

## ***School Board Decides to Close One School for 2017/18, Other Proposed Reallocations Discussed***

**GOLDEN, CO, Feb. 10, 2017** – Limited funding and changing student enrollment has led the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education to consider \$20 million in proposed budget reallocations next year. In November, Jeffco voters rejected two measures that would have increased school funding, and state K-12 funding has been below levels dictated by Amendment 23 since 2009 (“the negative factor”). The Board set the following budget priorities: competitive compensation for employees, maintaining school funding levels through student-based budgeting, and keeping school buildings warm, safe and dry. These decisions are difficult for school communities and the Board. However, the Board is committed to an open and transparent process. The five-member Board had begun the process of reviewing the proposed reallocations and engaging the public, parents, and staff on the larger, long-term budget issues.

“The Board will be making these decisions based on what is best for our Jeffco students,” said Board President Ron Mitchell, “Jeffco needs the best teachers in our classrooms, not in the neighboring school districts. In addition, maintaining quality programs in our schools is a priority.”

At their regular meeting on Thursday, Feb. 9, the board heard over three hours of public comment, then discussed key issues on the reallocations list. First, accelerating the timeline for the Wheat Ridge and Arvada area 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to transition to middle school. Second, the closure of five elementary schools. Finally, towards the end of the seven-hour meeting the board began ranking other items on the reallocation list. Board budget work will continue through April and include public input, committee recommendations, state funding projections, and further review of the proposed reallocations. The Jeffco Public Schools 2017/18 budget will not be finalized until May, however some decisions and recommendations occurred Thursday night. Below is a summary of the work accomplished.

Items moving forward:

- Pleasant View Elementary School will close as of the 2017/18 school year.
- Moving to the 6-8 middle school model was reaffirmed as a positive direction for students, but the Board honored its original commitment of giving school communities a year to work on transitions. **The accelerated timeline for Wheat Ridge and Arvada areas was not approved.** The Chatfield area will move to the 6-8 model next year as planned and approved last June; other areas in the district will transition beginning in 2018/19 where feasible.

Items no longer to be considered for the 2017/18 budget year:

- Closing of Peck, Stober, Swanson, and Pennington Elementary Schools.



Items tabled:

- Funding for additions to four middle schools will be revisited after the state budget is released.

Items deferred (meaning they will only be revisited if state funding is below expected levels):

- Wheat Ridge High School Gifted & Talented teachers for 2017/18 (the board allocated one-time funds and expects a plan to achieve a self-sustaining program beyond next year)
- Central Gifted & Talented Resource teachers
- Custodial services reductions
- Option and Outdoor Lab school busing
- Social Emotional Learning Specialists
- Literacy Interventionists
- Mastery Connect program and MAP testing K-2 portion

Next steps for the Board regarding the 2017/18 budget include consideration of legislative action that may impact the budget on Feb. 16, review of public input from a variety of sources (online budget tool, correspondence, and committee recommendations) on March 16, and the state budget forecast on March 23. All lead up to a target date of April 20 for the first public hearing of a 2017/18 final budget.

“All budget decisions are difficult, because as we saw last night during public testimony, Jeffco Public Schools make a significant and positive impact in our communities. The decisions last night provide insight into the cuts that lie ahead if we do not secure additional funding for our district,” stated Mitchell.

The meeting materials can be found online:

<http://www.boarddocs.com/co/jeffco/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=AJ4P7G61B921>.

Video recording of the meeting is also online: <https://livestream.com/accounts/10429076/events/3542310>.

For more information, go to [www.jeffcopublicschools.org](http://www.jeffcopublicschools.org).

### **About Jeffco Public Schools**

Jeffco Public Schools has been providing educational excellence for more than 60 years. Approximately nine percent of all the K-12 students in Colorado attend a Jeffco school. Our mission is to provide a quality education that prepares all children for a successful future. The district serves over 86,000 students at 155 schools on 168 campuses. Find [Jeffco Public Schools](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

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