

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING OF OCTOBER 10, 2005

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, October 10, 2005, at 6:31 p.m. in the Board Room, at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President, Jeff Friedman, presided.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE, Jeff Friedman Presiding

Board Members Present: Tim Steele, Crystal Kennedy, John Steiner, Jeff Friedman, Jake Metcalfe, and Macon Roberts

Others Present: Jan Christensen, Leslie Vandergaw, Michael Henry, Enid Hunter, Patricia McRae, Jerry Sjolander, Jeff Wood, Eric Tollefsen, Larry Wiget, Janet Stokesbary, George Vakalis, Ray Amsden, Pam Chenier, Michelle Egan, Rhonda Gardner, Laurel Vorachek, Danise Podvin, Xiaogeng Sun, Julie Jessal, Ophelia Dargan-Steele, Todd Hess, Bonnie Hardy, LTC David Jones, William Johnson, Johanna Lee, the press, and other interested people.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Requests were made to pull ASD Memoranda # 48, #68, #69, and #72 from the Consent Agenda and ASD Memoranda #36, #59, #60, and #71 from the Superintendent's Report for further discussion.

The agenda was unanimously approved as amended.

C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Comeau announced that the Re-Dedication of Chugach Optional School would be held tomorrow evening, October 11th, at 6:30 p.m. This will be a wonderful celebration of their completed renovated school.

D. AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Chugiak High School Swing Choir, under the direction of Mr. Ron Lange, entertained those present with the performance of four musical pieces prior to the beginning of the meeting. They performed The Star Spangled Banner for those in attendance at the beginning of the meeting.

Macon Roberts read the Recognition of Extraordinary Assistance to Hurricane Katrina Refugees - Margaret Douglas. Ms. Douglas is

recognized for her efforts to make the transition for students from the Gulf Coast to Anchorage as easy as possible by providing backpacks filled with supplies for them. Ms. Comeau added her sincere appreciation for Ms. Douglas' generous and heartfelt gift.

E. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

1. Student Advisory Board

Mr. Feriani was not in attendance. In his absence, Mr. Friedman announced that the next meeting of the Student Advisory Board is scheduled for October 17th at 11:00 a.m. The meeting location has yet to be determined.

2. Military Delegate

LTC Jones was unable to attend tonight's meeting due to the Joint Staff and Pacific Command Change of Command ceremony scheduled for tomorrow.

3. M.E.C.C.

Mr. Johnson announced that the MECC will hold its next business meeting on October 20, 2005 at 12:00 p.m. in Room 322. As always, the public is welcome and invited to attend. Mr. Williams introduced the new MECC Board members being recommended to the Board for approval this evening. He noted that we have another strong group of members, every one of which has leadership abilities, commitment to community service and a strong desire to help Anchorage students, parents, the District and the School Board to be successful.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD NON-AGENDA ITEMS

G. CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda is attached. **All attachments referred to in memoranda Recommendations are on file in the Superintendent's office.**

1. Approval of Minutes:
 - a. Special Meeting - September 12, 2005 4:30 p.m.
 - b. Regular Meeting - September 12, 2005 6:30 p.m.

2. ASD Memorandum # 48 - Approval of Recommended New MECC Board Members

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board appoint five new members to the Minority Education Concerns Committee (MECC) for a term expiring on June 30, 2007.

3. ASD Memorandum # 68 - Resolution in Support of Keeping the Lights on Afterschool – October 20, 2005

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt the attached resolution designating October 20, 2005 as "Lights on Afterschool! Day" in the Anchorage School District.

4. ASD Memorandum # 69 - Resolution for School Bus Safety Week

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve a resolution recognizing October 17-21, 2005, as School Bus Safety Week in the Anchorage School District.

5. ASD Memorandum # 72 - Resolution Designating October 23-31, 2005 as Red Ribbon Week in the Anchorage School District

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt the attached resolution designating October 23-31, 2005 as Red Ribbon Week in the Anchorage School District.

6. ASD Memorandum # 61 - School Board Policy Revisions: Section 165.2 Regular Meetings (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading the recommended policy change for School Board Policy 165.2 Regular Meetings.

7. ASD Memorandum # 62 - School Board Policy Revisions: Section 343.34 (h) Directory Information (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading the recommended policy change for School Board Policy 343.4(h) – Directory Information.

8. ASD Memorandum # 57 - Personnel Report

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the attached Personnel Report.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner
seconded by: Macon Roberts

To approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting, September 12, 2005, and the Regular Meeting, September 12, 2005 and ASD Memoranda #61, #62, and #57.

VOTE:

Ayes: Kennedy, Steele,
Friedman, Steiner,
Marks, Metcalfe, Roberts

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 48 - Approval of Recommended New MECC Board Members

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board appoint five new members to the Minority Education Concerns Committee (MECC) for a term expiring on June 30, 2007.

ACTION:

Moved by: Tim Steele
seconded by: Macon Roberts

To approve ASD Memorandum #48 - Recommended New MECC Board Members

Ms. Christensen thanked the MECC committee that worked to interview all of the candidates. She requested an amendment to add a sixth new member, Angelina Bernie, whose name was left off of the memo.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by: Jake Metcalfe
seconded by: Macon Roberts

To add a sixth name, Angelina Bernie to ASD Memorandum #48 - Recommended New MECC Board Members

VOTE:

Ayes: Kennedy, Steele,
Friedman, Steiner,
Marks, Metcalfe, Roberts

Nays: None

AMENDMENT PASSED

Mr. Steiner noted that MECC is tasked to consider several items as listed in the memorandum. One of those is item 4) such matters with respect to the District at large as may be identified by the School Board or the Superintendent. He explained that, with the emphasis on No Child Left Behind and their focus on achievement, we are very concerned that all the groups within our District achieve. He is pleased with the willingness of the MECC members to work on these issues to identify and address the concerns of the minority community in our District.

