

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 14, 2005

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, November 14, 2005, at 6:30 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, Mary Marks, Jake Metcalfe, Jeff Friedman, Crystal Kennedy, Macon Roberts, and John Steiner.

Others Present: Jan Christensen, Enid Hunter, Mike Henry, Patricia McRae, Jerry Sjolander, Leslie Vandergaw, Janet Stokesbary, George Vakalis, Ralph Feriani, Ray Amsden, Pam Chenier, Stan Syta, Jim Utter, Michelle Egan, Larry Wiget, LTC David Jones, William Johnson, Johanna Lee, the press, and other interested people.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Steele noted that a revision has been made to ASD Memorandum #98, Acceptance of Grant Award: Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program.

The agenda was unanimously approved with the revision.

C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mary Marks apologized to those present, the Board, the District and the Community, asking for forgiveness for her recent DWI. She noted that her behavior was unacceptable and should not be tolerable. She stated that she is grateful that policies are in place for students within the District which provide opportunities to correct behavior and make better choices. She explained how much more dire the consequences are for adults who make poor choices and what she has experienced since the event. Mr. Roberts thanked Ms. Marks for her apology.

Mr. Roberts reported that he has been the Board representative to the Congressional Civic Education Program for the last three years. He introduced Mrs. Bristol, the Alaskan Coordinator for Civic Education and Civitas International. Mr. Roberts also introduced Mr. Wilson-Jack from Nigeria who has been in Anchorage the last several days and has had the

opportunity to speak to students at several of our schools. Mr. Wilson-Jack explained that he is here as part of an educational exchange program, building a new alliance between Alaska and the Federal Alliance of Nigeria. He noted that soon after his return to Nigeria, educators from Alaska will be visiting Nigeria to arrange for training programs in civic education. He explained that Nigeria is an emerging democracy and they have a responsibility to make sure that the younger generation who are still in school have the best civic education and have the necessary skills and dispositions that will enable them to defend the young Nigerian democracy. Mrs. Bristol explained that Mr. Wilson-Jack is also the General Secretary of the Nigerian Bar Association and, with his help, we have also been able to establish a partnership his association and the Alaska Bar, providing the opportunity for law related education in both Nigeria and Alaska.

D. AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Huffman Elementary School Orchestra under the direction of Ms. Kathryn Hoffer performed for the Board. Mr. Steiner congratulated the students on their performance.

ASD Memorandum #85 - Recognition of Good Samaritans

Mr. Steele explained that on Saturday, September 24, 2005, several staff and students came to the aid of a parent volunteer who suffered a heart attack while at the Region Cross-Country Running Championships at Kincaid Park. The actions of these students and adults showed their sincere concern for the well-being of others and ability to act responsibly during a crisis.

The Anchorage School Board recognized KCC students Amanda Palmer and Aaron Pruneda, teachers Jim Aronow, Alan Loken and Rus Schreckenghost, and administrators Dale Evern, Rosemary Fish, Julye Neel and Pat Walker, CITC's Mike Tomco, psychologist Mary DuHoux, counselor Sara Miller and all the Dimond staff that volunteered at the meet for their prompt and caring response to this situation. Mr. Friedman distributed recognition certificates to those involved.

ASD Memorandum #50 - Recognition of Crayola Dream-Makers Recipients

Mr. Metcalfe explained that the Crayola Dream-Makers Award program was introduced twenty-one years ago to encourage the creativity and conceptual development of kindergarten through sixth-grade children through art activities emphasizing the value of visual learning in all curricular areas, and calling attention to the creative work of children through exhibitions of their artwork. Artwork submissions reflect cross curricular context, including art and literacy, art and math, and art and science. The artwork was judged on the basis of visual appeal, originality, craftsmanship, and the student's statement about his or her work.

