

***TRANSPORTATION TASK FORCE***  
**MEETING MINUTES**

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Meeting Date: October 13, 2010

Meeting Location: Bond Conference Room

Recorded By: Dena Neuhaus

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## 1 ATTENDANCE

Name	Title	Organization	Present
Bob Abeyta, Chair	Parent/Community Member/BAC		Y
Joan Bludorn	Principal, Arapahoe Ridge High School	Boulder Valley School District	Y
Karen Carr	Family Literacy Coordinator	Boulder Valley School District	Y
Ghita Carroll	Sustainability Coordinator	Boulder Valley School District	Y
Michele Crawford	Parent and Seat Belt Advocate		Y
Michele DeBerry	District Athletic Director	Boulder Valley School District	N
Chris Hagelin	Senior Transportation Planner	City of Boulder	Y
Cynthia Louy	School Bus Driver	Boulder Valley School District	Y
David Mallett		City of Boulder Parks and Recreation	N
Jean Paxton	Former BVSD School Board Member		Y
David Secunda	Parent and Business Owner	Avid 4 Adventure	Y
Ruth McGwire Tuck	School Nurse Consultant	Boulder Valley School District	Y
Robert Young	Director of Transportation	Boulder Valley School District	Y
Joe Sleeper	Assistant Superintendent of Operations	Boulder Valley School District	Guest - Y

## 2 MEETING LOCATION

Building: Boulder Valley School District Administrative Offices

Conference Room: Bond Conference Room

## 3 MEETING START

Meeting Schedule Start: 4:30 PM

Meeting Actual Start: 4:37 PM

Meeting Scribe: Bob Abeyta

## 4 AGENDA

- **Introductions – 4:30**

- Abeyta thanked all for volunteering to be on the Task Force. He (Bob) will be chairing the committee as a volunteer. He (Bob) is not an employee of the district and has no district affiliation, but is a parent and wants to help make the business better.
- Policy and Ground Rules - Abeyta

- Meetings will be every other Wednesday and attendees are all volunteers. Please notify Bob Abeyta, Bob Young or Dena Neuhaus if you will not be in attendance.
- A report will be submitted to the Superintendent's Budget Advisory Committee mid-February. This will include all proposals and recommendations. The committee will ensure these are equitable across the board. All items and issues the committee brings forward will be looked at and recommendations taken.
- Make sure we are always polite, all get a say and do not speak out of turn or interrupt. We are all entitled to our opinions and no opinion is wrong. Abeyta will be sure that all have enough time to speak their thoughts.
- Task Force Goal – Abeyta
  - The goal of this task force is to reduce, reuse and recycle what we can with process efficiencies, planning and other ways brought forth to ensure safety but also try to put money on the table.
- **Resource Book – Bob Young**
  - The white binder is information regarding transportation and BVSD. The school bus is the safest form of transportation and largest in the United States. It is also the most regulated organization with the exception of airlines. In the binder you will find:
    - Stats – from the Metropolitan Area Transportation Efficiency Study (MATES). This is a group of Transportation Directors, Fleet Directors and others that meet throughout the year to discuss issues and ideas and also produce a report once a year. Do not take the figures at face value as they are very complicated and hard to make direct comparisons from. Also, some data was input wrong and the accounting data was from last year. This is only a good baseline for the Task Force to use. Some BVSD vehicle inventory and other stats are also to be used strictly for informational purposes. Things are very complicated in this industry and also highly political.
    - Contact Bob Young with any questions regarding the content.
- **Meeting times and dates, norms, commitment, report-out to Budget Advisory Committee – 4:45**
  - ABEYTA: In the report due next February to the Superintendent's Budget Advisory Committee the hope is to get money back to the budget so it can be used for classroom-oriented items. Transportation is \$11-\$12 million dollars of the budget and if the TTF can get some back to the schools, that would be great.
  - ABEYTA: The goal is not to segregate or disenfranchise any group. All items will be discussed and all will be able to share their opinions. Then the task force will get the data and formulate a plan. The TTF will not go after one group, area, school, etc. That why I (Bob) is chairman of committee. If anyone starts to feel that way, please let me (Bob) know.
  - ABEYTA: Let's keep all discussions to pertinent and relevant data and try to keep emotions out as much as possible. All should stick to the facts so rational decisions can be made and all are kept engaged.
  - SECUNDA: Asked if the mandate of the group was reporting to the Superintendent's Budget Advisory Committee on fiscal conservancy and other material was found in the Task Force to increase efficiency in the District, but would not drop the bottom line, what will happen with that information? Secunda does not want them to disappear.
    - CARROLL: Carroll stated she would take any findings that are not pertinent to the Transportation Task Force to the correct areas in the District.
  - ABEYTA: Welcomed all ideas in regards to transportation efficiency (carbon footprint, safety, etc.). All ideas will go to other groups and/or organizations.
  - CARROLL: Stated that even these items can be included in the Superintendent's Budget Advisory Report as a recommendation.
- **Historical review of the Transportation Task Force (TTF) – 5:00**
  - Install GPS on all equipment as soon as possible as efficiencies gained should be immediate.