Ms. Comeau pointed out that Mr. Johnson had given the MECC End-of-the-Year Report at the September 12th Board meeting. That report included the MECC's goals, one of which was the focus on the issue of academic achievement. She is sure that this issue will continue to be a focus of the MECC this upcoming year.

VOTE ON MOTION:

Ayes: Kennedy, Steele,
Friedman, Steiner,
Marks, Metcalfe, Roberts

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 68 - Resolution in Support of Keeping the Lights on Afterschool - October 20, 2005

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt the attached resolution designating October 20, 2005 as "Lights on Afterschool! Day" in the Anchorage School District.

ACTION:

Moved by: Mary Marks
seconded by: Tim Steele

To approve ASD Memorandum #68 -
Resolution in Support of Lights on
Afterschool Day.

Mary Marks and Tim Steele read the Resolution Designating October 20th as Lights on Afterschool Day in the District.

Mr. Steiner noted that by passing this resolution the Board is committing to engage in innovative after school programs, however budgeting is always another issue. We can agree that this is a very important thing to do, but we can't actually do it unless we identify a way to find funds to put toward that effort. These programs are certainly a valuable thing for us to provide, if we can, or to work in conjunction with other organizations to do so. He supports the resolution.

Ms. Marks noted that the issue of after school programs is a concern on a national level. There is an ongoing effort to fight for funding and to prove to Congress the importance of these programs and how they impact our students.

Mr. Steele noted that these are grant funded programs that we know work. The only limiting factor is educational funding.

VOTE:

Ayes: Kennedy, Steele,
Friedman, Steiner,
Marks, Metcalfe, Roberts

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 69 - Resolution for School Bus Safety Week

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve a resolution recognizing October 17-21, 2005, as School Bus Safety Week in the Anchorage School District.

ACTION:

Moved by: Mary Marks
seconded by: Tim Steele

To approve ASD Memorandum
#69 - Resolution for School Bus
Safety Week.

The Resolution in Support of School Bus Safety Week was read by Jake Metcalfe and John Steiner. Ms. Kennedy pointed out the significance of the statistics referenced in the resolution.

Mr. Roberts, having been a bus driver during his last two years in high school, voiced a special understanding and appreciation for the job that

bus drivers and bus attendants do and the service they perform for the District and our students.

Mr. Steiner acknowledged the difficult job bus drivers perform, combining the responsibility of safely driving the vehicle while supervising students, and noted that he holds them in high esteem.

VOTE:

Ayes: Kennedy, Steele,
Friedman, Steiner,
Marks, Metcalfe, Roberts

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 72 - Resolution Designating October 23-31, 2005 as Red Ribbon Week in the Anchorage School District

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt the attached resolution designating October 23-31, 2005 as Red Ribbon Week in the Anchorage School District.

ACTION:

Moved by: Crystal Kennedy
seconded by: Mary Marks

To approve ASD Memorandum
#72 - Resolution Designating
Red Ribbon Week.

Crystal Kennedy and Jeff Friedman read the Resolution Designating October 23-31, 2005 as Red Ribbon Week in the Anchorage School District.

VOTE:

Ayes: Kennedy, Steele,
Friedman, Steiner,
Marks, Metcalfe, Roberts

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

Ms. Comeau requested that the Profile of Performance be reordered to the last report.

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. ASD Memorandum # 58 - Project Status Report

This is a report of activities and project status changes in Major Capital Projects during the period of September 16, 2005 through September 30, 2005.

2. ASD Memorandum # 59 - Enrollment Status Update: Sept. 30, 2005

Enrollment as of September 30, 2005, the official membership date for the District, was a total of 49,589 students. This enrollment represents 135 (.27%) more students than the 49,454 reported for the same time last year.

Ms. Comeau reported that, as of September 30th, the District is 300 students over projected enrollment, representing an increase of 135 students over the number in school at the same point last year. She noted that the reason for this positive trend is still being analyzed. The next critical date is October 28th, which is the end of the count period and determines our funding level for this year. The numbers point out an interesting set of circumstances with about 100 additional kindergarten students and over 200 more high school students than projected. She reported that we have already released staff in those two areas so that classroom sizes could be adjusted.

Mr. Steele noted that he is pleased to see the trend. He pointed out the maps attached to the report and how they clearly display where the current needs in the District are, which schools are over capacity, and which are under. He found it interesting to note that the map of the elementary program points out the need for space right where we are doing our work. He requested some discussion on the Middle School map which basically shows that we are over capacity in every middle school. His concern is that we not get too far along with the boundary issue until we get an idea what we are going to do in the Western area. He questioned whether, if we get a site for a middle school in that area, we will make it to serve 6th, 7th and 8th graders in order to take some pressure off of the surrounding elementary schools. He noted that we had also had some discussion about Clark and whether, with updates, that school would serve 6th, 7th, and 8th graders.

Ms. Comeau reported that our goal has always been to make all of our middle schools 6th, 7th, and 8th, but it is a question of capacity. The other issue which will impact our longer range plans is what happens with the site selection process in southwest Anchorage. If we are unable to secure a middle school site at that location we will have to make a boundary change recommendation in the spring for the other middle schools while we keep looking for a site. Ms. Comeau noted that this has had to be done before, just not so often at the middle and high school levels. The critical issue is to balance enrollment. She pointed out the map in Eagle River, noting that we should be able to move some of the Gruening students north to Mirror Lake and move the Fort Richardson students to Gruening, which would relieve some of the pressure on Central. Muldoon Middle School should also relieve some pressure on Clarke, Hanshew, Wendler and Central. This will all be part of the committee discussion and when the recommendation comes in the spring she anticipates that it may suggest a two-step process. Mr. Steele asked if there was still a question as to whether we first go with an elementary or a middle school in the southwest area. Ms. Comeau acknowledged that this was still an open question noting that the answer will depend on when a site can be secured. We will then have to bond for a school, so opening any school in that area is still quite a ways down the road. Mr. Friedman noted that, even if we had a site today, it would take three or four years before we would be able to open a middle school and we can't wait to make boundary changes to take the pressure off of the other schools.

