comfortable.

**20. What are you doing to try and retain quality teachers in APS?**

Newly appointed Kari Allen, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources is forming small focus groups to address the issues and work towards better hiring practices, getting a good fit and identifying the talent to make teachers succeed. We will foster an environment of trust and teamwork. She stated that they are look for confidence and competence. The teachers must show respect and have the reflection of knowing that what they do will be recognized and rewarded. Everyone counts. There will also be a quarterly and annual award program.

Barry stated that we will continue to accelerate student achievement.

**21. Would you be in favor of raising the graduation requirement for physical education from 1.5 to 2.0 credits? What do you think about eliminating the waivers for students to be exempt from P.E.?**

Tabacheck stated that physical education is a very big part of our schools. Waivers should be left up to the staff and doctors.

**22. The Arts are a vital component of every child's education. Creativity and imagination are key elements in learning. Exposure to different forms of art in different cultures is lacking in most students' education. Through-out history all cultures have used art as a form of communication. Why are students not being exposed to the arts in their primary education from Kindergarten to H.S.?**

Barry again referred to the strategic plan and our commitment to increased support. He stated that at the end of the year there will be an academy awards for the arts program. Art will be displayed and graded. He stated that there will be awards for music, theater, best actor, etc.

Cook stated that DAAC has recommended more money in the budget for art and will allocate additional funds for programs.

**23. How can we have a board that represents the diverse culture in our community?**

Tabacheck stated that the community has to have individuals who are willing to run for the board. Everyone interested should fill out the paperwork.

Book stated that the board will do a better job of going out to different places of comfort to reach out to individuals and encourage them to get into positions of leadership. The board has a lot of say; their voice represents the parents. The parent's voices are very important. APS is the launching pad for becoming the premier school district in the state of Colorado. It takes commitment to get this done.

Tabacheck stated that education has to be where your heart is.

**24. Why can't APS use the success of PUEBLO (with a similar population mix) as a model? APS confuses activity ("We all work hard") for accomplishment (Basic skills measured by CSAP).**

Barry stated that we are currently looking at other districts and that they are reaching out and using models. We will go where we need to go to find the right answers for the kids. Stuart, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction will be traveling to Norfolk and Garden Grove to look at their models and how they have gained success in winning the Broad prize.

Cook stated that our strength is our parents and the community and teachers should build on the foundation we have here.

**25. Regardless of different techniques, if we don't reduce class size, students don't get the help they need. Is there a goal and a way to cap class sizes?**

Barry stated that not every class has 35 kids; the average is 23-24. The ideal size would be 15 students. He stated that demographics are changing.

He also stated that with the bond passed in 2002 for \$225 million dollars, every school will have air conditioning by next summer. He reported that all construction remains on time and below budget. There is money left over and that will enhance the design for the next high school. Within the next 20 years there will be 22 new schools in Aurora.

**26. I want to know if there is going to be more security in Aurora Public Schools, special in high school.**









in the APS district? This needs to be addressed at the elementary level also.

**30.** In my neighborhood there has been a lot of graffiti and gang activity. Can APS along with the police department in Aurora partner up to reach out to the students joining these gangs and hopefully create a positive support system for them to get them out of these gangs or never join them?

Risk Management  
School Services

**31.** Three district special ed. Positions were eliminated during the last 2 years. At this time we do not have adequate support at the district level for special ed. Teachers, students, and parents.

Instruction

**32.** Will the opportunity arise for a full time pre-school in our district?

Instruction

**33.** How can we fund the schools so they all have the same minimum amount of services? All students should be receiving adequate technology training.

Finance

**34.** We need more ELA teachers and Special Ed. Teachers. They are spread too thin! General Ed. Teachers can only do so much regardless of their skills. One ELA teacher to 170 kids is wrong.

Instruction

**35.** I understand that teachers may no longer take a few of their students to school sports events at other schools in APS, even when they have clearance for transportation from Risk Management. Is this accurate and if so what is the reason behind this decision?

Instruction

**36.** Can electronic bullying be applied to staff members sending emails at work to the entire staff or individuals? What about staff bullying?

**37.** When will all of the schools be brought up to date? (buildings, examples: Boston, Montview)

**38.** Why are police not in marked police cars? Show of force/security or are we hiding our lack of resources?

School Services

**39.** Will the policy of no retention be reviewed? My son has classmates who consistently get F's, don't do the school work, or have many absences, yet they are passed along to the next grade.

Instruction

Where is the accountability? I don't want this to be a poor example for my son or other students.

**40.** Even if you have healthy food choices and you still offer unhealthy options, kids will generally not pick healthy and we can't be at school to help with these choices. My daughter only has gym 9 weeks out of the whole year. There is also the issue of students not having enough water or time to get water during the day.