- ABEYTA: Very happy to say Young and the transportation department have already begun this step.
- YOUNG: Reported that they are currently putting in a new server in for the software and programming was completed a few days ago. The big picture is to be completed with all aspects by 12/31/10. All buses and almost all maintenance vehicles will have GPS installed. Using this new function will have real-time information for the District to use (speed, location, time at bus stop, etc) on a map and in report formats. Maintenance will also have a feature when batteries are low or there are other mechanical concerns.
- This is a great addition to assist with savings in the District. The white fleet of District vehicles will have a vehicle location function which will assist in dispatch efficiencies.
- 80% of the price of GPS in the District was paid from a CMAQ grant (Congestion Mitigation Air Quality) through CDOT and the RAQC. The RAQC (Regional Air Quality Council) operates from the Governor's office and the MATES committee works with RAQC for grant money. The other grant source which the Transportation Department utilizes is the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program.
- ABEYTA: GPS was installed in other metropolitan districts with immediate financial impacts (money saved) to district.
- SECUNDA: Asked if the savings were to payroll, maintenance or other areas.
  - YOUNG: Answered that the findings of savings were in routing. This is ultimately saved in payroll which makes up most of BVSD's Transportation Department's budget. Fuel and parts are not as big of a portion of the savings. Transportation is ultimately a people business, not a bus business. The largest savings are always with employees and payroll.
- SECUNDA: Asked if the GPS will confirm routing data.
  - YOUNG: Answered that the GPS has to interface with routing software.
- LOUY: Asked what our current routing software was
  - YOUNG: Answered Edulog. Young stated that Edulog is the most powerful software out there, but it does have some problems and he doesn't like it. It is not very user-friendly, but he can't afford to change. BVSD has had it since mid-1980s. BVSD was one of the first in Colorado to use Edulog and it has only been in the past three to four years that BVSD has begun to use it to its full potential.
- LOUY: Asked if the upkeep of Edulog and installation of GPS is a district financial efficiency.
  - YOUNG: Answered that the cost is cell phone based and there is a monthly charge for each vehicle of \$8/month. (correction – cost is actually \$9.60/month) Young stated that the savings will more than pay for the entire GPS installation. Young also added that the initial RFP (Request for Proposals) was for 250 buses.
- Continue to discuss/educate contract employees about how the effects of decisions made and some archaic processes negatively affect operating efficiencies.
  - ABEYTA: The in these meetings he wants to discuss items such as how decisions are made, routing is determined, trips are scheduled, etc.. He wants all items on the tables in regards to bus drivers. Many items are 20-30 years old that are potentially not the most efficient and are out of date. He wants the task force to see if transportation can do better while being mindful not to offend anyone.
- Review Policies for underprivileged and disenfranchised students as they relate to transportation costs, i.e. out of district single passenger transportation. Some of these underfunded mandates are being taken advantage of and are not feasible in time of budget constraint.