Eleven elementary students from the Anchorage School District were among the 40 selected from the Western Region to receive awards. The winning students are Hattie Williams of Fairview, Moe Liaga and Daniel Walton formerly of Fairview, Cassandra Munoz of Chester Valley, Lisa Torres of Rabbit Creek, Pierce Bateman, Anna Roller, Rebecca Hanscam and Fiona Bruce of O'Malley, and Kira Egelhofer and Zoe Ingram-Patton formerly of O'Malley. These creative students received valuable guidance and support from art teachers Hollis Mitchell of Rabbit Creek and O'Malley, and Sharon Trager of Fairview and Chester Valley.

The Anchorage School Board recognized these award-winning students and their teachers for their artistic achievements. Mr. Roberts distributed certificates of recognition to the students and teachers.

E. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

1. Student Advisory Board

Mr. Feriani reported that the last meeting of the Student Advisory Board was held today at King Career Center. Mr. Feriani reviewed several items discussed at today's meeting. He reported that Ms. Waters spoke at the meeting concerning the Spring AASA Conference scheduled for April 19-21, 2006 at South Anchorage High School. Mr. Feriani encouraged all students to attend that conference, in particular those involved in Student Government. Mr. Mark Mew, ASD Director of Security and Emergency Preparedness was also at the meeting representing the Public Safety Advisory Commission. Mr. Mew was seeking student volunteers to join the Commission. Mr. Fiedler, Assistant Director

of Communications for ASD, attended the meeting to share information concerning the District budget. Ms. Sharon Vaissiere, Coordinator of Health and Physical Education Programs for ASD, presented information to the Student Advisory Board on the Wellness Policy Resolution. The Student Advisory Board also discussed the School Resource Officers with across-the-board support of having these officers in the schools.

Mr. Feriani reported that he had recently attended the Alaska Association of School Boards conference. He explained some of the benefits of his attendance and noted that each high school in the District should be encouraged to send a student representative to the conference next year.

The next Student Advisory Board meeting will be held on December 5, 2005 at 11:30 a.m. at King Career Center.

2. Military Delegate

LTC Jones was not present due to preparations being made for President George W. Bush's visit to the Elemendorf Air Force Base.

3. M.E.C.A.C.

Mr. Johnson reported that the MECAC will have their next business meeting on Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon in Room 320. He noted that MECAC had held their fall retreat last week. The following issues were discussed: Parent Advocacy, an Education Forum, and the secretary position. He explained that the conversation was spirited, robust and very constructive. Mr. Johnson also noted that he had recently had his annual meeting with the Superintendent, where the conversation was also spirited, robust and very constructive.

Mr. Friedman asked for suggestions from MECAC regarding the budget process. Mr. Johnson noted that the MECAC will definitely be addressing the budget and he will, of course, be sharing the committee's thoughts and concerns with the Board.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Robert Hayes, the parent of two ASD students, was present to talk about role models. He noted that people in positions of responsibility within the District need to be held responsible for their behavior. He explained that District leaders are role models for our students and as such should be held to a higher standard. He encouraged the Board to make sure that there are policies in place so that they are prepared to act when issues arise regarding the use of alcohol and drugs by District staff and officials.

On another topic Mr. Hayes also shared his high regard for Shadow Walkers, a movie about native teens which he saw last evening. He highly recommended it for inclusion in our Alaskan history courses for students in sixth grade and older.

Mr. Andy Horton, a parent of three ASD students was present to address a concern he has with District policy on dealing with lice. He identified an issue with how information is communicated to parents in situations where an apparent outbreak of lice is identified in the classroom. His children were recently involved in just such a situation and he was told by the school nurse that it was not policy to inform parents when a lice occurrence is identified in a classroom. When he spoke with staff from the Health Resources Department they informed him that, when lice are identified, it is policy to test everyone in the class and the siblings of everyone in the class and to notify parents about the occurrence. Mr. Horton sees this situation as evidence of a severe lack of communication between parents and the District. Ms. Comeau explained that it is policy to inform parents. She indicated that the school principal would be contacted tomorrow and arrangements made for a meeting between the principal and Mr. Horton.

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. Regular Meeting    September 26, 2005    6:30 p.m.