Mr. Steiner, while glad to see the maps, had some concern regarding their enrollment capacity interval breakdown. He noted that the legends are not consistent between the maps of the elementary, middle and high schools. He questioned the rationale for the differences. Ophelia Dargan-Steed reported that the maps were created in GIS and that the interval ranges were set by the computer program. She did, however, indicate that they could be set manually. Mr. Steiner suggested that the intervals be set with a view to how the capacity impacts student education. Ms. Comeau indicated that we can look at that, noting that the impact on students often depends on the program and the school. Mr. Steiner questioned whether program capacity is an absolute maximum figure or a target figure. Ms. Comeau noted that she believes the issue of program capacity is addressed in the narrative of the CIP and that she will make sure that is the case.

3. ASD Memorandum # 66 - Service High School - One Percent for Art

Chapter 7.40 of the Anchorage Municipal Code defines the process for selection and acquisition of art to be displayed in public places, including public school buildings. This code authorizes the Municipality to select the artist and the artwork, with a review of the proposed artwork by the School District only as to its safety and maintenance factors. The artwork has been reviewed and approved by the District's Risk Management, Operations, Maintenance and Facilities Departments and the Anchorage Fire Department. The artist has agreed to their safety recommendations, which will be addressed in the artist's contract.

4. ASD Memorandum # 36 - Summer School Report

Summer School 2005 in the Anchorage School District served just under 5,000 students at 14 sites. Following are reports from Patricia McRae, Executive Director of Elementary Education; Leslie Vandergaw, Executive Director of Middle School Education; Mike Henry, Executive Director of High School Education; and Doreen Brown, Supervisor of Indian Education.

Ms. Comeau was very pleased with the number of students participating in summer school this last summer. She noted that the willingness of the Board to support an enrichment program at the middle and high school levels made a significant difference and also allowed a significant number of students to have flexibility in their schedules.

Ms. McRae, Director of Elementary Education, reported that the elementary program basically followed the same model that it has in the past, an intensive, direct instruction program for students who are below proficient, focusing on reading or math. Multi-sensory instruction was added this year at every site as part of the program, which worked out very well. "Fast Forward" was also implemented at every site. She reported that they are looking at combining Title I summer school into our elementary summer school for next year. This year both programs used the same curriculum. The difference is that Title I can provide transportation. So, in order to address the issue of small class sizes, they are looking at not having stand-alone Title I sites, and instead using Title I funds to transport those students to one of the regular

elementary sites in the District, thereby increasing the geographic choices for those students and filling our classrooms. In response to a question from Ms. Comeau, Ms. McRae noted that the English language learners were incorporated into the program at the regular sites in a combination inclusive effort utilizing bi-lingual tutors.

Ms. Vandergaw, Director of Middle Schools, reported an increase of about 200 children students participating in summer school. She explained the three-part program offered at the middle school level. In addition to the regular summer school program offered to all students there are two types of enrichment programs available. The enrichment program consists of "Enrichment Institutes", which are six-week, half-day classes, and "Enrichment Camps", which are two-week, intensive courses. These enrichment options were very well received by both parents and students. The other noted success was the addition of a healthy lifestyle component to the regular remediation program.

Mr. Henry, Director of High Schools, reported that, at just under 3000 participants, this was by far the largest high school summer program we have ever had. He noted that, with the additional funding provided for summer school, the program was able to be increased to 27 days. With the additional days summer instructional time is equal to, or more than, the instructional time during first or second semester, therefore effectively adding a third semester to our program. Because of that they were able to offer, for credit, any courses offered during the regular school year. Mr. Henry noted that, with that addition, many students chose to participate in summer school not only to recover credit but also to provide flexibility in their schedules during the regular school year. Mr. Henry acknowledged the impact partnerships with programs such as the UAA drama department and Cook Inlet Tribal Council had on the number of students participating in the summer school program.

In response to a question from Ms. Comeau, Mr. Henry reported that 38 students were able to secure diplomas at the end of summer school. Ms. Comeau noted that this is an important outcome of the program. Although we are not allowed to count that number in our graduation statistics for last year we do get to count that number toward the graduation rate for next year. Mr. Steiner noted that it would be hard to overestimate the value of having

summer school credit opportunities in the lives of the students who attained graduation through the program. Mr. Steiner questioned whether we are able to track the impact summer school has on student achievement. Ms. Comeau requested that this question be addressed during the Profile of Performance report.

Mr. Steele, identifying himself as a strong supporter of summer school, noted that the number of summer school participants indicates the need and demand in the community for the program. He hoped that we would be able to offer these programs on a continuing basis. He noted that the demand will only grow as parents and students see the success achieved through the program. Mr. Friedman indicated that, taking the number of students who graduated after summer school this year and the students who will be able to graduate because they were able to recover credits through the program, we should be able to show a savings to the State if they will fund our summer school program.

In response to a question from Mr. Roberts, Ms. Comeau noted that we are not at capacity in the summer school program. Each year we identify ways to become more efficient. One limiting factor is our summer construction. She noted that there are many teachers who are interested in teaching summer school and, she believes, many students who would be interested in participating if they were able to get to the locations where the program is available.

Mr. Steiner expressed appreciation and congratulations to those individuals who have made the summer school program such a success.

Dr. Enid Hunter, reporting for the Indian Education program, called attention to the fact that acquisition of native languages was an emphasis and that all students had the opportunity to learn native languages. She voiced appreciation for the addition of the Healthy Living component. Dr. Hunter also noted appreciation for the partnerships with CIRI, the Indian Education Program grant, the Municipality and Kids Café all of which provided support for the program. She acknowledged staff training efforts and noted that responses from parents indicated that they would happily enroll their students in the program again next year.