**Support Services**

**41.** Why are children with severe needs in the general ed classroom without enough support?  
**Learners**

**Instruction & Diverse**

**42.** How or why is it possible for a Middle School student to go all three years without physical education?

**43.** Police officer to patrol that area more during the weekdays during school hours?

**44.** The coaching model is not working as a win-win model to support teachers in all instances. Does the tremendous cost of this program and the increased class sizes of 35+ in some high school classes really worth this – why not reduce class size and raise morale by doing away with this model.

**Instruction**

**45.** There are several private schools in Aurora. Parents of students in those schools pay at least as much in taxes for APS as parents of AOS students even tho they do not use most of the APS services that they are paying for. But some APS services should be available to private school students who live in Aurora (e.g., use of school library, school nurse, school gyms, school counselors, etc.) What does APS do to facilitate use of these non-classroom services by private school students.

**Support Services  
Finance**

**46.** What does the BOE and you as superintendent intend to do to improve the facilities and conditions for our special ed. Students – from K— through after school life programs to improve life-skills and quality of life – transition services.

**Instruction**

**47.** I think “No child left behind” is a bunch of phoey. Some children do very well if they repeat a grade. They may not be ready emotional or the parent may request this or they are just

**Instruction**

plain lazy and this could be a good kick in the pants. Is there any way around this law?

**48.** Why can't I get a transcript for my child for early college admission or to apply for a scholarship. The school says the system can't generate a transcript at this time. The deadline for early admission is Nov. 1. What can be done about this?

**Supertintendent**

**49.** How is APS covering the kind of learning that is indicated in my attached survey (responses to which are still coming in):

Would you please help me with a social studies project that I am doing?

Just write in the space below and on the back side of this paper two or three (or more) facts from our history or culture that you think high school seniors and college students should know. **Instruction**

I need independent, individual responses, so please do not discuss your facts with anyone else until you have handed in your paper. Just jot down your own personal ideas, for example:

- an important event in our history
- an historic location or an important battle
- an influential song or book
- an important political or legal process
- a well-known, historic story (either fact or fiction)
- the name of an important person in our history
- a custom, a behavior, a courtesy, a way of inter-acting with others that is typical or important in our culture
- something that you think is essential to our national identity
- a civil right that members of our society have. (Note: this means a CIVIL right that is granted or recognized by our political system, NOT a God-given human right.
  - a civil duty or responsibility that membership in our society requires.

I would like to collect your paper now, but if you want more time, you can mail it to:

**50.** (Originally in Spanish) In what year/grade can one go to Community College?

51. (Originally in Spanish) Considering the very dangerous situations our schools find themselves lately, and for the safety and security of the students, is it possible to have security systems in all our school to monitor/control those who go into the schools.
52. (Originally in Spanish) What sort of security do you foresee or think we'll see in all the Aurora Schools.
53. (Originally in Spanish) In schools where the majority of students is anglo, there is personnel that checks the food to assure its health/quality, and in schools where the majority of students is Latino, there is no personnel assuring the quality of food. I have seen most of these students throwing the food away because of this.
54. (Originally in Spanish) Why do the teachers pay no attention to the girls who complain?
55. (Originally in Spanish) How do we as parents ask for transportation to school for our children when the school at which my child attends, which is a middle school, does not provide transportation even though there are many children who would use it?
56. (Originally in Spanish) When students are asked to sell things (such as cookies, chocolates, or whatever else), is it possible to have them sell items that are priced below \$8 or \$10?
57. (Originally in Spanish) I think sex education should be discussed more with adolescent students. What do you think is important to discuss with our children regarding this subject at an early age so as to prevent diseases?
58. (Originally in Spanish) How can we as parents become involved in the security of our children's schools? **Risk Management**
59. (Originally in Spanish) Considering all the things going on in schools, just how safe is West Middle School for our children.

60. (Originally in Spanish) I would like to have in this school (West) more security such as police officers in the school.

61. (Originally in Spanish) How will you help our children learn English?

62. (By Paris Elementary) Why isn't there a crossing guard on the corner of Oswego and 17<sup>th</sup>? The stop light on 17<sup>th</sup> between Oswego and Paris, how can we get one?

63. Parents are still crowding the doors at the end of the day at Paris. Will this stop when someone is severely injured?

64. Why is staff not properly trained to hold IEP staffings?

**Instruction**

65. I am having a hard time with the discontinuation of weighted grades for honors and AP classes. It is not fair to those who have worked harder than most but will not have a lower GPA. How is this going to be made fair?

66. Why can we not have full time, dedicated police officers in our middle and high schools with marked vehicles?

**Risk Management**

67. How can we shorten the lunch lines or lengthen the lunch periods?

**Risk Management**

68. I was not notified in any way about the accountability meeting on 9/26/06 and 10/10/06.

School Services

**69.** My son can just barely read. He is in the fourth grade.

How can this be what is going on for 6 hours a day at school? It seems really simple, if he can't read he's doomed to complete failure in life. He was also kicked out of the after school program once because we do not get reduced price lunches. If we do not need government hand outs we will not accept them.

**Instruction**