2. ASD Memorandum # 111 - Resolution in Recognition of American Education Week and All School Employees

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt the attached resolution designating November 13-19, 2005, as American Education Week for all employees in the Anchorage School District.

3. ASD Memorandum # 113 - Resolution in Support of Principal Appreciation Day

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt the attached resolution designating November 18, 2005, as Principal Appreciation Day in the Anchorage School District.

4. ASD Memorandum # 64 - School Board Policy Revisions: Appendix A Student Rights and Responsibilities 14 Drugs and Alcohol (b) (Second Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt on Second Reading the recommended policy changes for School Board Policy -Appendix A - Student Rights and Responsibilities - 14. Drugs and Alcohol (b).

5. ASD Memorandum # 107 - FY 2006-2007 Financial Planning

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to prepare the Anchorage School District's FY 2006-2007 Preliminary Financial Plan in accordance with the financial projections set forth in this memorandum. Specifically, the budget for FY 2006-2007 is to be established for planning purposes with projected revenues and use of fund balance not-to-exceed \$607,123,715.

6. ASD Memorandum # 98 - Acceptance of Grant Award: Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to provide counseling services that focus on prevention and early intervention in a continuum of services for elementary students with emotional and behavioral challenges.

7. ASD Memorandum # 97 - Acceptance of Grant Award: Fund for the Improvement of Education Earmark Grant

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept grant funds from the U.S. Department of Education in the amount of \$198,400. Project Elluminate will provide online staff development opportunities for teachers integrating PLATO curriculum in grades seven through twelve.

8. ASD Memorandum # 96 - Acceptance of Grant Award: Manning Family Foundation

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a cash grant from the Manning Family Foundation to Inlet View Elementary School in the amount of \$10,000.

9. ASD Memorandum # 95 - Acceptance of Continuation Contract Agreement: The Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a continuation contract agreement from the Association of Alaska School Boards in the amount of \$168,700. Funds are used to promote the project's purpose to engage community members in the education of children and youth.

10. ASD Memorandum # 123 - Acceptance of Continuation of Right Start Contract: North Star, Williwaw, Tyson, Mountain View, and Big Lake Elementary Schools

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to continue a contract from the state of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development in the amount of \$88,640. Funds will be used to provide intervention for kindergarten children identified by the Developmental Profile as needing extra help in specific areas of development. This contract is for North Star, Williwaw, William Tyson, and Mountain View elementary schools in Anchorage and Big Lake Elementary School.

11. ASD Memorandum # 106 - Acceptance of Continuation Grant Award: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Grant

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a McKinney grant

award from the Alaska Department of Education in the amount of \$60,756. This is a continuation grant for projects first implemented under McKinney grants in FY 2003-2004 and FY 2004-2005. McKinney-Vento funds are administered by the Title I Child In Transition/Homeless Project.

12. ASD Memorandum # 105 - Acceptance of Grant Award: Title I Neglected and Delinquent Youth 2005-2006

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a grant from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Title I Competitive Neglected and Delinquent Grant Program, in the amount of \$120,000.

13. ASD Memorandum # 101 - Acceptance of Continuation Grant Award: Reading is Fundamental, Inc.

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a continuation grant from Reading is Fundamental, Inc., in the amount of \$17,488. Funds are used to distribute books to fifteen elementary schools.

14. ASD Memorandum # 110 - Acceptance of Grant Award: Alaska Railroad Summer Youth Employment Program 2006

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept grant funds from the Alaska Railroad Corporation for an ongoing program described in a current Memorandum of Agreement. This award for \$30,000 supports supervised summer employment for youth from the Martin Luther King, Jr., Career Center.

15. ASD Memorandum # 114 - Sale of Surplus Property

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to dispose of the listed surplus property by sealed bid sale or public auction in accordance with Board policy 732.1. Prior to the sale, these assets will be offered to the Municipality of Anchorage for extended public use.

16. ASD Memorandum # 99 - Award of Contract: Mears Middle School Generator Installation Service Upgrade

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to award a contract for the

Mears Middle School Generator Installation and Electrical Service Upgrade to the lowest responsive bidder, Haakenson Electric for the Base Bid amount of \$167,649, and to accept Alternate 1, Assignments A and B in the amount of \$185,417 for a total award of \$353,066.