Mr. Sjolander, Director of Special Education, reported that over 300 Special Education students received extended school year services

during the summer. In addition, a significant number of students who receive special education services during the regular school year took advantage of the general education program during the summer. The program allows students to concentrate on one or two courses in order to solidify understanding in core subjects or for credit recovery.

Ms. Kennedy reiterated appreciation for the community support of each of the various summer school programs.

5. ASD Memorandum # 71 - FY 06-07 Budget Development Process

Over the last several years the Anchorage School District has actively sought community input in the budget development process. In preparing the FY 2005-2006 budget, the District engaged members, employees and students by conducting three town meetings. The budget development for FY 2006-2007 will again involve conducting three town meetings. New this year, the administration will be making department and school site visits in order to engage staff in earlier discussions regarding districtwide budget requirements.

Ms. Comeau reported that there would be four public town hall meetings on budget development this year, rather than three as is stated in the text of the memorandum. In addition, the meeting at Chugiak High School will be run a little differently than the other three. We are going to try a more informal approach where staff from different departments will be seated at separate tables and people will be able to ask questions or give suggestions specific to a particular area on a more individual basis. In addition, we have the website link with a suggestion box which directs comments to the administration as well as to Board members. We also have cards and forms available at the schools for people to fill out and send in. Ms. Comeau reviewed the important dates through the budget development process which will culminate in the presentation of the FY 2006-2007 Proposed Budget in late January/early February.

Ms. Comeau emphasized the efforts being made to do more outreach and education regarding the budgetary process to our own staff. She noted that administrators will be going out to schools to provide short briefings at staff meetings, schools and departments, as well as meeting with the unions at their meetings. As much as possible will be done to get as much involvement as

possible from our employees and the community so that everyone will feel that they are part of this process. Ms. Marks also noted that she would like to see MECC and the Student Advisory Board included in the process. Ms. Comeau agreed that those organizations will, indeed, be included.

Mr. Friedman noted that all comments are reviewed regardless of whether the suggestions are made at town hall meetings, via email, or by other means. All comments and suggestion are given serious thought and consideration. He encouraged people to provide input into the process.

Mr. Steiner explained that the District does not know how much benefit we will get from the state's budget surplus. He noted that we are faced with continued rising costs in areas such as retirement and transportation. At the rate of these increases, we could be faced with a shortage again. On the one hand, there is the question of, despite the State having a lot of money, how are we going to meet the budget that may be presented to us by the legislature and the Governors' proposal, and on the other hand, the possibility of having the opportunity to actually improve education funding. With that in mind, it is extremely important that we get public input. We can't ask the Legislature for a particular amount of money unless we have good, solid explanation of what the community wants and what our professional staff indicates is needed to increase performance and decrease the gap in performance between groups of students. So we really need that grassroots support and input from our citizens so that we can represent to the Legislature what the community needs and what their constituents want.

Mr. Metcalfe encouraged as many staff people and bargaining unit members in the District to get involved in this process. It is important so that those bargaining units can help lobby budget support in Juneau.

Mr. Steele thanked the superintendent for forwarding the suggestions that are already coming in from the community. He encouraged the public to take advantage of the opportunity to understand and contribute to the budgetary process.

At 7:38 p.m. Mr. Friedman called for a 15 minute recess. The meeting was called back to order at 7:52 p.m. by Mr. Friedman.

6. ASD Memorandum # 60 - Profile of Performance 2004-2005

The *Profile of Performance* is the Anchorage School District (ASD) report to the School Board and the community on the academic achievement of Anchorage students and schools.

Mr. Dan Loring, community member, addressed the Board on the Profile of Performance. He also acknowledged his new position as a member of the MECC and voiced his appreciation to be able to serve on that committee. He explained that he first became involved in public education as president of his local community council. There were, at that time, concerns in his neighborhood with the local elementary school. In light of these concerns they established a sub-committee on the issue and since that time have done extensive research on the state of public education. He believes that public education in Anchorage is in a state of crisis and with the trend of graduation rates as will be reported in the Profile of Performance he thinks that even more so now. The challenge, in his opinion, is to engage in conversation with all stakeholders to try to look at all aspects of education to see if we can do better. He further believes that in order to do better we need to be brutally honest. He referenced a recent report that stated a 96% graduation rate for the class of 2005, a statistic which he finds misleading. He believes that 30-60% of that class had actually dropped out of school before ever reaching their senior year. In his opinion solutions can be found within the public school system and not through vouchers or the privatization of schools. Mr. Loring emphasized that all stakeholders need to be involved and should use their positions to help find solutions to the problems within the system. He encouraged our elected leaders to stand up and be counted.

Ms. Comeau noted that all the Profile of Performance information is available on the website or a hard copy of the report can be purchased from the District. It is public information and is available for public review, scrutiny and criticism.

Ms. Comeau does not believe that public education is in crisis, she notes that there are some students who are not performing where

they should be but there are a significant number of our students who do very well and, upon graduation, are ready for whatever post-graduate plans they have made. That is not to say that there are not issues. Students come to us with many challenges and it is our responsibility to try to identify the best approach for those children and try to get them the programs, the support and the education that best meet their needs. It does take adequate resources to meet the needs of our students so that they can get the education they deserve.

Ms. Christensen, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, introduced the 2004-2005 Profile of Performance. She noted that there are some real significant successes in the report and also some challenges ahead. Ms. Christensen introduced Laurel Vorachek, Director of Assessment & Evaluation, Denise Podvan, Acting Director of Program Evaluation, Xiaogeng Sun, Coordinator of Program Evaluation, and Rhonda Gardner, Director of School Accountability and Improvement. She voiced her appreciation to Roger Fiedler and the Communications Department for their assistance with editing the report.