- ABEYTA: Brought up an example of students classified as homeless. Some of these students move out of district and he asked if BVSD needs to get them to go to current school.
  - YOUNG: Stated the regulation was the McKinney Vento Act, which defines homeless students quite broadly. The act does require the student to attend their current school and the district must get them there.
- ABEYTA: Asked if there is there a better way for the District to go and get these students who could be 30+ miles away. Could transportation trade with another district or are there other options and more efficient ways without disrupting student's lives?
- Review/change policies on extracurricular activities and how these affect operating expenses and school budget impact.
  - ABEYTA: Stated this is in regards to the ways field trips and athletic trips are operated. Can it be more efficient? He stated that some high schools have their own fields but no stadium, lights or seats. Abeyta wonders if the district spent the money to build a stadium at these schools if it would be worthwhile and ultimately save money in other areas. For example Monarch has to play at Centaurs now. These small capital investments may ultimately eliminate bus trips and save money.
- Explore ride fee after evaluation and feedback from other districts that have implemented it already.
  - ABEYTA: Stated that some districts have already adopted an each way or monthly charge. The TTF should look at this option and see what the impact would be. Would it weed out kids that don't really ride anyways but are signed up? This could help routing be more efficient. This amount also doesn't need to be a self-sustaining amount
  - LOUY: Asked if the district already gets money for the students who ride through the annual October count (CDE40).
    - YOUNG: Answered that the state does give money to the district. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) calculates the amount each district gets each year and there is not a fixed amount. CDE looks at what they have for money, how much the claims for all districts are, and other factors in this calculation. The last few years have been around 28%-29% of district costs that were allowed.
    - YOUNG: Stated that the district also did a mill-levy override. He explained that this allows the district to assess a mill levy on tax payers for the difference on what it actually costs BVSD (with a cap of \$7.5 million) and what the state gives BVSD. There is still a gap and that is what BVSD has to back-fill to the Transportation Department (currently approximately \$1.5 million).
  - SECUNDA: Stated that the total BVSD budget is almost \$300 million. If the district can reduce this back-fill by \$ 1 million, some money can go back to the district with the rest going back to tax payers.
  - PAXTON: Asked when the transportation department outgrew the mill-levy
    - YOUNG: Answered that the levy was outgrown about two years ago so these last couple of years have not been self-sufficient.
  - YOUNG: Also stated that a problem with the funding from CDE is that they base their calculations on the transportation costs from the previous year, not the current year which causes a lag in funding actual current expenses.
- Continue to turn over fleet as quickly as possible and explore alternate energy sources like natural gas instead of diesel.
  - ABEYTA: Stated that this will be a better carbon footprint.
  - YOUNG: Stated that 1988 is our oldest bus. The white binder provided has the age of our current fleet. The average is 11.5 years.
  - SECUNDA: Asked if the replacement cost was from the \$11 million in the budget.

- YOUNG: Answered no but that it was from the Cap Reserve.
  - SECUNDA: Asked if there was any reimbursement.
    - SLEEPER: Answered no and that all BVSD vehicles come out of the same account. On average there is about \$262 per student that was reimbursed from CDE. He indicated that many districts need to raid their Cap reserves to back-fill.
  - SECUNDA: Asked if the Cap budget was for vehicles only or the entire district.
    - SLEEPER: Answered the entire district. It is used for all buildings, vehicles and projects over \$2500 and purchases over \$1,000. There is currently about \$2.6 million in the Cap budget and that is very thin and the district is watching it very tight.
  - ABEYTA: Stated that any money the TTF can bring to table could be reinvested in the fleet to have better savings, natural gas, etc. to help build a sustainable environment.
- Continue to leverage and optimize the routing and equipment deployment process and software, and challenge this with some cognitive review.
- ABEYTA: Stated that instead of Edulog, the TTF should look at what else is out there and discuss all options.
  - YOUNG: Indicated that if there are questions regarding transportation that his employees can assist with, he can have them attend a meeting to make a presentation to provide more information.
  - SECUNDA: Brought up that he didn't see anything on the percentage of seats filled on the buses. He brought up that this could be another measure of efficiency.
    - YOUNG: Answered that with the October count, there are some statistics on routes for all eligible riders. He stated that the district's obligation is to provide service for all eligible riders. He indicated that if the district could develop a system to calculate the eligible rider numbers before routes are created, routing could be a more efficient process. He defined eligible riders as students who live beyond the below distances from their home-school.
      - Elementary: 1.5 miles
      - Middle School: 2 miles
      - High School: 2.5 years.
      - Exceptions are made for designated hazardous areas.
  - SECUNDA: Asked to get the historical October count percentage of seats occupied for next meeting.
  - YOUNG: Stated that Safe Routes to School comes in with number of walkers and transportation can provide open enrollment space available numbers.
  - CARROLL: Asked if a bus continues to go to a bus stop if it is unoccupied.
    - YOUNG: Answered that a reported dead stop will stay on the bus route but that the driver will not go to it. Drivers are to tell Dispatch of any dead stop on their route.
  - ABEYTA: Indicated that there currently are some cost saving measures being done at schools in regards to athletics that may be safety issues overall. Some teams are not contracting buses and are having the parents and student drive to the events instead. This makes many in the district nervous as there are new teen drivers on the road late at night.
    - YOUNG: Stated that the Transportation Department bills the school for all activity trips and that the only free service was for to and from home and school. He stated that most of the schools think the price is too high, but in fact the Transportation Department actually loses money because the Superintendent will not let Young raise the activity trip price. He stated that it is six to seven times safer to ride on the school bus than in the family car.