17. ASD Memorandum # 100 - Award of Contract: Goldenview Middle School Generator Installation Service Upgrade

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to award a contract for the Goldenview Middle School Generator Installation and Electrical Service Upgrade to the lowest responsive bidder, Norcon Inc., for the Base Bid amount of \$173,654, and to accept Assignments A and B in the amount of \$16,366, for a total award of \$190,020.

18. ASD Memorandum # 108 - Award of Contract: Wendler Middle School Generator Installation

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to award a contract for the Wendler Middle School Generator Installation and Electrical Service Upgrade to the lowest responsive bidder, Samson Electric Inc. for the Base Bid amount of \$223,000 and Assignment A amount of \$176,836 for a total award of \$399,836. It is further recommended that the School Board approve the use of unrestricted interest funds for this award.

19. ASD Memorandum # 109 - Award of Contract: Hanshew Middle School Generator Installation

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to award a contract for the Hanshew Middle School Generator Installation and Electrical Service Upgrade to the lowest responsive bidder, Marsh Creek LLC for the Base Bid amount of \$191,336, and Assignment A in the amount of \$179,700 for a total award of \$371,036.

20. ASD Memorandum # 121 - Discipline of School Board Member

It is recommended that the School Board appreciate and accept Board Member Mary Marks' apology although regretting the actions that led up to it.

21. ASD Memorandum # 43 - Personnel Report

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

Mr. Friedman requested that ASD Memorandum #111, the Resolution in Recognition of American Education Week and All School Employees, and ASD Memorandum #113, the Resolution in Support of Principal Appreciation Day, as well as ASD Memorandum #121, Discipline of School Board Member, be pulled for discussion. Mr. Steiner requested that ASD Memorandum #107, FY 2006-2007 Financial Planning, be pulled for discussion.

It was further requested that two items from the Superintendent's Report, ASD Memorandum #89, Evaluation of 2004-2005 Six-Year Instructional Plan and ASD Memorandum #83, Class Size Report 2005-2006, be pulled for discussion.

ACTION:

Moved by: Tim Steele  
seconded by: Mary Marks

To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting September 26<sup>th</sup> and ASD Memoranda #64, #98, #97, #96, #95, #123, #106, #105, #101, #110, #114, #99, #100, #108, #109, and #102.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 111 - Resolution in Recognition of American Education Week and All School Employees

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt the attached resolution designating November 13-19, 2005, as American Education Week for all employees in the Anchorage School District.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner  
seconded by: Macon Roberts

To adopt the Recognition of American Education Week and All School Employees in the Anchorage School District.

Ms. Comeau explained the importance of having the community recognize the outstanding work of all of our District employees. She noted that it takes the efforts of all employees working together to make our schools safe, well maintained and barrier-free. The Board read the resolution in order to acknowledge the importance of recognizing these efforts.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 113 - Resolution in Support of Principal  
Appreciation Day

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt the attached resolution designating November 18, 2005, as Principal Appreciation Day in the Anchorage School District.

ACTION:

Moved by: Tim Steele  
seconded by: Macon Roberts

To adopt the Resolution in Support  
of Principal Appreciation Day.

Ms. Comeau noted that this resolution is an effort to recognize the leadership and the importance of school principals. This year's theme is "A Strong America Starts with Great Public Schools." She noted that, when you have a principal who is a strong instructional leader and has an outstanding teaching and support staff, the children get an excellent education. She is pleased to support this resolution. The Board read the resolution in order to acknowledge the importance of these leaders in our schools.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 107 - FY 2006-2007 Financial Planning

It is the Administration’s recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to prepare the Anchorage School District’s FY 2006-2007 Preliminary Financial Plan in accordance with the financial projections set forth in this memorandum. Specifically, the budget for FY 2006-2007 is to be established for planning purposes with projected revenues and use of fund balance not-to-exceed \$607,123,715. This includes individual fund budgets currently projected as follows:

	<u>FY 2006-2007 Financial Plan</u>
General Fund	\$ 465,710,000
Food Service Fund	14,951,500
Debt Service Fund	77,462,215
Local/State/Federal Projects Fund	<u>49,000,000</u>
Total - All Funds	<u>\$ 607,123,715</u>

It is further recommended that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to adjust the budget expenditure ceiling indicated above in accordance with any negotiated contract adjustments and other associated cost increases, further review of the fees’ structure, School Board requests, Administration, community, staff and students’ recommendations as implemented by the Superintendent. In addition, flexibility must be allowed for adjustments based on the budget being in alignment with academic achievement, updated demographic and/or economic information.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner  
seconded by: Macon Roberts

To approve and authorize the Superintendent to prepare the Anchorage School District’s FY 2006-2007 Preliminary Financial Plan in accordance with the financial projections set forth in this memorandum.

Ms. Comeau reviewed key items from last week’s work session. She noted that the Governor’s announcement regarding his recommendation for a significant increase in the base student allocation is a major factor that will allow us to move forward in the budget process. The Board has given the Administration the authorization to proceed using that recommendation as the base for the public school funding program. With

that development, the \$29.8 million fiscal gap has been narrowed to \$1.8 million. The Board has also directed the Administration not to use any of the Undesignated Fund Balance as a funding source.

Ms. Comeau reviewed the process being used to solicit community input for the budget. There have been four community forums throughout the District. A number of important issues have been brought out at these forums. These suggestions from the community, as well as the Board Goals, the Six-Year Instructional Plan and other Board directives will be taken into consideration as the budget is being developed. She noted that cuts will still need to be made in order to achieve a balanced budget. As a starting point the Administration has directed each department to build a maintenance level budget with a 5% cut from last years' budget. They were also asked to prioritize the recommended cuts. Ms. Comeau indicted that one of the most frustrating issues in the budget process is the increase of federal, state and some local mandates without the attending funding.

Ms. Comeau reviewed the assumptions that will be used when developing the Financial Plan. She pointed out that the Administration is projecting a slight decrease in enrollment of 211 students next year. These are very preliminary projections and we will be watching the numbers very closely. She explained that the State Foundation Formula funds about 58.7% of our General Fund. The Governor's recommendation is an increase of \$428 per student, which is significant and we are grateful to him for coming out so early with this recommendation. While we hope that the Legislature will fund at that level, at the very least, we will be lobbying for additional funding. Also built into the recommendation will be the assumption that the District will be able to go to the tax cap in the Municipality of Anchorage.

In summary, Ms. Comeau noted that it is her responsibility to bring the Board a balanced budget in January. Salaries and benefits take about 86% of operating costs in the General Fund. The District has just concluded negotiations with the ACE bargaining unit and still has AEA, two Teamsters bargaining units and consideration for exempt personnel which will need to be factored in to this budget. The mandated retirement increases are an additional 5% for both the teacher's retirement and the public employee's retirement. She explained that SB 141 did nothing to address this under-funded liability, while changing the system in such a way that it has caused grave concern with the District's ability to attract and retain employees.

Mr. Steiner asked whether there is the ability to make adjustments within this budget if there are changes in projected enrollment. Ms. Comeau asked that the Board adopt the figures presented in order that the Administration can begin the process. If an increase in the projections is identified, the Administration would approach the Board with another memorandum between now and January to ask for an increase to the upper limit. In addition, if the enrollment looks like it will continue to increase when we do our spring revisions and, thinking optimistically, when the Legislature increases the per pupil allocation, we would again come back to the Board for budget adjustments. However, it is Ms. Comeau's desire to be conservative at this point.

Mr. Steiner questioned what process is followed when the Board sets an upper limit on spending and the Assembly approves that limit and then enrollment in the District increases leading to additional monies from the per student allocation. Ms. Comeau explained that if the District needs to go over the established spending limit the Administration would have to come back to the Board and then to the Assembly to get permission to spend the additional money. Anecdotally, Ms. Comeau noted that a few years ago the District received significantly more grant money than anticipated which required a return to the Assembly for permission to use those funds.