Laurel Vorachek reviewed the format of the report which remains consistent from the previous two years. She indicated that the primary purpose for the report is really to focus on Board goals and performances. The report is broken down into two parts. Part one, District Information, provides the background information which includes online resources, the assessments that we use in the District, socioeconomics status and demographics. Part one also addresses how the District performed on each of the goals the Board outlined for us last year. Part two is information reported at the school level. She noted that the report tonight would focus on the District but that they would be happy to field questions from both sections.

Ms. Vorachek began with a review of the Race/Ethnic Distribution. She noted that the majority distribution continues to be Caucasian, although that percentage has continued to decline each year. In terms of the socioeconomic status of our students, she noted that the definition of Economically Disadvantaged Students (EDS) has changed over the past few years and now includes students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch, all students in Provision 3 schools, migrant students and sibling matches. Utilizing these parameters, 26.2% of all ASD students were identified as economically

disadvantaged during the 2004-2005 school year. Economically Disadvantaged Students did score lower in standardized tests compared to non-EDS. She emphasized that performance of individuals varies greatly and that we have high expectations for all of our students. There were many exceptions to this pattern by individual students.

In a review of Special Programs, Ms. Vorachek noted that Gifted Program numbers have been moved from Special Needs, Table 7, because they are not part of the Special Education Department. We are seeing an increase in the number of students in the Bilingual Program who are either new to the United States or are not English proficient. This increase has programming implications for us.

Ms. Vorachek explained that in this presentation more emphasis will be placed on the charts than on the graphs because, without all of the figures available in the charts, the graphs can be misleading. She also noted that caution should be used when comparing our performance in 2004 - 2005 on the Standards-Based Assessments (SBAs) with the Benchmark and Terra Nova results from previous years. The SBAs assess students at grade level, not at the age span. So we are, in effect, establishing a new baseline. For clarification purposes Ms. Vorachek reviewed how the Benchmark System worked; we tested in grade 3 with the content covered in grades K-2, then we tested in grade 6 with content covered in 3-5 and again in grade 8 with content covered in 6-8. In the high school, the exam was refocused to an essential skills exam in 2001-2002 so, if the test was taken in the sophomore year and if the student was on regular mathematics track, they would have been exposed to the content covered in the HSGQE.

Goal 1, Indicator a - The percentage of students scoring proficient or above in each designated group will increase by at least ten percent of the difference between the previous year's percent proficient for that group and 100%. For Language Arts, gains were achieved in all groups and target was met in six of the thirteen designated student groups and at the All Student level. In Math, gains were achieved in all but one group and the target was met in three groups.

Ms. Vorachek provided an explanation in how to look at these figures in light of closing the achievement gap. In the assessment field closing of the achievement gap can be looked at in three ways;

the good way, the okay way, and the not okay way. The “good way” is that all of the designated student groups show growth but that designated student groups all show more growth than the comparison group (the Caucasian group). An “okay” closing is one where the Caucasian group does not grow at all and the other designated sub-groups increase. The “bad”, or “not okay” way, is when the Caucasian group drops and the performance of the other sub-groups drop, but their drop is not as large as the comparison group.

Goal 1, Indicator b – The percentage of students in each designated student group in the advanced proficient category will increase by at least five percent over a two-year period. A decrease was seen in all groups in Reading, Writing and Math. Ms. Vorachek addressed the issue of using advanced proficient as a measure of whether or not students at the high end of the spectrum are continuing to grow. The primary purpose of the SBA is really to measure whether students are proficient or not proficient. The reason we have four levels, which include advanced, is because it is required under NCLB. Using an SBA measure to determine growth at the proficient and advanced proficient levels greatly reduces the reliability of the results because there are just not enough items to differentiate. The SBAs were not intended to measure advanced performance of students. With that background, Ms. Vorachek explained that we would like to explore better ways to measure performance for students on the high end. During her review of the specific numbers, Ms. Vorachek encouraged the Board to look at the total picture, noticing that a change in cell size can impact the corresponding results to the point that they may not be statistically significant.

Goal 2, Indicator a – Over a two-year period, there will be an increase of at least 5% of students, in each designated group at each school, demonstrating proficiency or higher on the reading portion of the grade 3 Alaska Standards Based Assessment. At the District level gains were made in all groups except Disabled, Hispanic, and Migrant groups. At the Individual Schools level the target was met at 28 of the 64 schools. Ms. Vorachek cautioned that when the data is reported by school the numbers are small, the percent proficient fluctuates greatly and reliability is compromised. She noted that, on the tables for the school level results, much of the data is suppressed because it does not meet the minimum number of students to do public reporting.

Goal 2, Indicator b – Over a two-year period, there will be an increase of at least five percent of students, in each designated student group at each school, demonstrating proficiency or higher as measured by the Developmental Reading Assessment in third grade. At the District level gains were made in 8 of the 12 student groups and in the All Student category. At the Individual Schools level the target was met in the All Students category and by 20 of the 61 schools. Again, at individual schools, there are cell sizes at the designated group level too small to report.

Goal 3, Algebra I – The percentage of students in each designated student group who successfully complete Algebra I in eighth grade with a grade of C or higher will increase by five percent in a year-to-year comparison. At the District level we saw a loss in percentage points was seen in all but two groups. For All Students, the percent completing the course in 2004-2005 decreased 12.1 percent from 2003-2004. We did see a gain of percentage points in two groups, Alaska Native and Asian/Pacific Islander.

Goal 3, Geometry – The percentage of students in each designated student group who successfully complete Geometry in ninth grade with a grade of C or higher will increase by five percent in a year-to-year comparison. We did see a gain overall and in eight of the designated groups. There was a 6.7 percent increase in All Students and target was achieved. Six of the designated student groups also achieved the target. Three groups lost percentage points: American Indian, Disabled, and Migrant. Ms. Vorachek pointed out that, when we are looking at the Algebra I to Geometry, the goal states specifically a year-to-year comparison. If you follow the cohort group of the particular class of students who took Algebra I in the 8th grade and compare that to the number of the same group who went on to Geometry in their 9th grade year, a very different pattern identified is identified.