- PAXTON: Reminded the TTF that it is against law for anyone other than family to ride with another student under a certain age.
- YOUNG: Indicated that there are times the Transportation department does not have enough buses or employees to drive all of the activity trips requested and scheduled.
- CARR: Stated that some of the district's schools are contracting with transportation for boy's varsity, but not girl's varsity sports and that this issue could result in a potential Title IX lawsuit. In addition, those athletes who cannot provide their own transportation can't play.
- ABEYTA: Added that the coaches are leaning on the students to get themselves to game without transportation provided by BVSD.
- PAXTON: Stated that it is the Booster clubs job to help raise funds and currently of these clubs do this.
- ABEYTA: Asked why these parents couldn't or aren't organizing carpools. He stated that this would be a safer and more efficient way.
  - YOUNG: Indicated that there is a board policy for parents driving students other than their own in the district and that this policy includes proof of insurance.
  - SECUNDA and ABEYTA: Stated that this is pretty easy for parents to provide and would minimize hassle and maintain compliance.
- SECUNDA: Asked if activity bus monetary losses were a direct cost or fully weighted.
  - YOUNG: Answered that it is fully weighted. It includes the benefits of the driver which is around \$26.97/hour per driver plus \$1.19 per mile. However, Transportation currently charges schools \$19.94/hour for a driver and \$1.04 per mile for bus. The district currently has to back-fill in the difference and this has been justified as an equity issue.
- YOUNG: Added that non-district work is billed out at actual cost plus administrative costs (Race for the Cure as an example).
- SECUNDA: Asked if the district provides trips to third party organizations year round.
  - YOUNG: Answered yes as long as there is no interference with the routes or other district activity trips. He also added that the district is not allowed to make a profit and he believes the Transportation Department is right on with the state statute. Many of the current third party trips are a good will community gesture and all non-district trips must be for non-profit organizations with a community focus (no weddings, private parties, etc.).
  - SECUNDA: Asked if trips were turned down because of the potential to make a profit. He wondered if anything can be restructured in order to fund the Transportation department. He would like the TTF to look more in-depth at the statute.
- PAXTON: Stated that the money is just paying for costs. Any dollar used for transportation back-fill is a dollar out of the classroom.
- CRAWFORD: Mentioned that some field trip grants are available through Target that will pay for items like the main fee to get into a museum and that ultimately the school bus is not that expensive (less than half of the total price). She wondered if the TTF should look into transportation receiving the actual cost of the transportation portion of the activity in the district. Crawford added that insurance is easy for parents to provide and that the district should communicate out to parents about this option and have permission slips signed at the schools.
- YOUNG: Added that many activities in the district are paid for by grants, i.e. homework clubs.

- **Brainstorming of goals, plans and tasks of TTF – 5:30 and/or topics**

- ABEYTA: Asked the TTD to have each member give ideas for the TTF and their goal in order to organize future meetings.

**GOALS**

Alternative transportation effects

Increase walking, biking and carpooling

Increase filled seats

Leverage public transportation

Bus passes for staff

Cost effective

Young walkers

Summer school-centralized schools

ESL stay in home school

Seat belts/Safety programs

Safety of kids (including health) on bus  
Match 504 students with regular riders

**QUESTIONS/TOPICS**

Icarpool/SchoolPool/Dial-A-Ride

Opt out/in carpool system

For-profit options

Routing software/overlap – human  
function of routing efficiency

Mill levy review

Route review – past and present  
Zone based vs. school based

Ride fee

Advertising on equipment

PTO Resources

Fleet review

BAC Recommendations – Look into

PTO funding assistance

- **Agenda for next meeting, assignments – 5:50**

- DRCOG (Denver Regional Council of Governments) will present regarding the SchoolPool project.
- Software
- Carpool
- Equipment
- Outside resources

- **Adjourn – 6:00**

## 5 MEETING END

Meeting Schedule End: 6:00

Meeting Actual End: 6:00

## 6 POST MEETING ACTION ITEMS

Action	Assigned To	Deadline
DRCOG Presentation	Chris Hagelin	10/27/2010

## 7 NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting:      Bond Conference Room  
                          October 27, 2010  
                          4:30-6:00 PM