Goal 3, Algebra II – The percentage of students in each designated student group who successfully complete Algebra II in tenth grade with a grade of C or higher will increase by five percent in a year-to-year comparison. At the District level we saw an overall loss and a loss in seven of the designated student groups. The All Student results showed a decrease of 3.5 percent. Three of the groups with a gain in percentage points achieved the target: African American, American Indian, and Multiethnic.

Danise Podvin reported on the final three Board Goals.

Goal 4, Dropout Rate - There will be at least a five-percent decrease in the dropout rate of middle and high school students over a period of two years as compared to the 2002-2003 school year. Ms. Podvin reported that the rate increased in all categories except for the Migrant group. It was significant to note that the 2005 rate can not be directly compared to previous years because of a change in the way dropouts are identified. In order to comply with state reporting requirements, we changed the way we reported summer-leavers. These are students who do not return after the summer break and do not transfer to another district. Beginning in 2005, these summer-leavers are reported as dropouts, which they had not been in previous years. If these summer-leavers are removed from the calculations, the dropout rate is less than the previous two years. We certainly need to comply with state regulations and including the summer-leavers is a much better way to account for the students, but doing so does not allow for realistic comparison to our data from previous years.

Goal 5, Graduation Rate - There will be at least a five-percent increase in the district's graduation rate in a year to year comparison. Ms. Podvin reported that we use the NCES recommended calculation which is based on an estimated cohort group method. Using that method we found that the Graduation Rate actually decreased in all categories except the Multi-Ethnic group. She again noted that the comparison is affected by summer-leavers. If we eliminate the summer-leavers from the calculation, the Graduation Rate would be approximately 63%, showing a slight increase over the previous year.

Goal 6, Advanced Placement - There will be at least a five-percent increase in the percent of high school students who successfully complete AP courses for the 2004-2005 school year. "Successfully Complete" is defined as passing the AP course with a grade of C or higher. Ms. Podvin reported that we met the target in the overall student category.

Ms. Podvin noted that the complete Profile of Performance will be available on the District website tomorrow. The presentation given tonight will also be available on the website. She noted that they learned a lot while going through the process of putting together the

Profile of Performance and that they are looking forward to working with the Board to put together goals for the coming year. She voiced her appreciation for the Assessment & Evaluation Department staff. This year new rules were implemented for small number suppression and they also implemented a new three-way checking process. While these changes definitely improved the quality of the data, they required a lot of hours and attention to detail.

Ms. Comeau thanked Ms. Vorachek and Ms. Podvin and opened the floor for questions from the Board.

Mr. Steiner asked for further clarification on the comment concerning the advanced proficient students. What he understood was that, although it may be legitimate to want to monitor improvement in our advanced proficient students, the assessment tool we are using is ill equipped to adequately do the job. Ms. Vorachek explained that the problem of measuring progress at the advanced proficient level is not just with the SBAs. The Benchmark System was not a good tool to use to make distinction between proficient and advanced proficient either. Both of these tests are designed to measure accurately toward the center and not for distinguishing between small intervals at the extremes. So, if we want to identify whether students at the high end are continuing to grow academically, a better measurement tool is needed.

Mr. Steele clarified that the issue appears to be the way the goals have been designed, not with the test. Ms. Vorachek agreed explaining that she believes our assessment system is solid. Ms. Comeau noted that she has asked the assessment team, as they develop recommendations for the Board goals, to come up with some draft measures they feel could give the Board the desired information using the assessments. In response to a request from Ms. Comeau, Ms. Vorachek clarified how Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) fit into the assessments and why it is critical, as we move forward, that we look programmatically at how the GLE's are embedded at all grade levels of instruction and in all subject areas. She explained that the system takes our performance standards, which were for grade spans under the Benchmark system, and breaks them down to specific grade levels. The GLE system is based upon content mastery. Once a concept is mastered it is assumed that the mastery will be maintained.

Ms. Christensen addressed the issue of how our curriculum fits with our GLEs. In some instances there is a disconnect between the two and we have to tell our teachers exactly what the expectations are for the grade level. It is important that we teach the students the material that we are going to test them on and give them the opportunity to master that material.

Ms. Marks questioned whether that information is also given to other District programs such as Indian Ed, Migrant, Bilingual, etc. Ms. Christensen assured her that we have a whole systemic approach and all members of the education team look at curriculum and how it matches assessment. She further noted that, with the development of our new assessment reporting system, all teachers from all programs have access to assessment results. So District professionals can identify exactly where students in their classroom or program are struggling. Mr. Friedman clarified that we are not teaching to the test, but rather have developed grade level curriculum in such a way that we are teaching them what we expect them to learn and testing on what we are teaching.

Ms. Vorachek also noted, for the public, that the Assessment Department's website, under the School Based Assessment (SBA) section, includes the Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs) which describe what proficiency looks like for each subject at each grade level. The Proficiency Level Descriptors were available under the Benchmark system but only at levels 3, 6 and 8. We now have PLDs at each grade 3 - 9. We will soon be receiving the draft PLDs for grade 10. She noted that, starting this spring, the 10th grade test will include both an HSGQE score and a GLE score for the Standard Based Assessment.

Ms. Marks requested some more clarification on GLEs and what is being done to help teachers, parents and students who might be struggling. She is concerned as to whether we are meeting the child where they are, noting that children learn at different levels. Ms. Christensen explained that each division has worked to get all of their professionals to understand data. The principals are trained and they in turn train their teachers how to interpret the data. The teachers can then use the information for the students in their classrooms and work with the parents and the children. She noted that we want to look at each individual child. That is one of the tremendous advantages of our assessment reporting system, which is on-line for teachers. Using the system they can identify

the particular students who are having difficulty with a particular concept.

Ms. Marks requested clarification as to what happens once a particular group of students who need an extra boost to meet the requirements and expectations have been identified. As an example of how the process works, Ms. Christensen asked Ms. McRae to explain the new reading program and what is being done with teacher meetings. Ms. McRae explained that the literacy curriculum that the Board adopted last year, Houghton-Mifflin, is aligned to the GLEs. When teachers teach that curriculum they are teaching the Grade Level Expectations. All students are assessed in the Fall with a reading test. Reading is first assessed at the end of kindergarten to see if students are on track, because it is difficult to catch up once they get behind. We have a standard for what is proficient and what is not proficient. Students are assessed again at the beginning of the year so that teachers are able to address the needs of the students who are not proficient right away. The Developmental Reading Assessment used in our schools is an instructional tool that identifies not only whether the student is proficient or not proficient, but also pinpoints the area of difficulty such as fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and phonics. With the new adoption of the Houghton-Mifflin curriculum we have added to the assessment model, so at mid-year in the first grade all students are re-assessed and any student who is not proficient at the beginning of first grade has additional assessments in phonics and phonemic awareness. Ms. McRae noted that it is all about student learning and frequent assessments assist in making sure students are learning. She also reported that we are using the Learning Opportunity Intervention money for schools to target the needs of the students who are below proficient, with specific targeted interventions based on data. We want to know who is not learning, have the best information that we can to know why they are not learning, and then intervene so that they can get back on track. Ms. Comeau summarized that a teacher should be able to explain to the parent why their student is not learning, how we are addressing the issue at school and how the parent can assist at home. Ms. McRae also reported that the Curriculum Department created a beautiful book, Helping Your Children Learn, a couple of years ago that was based on Benchmark performance standards. Plans are in the works to redesign that book to align with GLEs.

Mr. Steiner questioned where we are in the process of being able to implement a student achievement database so that teachers, parents and others in the District could assess what programs are having the most results for our children. Ms. Christensen explained that there is a team working under Jeff Woods on the technical aspect of setting up the data warehouse and developing a new student management system that will make it easier for all stakeholders throughout the District, including our parents, to access information. The Assessment and Evaluation Department recently added Ms. Podvin's position in order to provide program evaluation. The Board has been very clear that they want Administration to make data-driven decisions. So a committee has been meeting to figure out how to use all of the data that we have collected. That committee has recently discussed establishing a Rubrik on prioritizing key items. Ms. Podvin reported that she is putting together and prioritizing a list of needed program evaluations. Her list includes mathematics, factors associated with the AYP success in our Title I schools, summer school, achievement of the NCLB transferred students, and factors contributing to drop-outs.

Mr. Steiner revisited the question of where we are in the process of being able to implement a new student management system. Ms. Christensen explained that this is a complex issue and that we are in the early stage of design. Ms. Comeau explained that we are in the process of conducting a needs analysis for the system. But, we don't have to wait for that system to be in place to be able to do program assessment. Mr. Steiner stated that he will be very interested to hear the suggestions on Board goals. He summarized that, overall, although we didn't necessarily achieve everything that we set out to do, the Profiles of Performance provides a pretty clear picture of which areas are showing success and which are not. He feels that the goals and the way they were set up have a lot of validity and are providing good information. He indicated that, for him, while achieving the goals is nice, it is not as important as the information which helps identify where we need to work harder.

Mr. Steiner briefly reviewed the issue regarding the graduation rate, the drop-out rate and how summer-leavers are counted. He agreed that counting summer-leavers toward the drop-out rate is appropriate in order for the data to be realistic and reliable. He also feels that, if you are looking at a particular statistic from year to year and suddenly change to a different measurement tool, it is

perfectly reasonable that seemingly poor results can be misleading. Mr. Steiner felt that the Board needs to keep in mind that as students progress through school and have more of their education behind them it becomes more difficult to achieve significant percentages of change in outcomes. It is much easier to see change from year to year in the lower grades. Mr. Friedman noted that the way to have the greatest impact on our twelfth-graders is to start in Kindergarten and to coordinate communication throughout the K-12 program, which is what we are trying to do. Mr. Steiner added that, with only a small percent of the total time in public school left, it may take even more resources to make an impact on outcome for high school students because they are relatively further behind.

Ms. Comeau reported that there are more students graduating with a diploma now than a few years ago. This can be attributed to way the High School Department has approached the issue including the increased use of technology and increasing summer school offerings. Ms. Comeau reiterated the impact that early childhood development has on future proficiency. She feels strongly that more needs to be done to level the playing field for those students entering kindergarten and first grade so that all children have an equal opportunity for a successful school career.

Ms. Comeau addressed some issues that she finds frustrating, beginning with the fact that we are not looking at cohorts of students. The real proof of success is whether a particular student or group of students is making annual progress as they move from grade to grade. She also noted that parents should be looking at the year to year progress of their own children. Once the teachers are comfortable using the data, they will be able to have good conversations with parents about where their children are strong and where they need help. The District then needs to be sure that our interventions are really targeted well and are making a difference. Another area of frustration for Ms. Comeau is in regards to the dropout rate. She noted that home-schooling students are considered dropouts and that we need to develop a plan to identify how many kids are home-schooling, even if it is not legal to calculate it in the graduation rate. Ms. Comeau feels that Alaska has a very liberal, loose accountability for home-schooling parents. The District is getting no credit and, in fact, is being penalized because parents are making the decision to home school. On top of that, those children sometimes come back into the District in the upper grades because the parents can't meet their needs and many

times those children are not ready or able to get a diploma. She feels that it is important to know how many of those children who have “dropped out” are in reality being home-schooled by their parents. Regardless of the reporting parameters, Ms. Comeau feels that it is important that we find out the specific reasons students are not continuing their education with us.

Mr. Steele indicated that, he too, is looking forward to hearing suggestions regarding the Board Goals. He is concerned however that, as new goals are developed with new and different ways of testing and measuring data, we make sure that we can track the data year-to-year. Specifically he hoped that there would be a way to compare the results of next years’ Board goals back to this years’ data so that we would be able to identify changes. Mr. Steele indicated that what really matters to him is whether we are making progress in the right direction and identifying where we need to make adjustments.

Ms. Vorachek noted that one of the areas that we continue to work very hard on in the District is how students are identified so that we have a system in place to compare data from one year to the next. She believes that we are doing a better job every year and that the quality of our data is improving. She acknowledged the importance of historically data and noted that even three years worth of data is not a trend. In a response to an earlier question from Ms. Marks, Ms. Vorachek explained that on the current assessment tests, no matter what subject or what grade level, a score of 300 is proficient. Previous assessments reflected proficiency with different scores depending on grade level and subject matter. This new, consistent scoring system makes it a lot easier to explain results to students and their parents.

In reference to the information provided which indicated that changes in cell numbers impact the significance of resulting outcomes, Mr. Friedman requested that future reports include some type of notation when those changes occur. Mr. Vorachek reported that, with the addition of a Psychometrician on staff, future reports will indicate not only results but also whether those results are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Mr. Johnson congratulated the group for preparing such a good product. He acknowledged the importance of both collecting the data and having it publicly available. Mr. Johnson also voiced his

appreciation for Ms. Comeau's comments encouraging parents to visit with teachers to find out how the data translates to their individual students' progress. Ms. Comeau noted that MECC members would be receiving copies of the Profile of Performance. She encouraged MECC members to review the data and meet with their teachers and principals to discuss the information. Every school in the District has to develop School Improvement Plans to address their student performance issues so this is another opportunity for MECC to assist the schools. It is very important for parents to be part of the conversation. Ms. Vorachek offered to attend a future MECC to review the Profile of Performance for members who might have questions.

Ms. Marks asked if there are any tracking records on preschool students who have graduated into kindergarten. Ms. Comeau clarified that we had preschool in the District for the first time last year at North Star. In addition to that school, a program was started at Fairview this fall. The preschool program is still too new to have information, but we will be adding this to programs we track. The goal is to see if participation in the preschool program will assist students to be successful as they continue through their education. She also noted that all students in the District have identification numbers which stay with them throughout their education which will assist in tracking their progress. Ms. Christensen added that with the assessment reporting system now in place, the students' assessment data follows them so that teachers can review past results for their current students.

Ms. Marks questioned if there was some type of networking system which would allow us track data for students from other preschools transferring into the District. Ms. Christensen noted that if they bring assessment data with them, that data could be entered into our system.

Ms. McRae reported that several of our Title I schools offered a "Jump Start Into Kindergarten" program last year. The principals at those schools were very enthusiastic about how much better prepared those student were to start school than the students with no previous exposure to school. She also noted striking performance results at the end of kindergarten of students in schools that have a Reading First grant. The four schools that had not implemented a core curriculum previously and then did implement a core curriculum had a huge increase in the number of

students who were proficient at the end of kindergarten. Almost 90% of students at these four schools were proficient at the end of kindergarten, compared to 78% the year before. Some of the Reading First schools had 100% proficient at the end of kindergarten last year.

Ms. Marks questioned why there was a change in the way the number of Economically Disadvantaged Students (EDS) is calculated, noting from Table 4, page 17 that we used to count K-8 and in 2004-2005 counted K-12. Ms. Vorachek explained that Assessment & Evaluation had worked closely with the Information Technology Department and the Accountability & School Improvement Department to develop a common definition of EDS. In order to accurately account for all students in the District this definition includes all grades K-12. She noted that additional information regarding the way this data has been tracked over previous years is outlined in the notations below Table 4, page 17.

Mr. Metcalfe questioned information provided on Table 5, pages 18-20 which lists several schools with 100% of students identified as EDS. Ms. Vorachek explained that the schools in question are Provision 3 schools. She clarified that, once certain Federal regulations are met, Provision 3 status allows every student in the school to be classified as EDS for funding purposes. It does not mean that every child in the school meets EDS criteria. Mr. Metcalfe requested clarification as to the significance of Provision 3 status, wondering if funding goes to 100%. Julie Jessal, Title I Coordinator, explained that Federal law allows the District to use the percentages as they were prior to the Provision 3 designation and to maintain that status for five years. So we do have accurate funding but it is not at 100%. We will do another check of the schools in five years.

Mr. Friedman brought attention to the "Other" section of the report. He especially noted areas in which Anchorage ranks above the National averages. Ms. Comeau commended the staff for the efforts that lead to these results.

Ms. Kennedy wondered, in light of the information in the Profile of Performance, whether we will need to make adjustments to our Six-Year Plan. Ms. Christensen reported that an evaluation and update of the Six-Year Plan will be coming in November. Ms. Kennedy mentioned the budgetary component, questioning

whether we will be able to correlate the items that we weren't able to fund last year with the areas where we did not meet our goals. Ms. Comeau noted that the administration would look at that issue.

Ms. Steiner noted that there is a lot of excellent education going on in the District. We are educating a lot of students very well, but there are also a lot of students who are not making it. He stated that it is important to keep our focus on the whole spectrum.

I. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

J. COMMUNICATIONS & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Roberts reported that he, along with Ms. Comeau and Mr. Friedman, had attended the Safewalking-to-School program at Mountain View Elementary last week. He extended his compliments to FedEx for their support of this important program.

Mr. Metcalfe pointed out a letter in the recent King Career Center Newsletter from a student who went directly into the IBEW apprenticeship program following graduation. He noted that there were four students who had that opportunity. He highlighted the benefits of that program and other direct entry programs for our KCC students.

Mr. Steele announced that there will be a Legislative Subcommittee meeting Friday, October 15th from 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. in Room 320.

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION – PERSONNEL/FINANCE/NEGOTIATIONS LITIGATION

L. ADJOURNMENT

The Regular Meeting of October 10, 2005, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:50 p.m.

Jeff Friedman, President

John Steiner, Clerk

Johanna Lee, Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approved