Mr. Metcalfe noted that even with the Governor's proposal we are still going to be working with a \$1.8 million deficit. In response to a question, Ms. Comeau explained that we had to cut \$7.5 million from the budget last year and she could not specify exactly how long it had been since the District had received enough money from the state that we did not have to budget with a revenue deficit. Mr. Metcalfe noted that ASD is the largest school district in the state and has a growing population. With reports of record increases in education funding and with a record surplus, Mr. Metcalfe is concerned about why ASD has to operate with a deficit. He expressed his hope that the Legislature will come up with a plan to increase the amount of education funding proposed by the Governor because it is not possible to offer the kind of education our students need while operating at deficit levels.

Ms. Comeau agreed with Mr. Metcalfe and expressed her desire that the Legislature find a way to level the playing field and put a cost of living factor into the per student allocation. There is no question that, in order to attract and retain a high quality work force we need significant increases in education funding. Members of the Board and the Administration will be spending significant time working with the Legislature to address these

issues. Ms. Comeau explained the importance of also getting parents and employees involved in really educating the Legislature about why we need a significant and sustainable increase built into the formula.

Mr. Metcalfe requested an explanation regarding PERS/TRS contributions, which are at record high levels and continue to rise. Ms. Comeau explained that the money going to PERS/TRS is a fixed cost and the amount is mandated by the state retirement board and goes directly into the retirement system. Mr. Metcalfe made the point that the District is being forced to make up for shortfalls in the retirement system that arose from decisions made at the state level. The District and the students are being forced to bear the burden for these decisions.

Mr. Steele noted his concern that this is the first year that he can remember that we don't have above the established 3-5% in the Undesignated Fund Balance which could be available to help balance the budget. Ms. Comeau reiterated the importance of maintaining the Fund Balance and only using it for one-time expenditures. It is essential that the money in the Fund Balance be protected so that it is available in case of emergencies.

Mr. Steiner engaged the Board in a discussion regarding the complicated matter of the \$4.853 million impact that the State assessed property valuation for the Municipality will have on the District budget. Mr. Friedman explained that the amount the District is required to contribute is based on assessed value which goes up with the economy, whereas our local tax cap is based on dollars collected the year before, which rises much slower. This leads to a situation where the assessed values are far outstripping our ability to raise local taxes.

Mr. Steiner clarified the use of the term "deficit". He explained that, for our purposes, deficit refers to a shortfall in the revenue in order to pay for the same things that we paid for the year before. It does not indicate deficit spending, which refers to paying out more than we bring in. The District has a balanced budget, but in order to reach that balance cuts have had to be made in services and programs.

Mr. Steiner noted that the facility use fees are under review. He questioned whether, based on approval of this memo, revenue from possible increases in these fees could be used in the budget. Ms. Comeau explained that she would prefer to bring any recommendations for fee increases back to the Board at a later date. She anticipates

recommendations for significant increases and believes that it will be important to have a separate discussion on that issue.

Mr. Steiner questioned whether this budget will allow us to make any progress in our efforts to improve in the quality of the food choices available. Ms. Comeau explained that the District is developing a Wellness Policy as is required under NCLB and the new Student Nutrition Act. In addition, several staff members are serving on the Mayor's Task Force on Obesity. She anticipates recommendations from each of these groups on what the District should be doing with our food choices. She also noted that the schools are aware that changes are going to need to be made in terms of what is available in vending machines. At some point, if changes result in a decrease in revenue from vending machines, the Administration may have to adjust activities fees to pay for some of the activities that vending machine revenues are currently paying for, but we are not to that point yet.

Ms. Marks drew the Board's attention to the musical instrument fees and questioned whether there is a mechanism in place to deal with situations where students do not have the resources to get instruments. Ms. Comeau explained that the musical instrument fees ultimately get back to the music departments to offset repair and maintenance costs. They are in place, in part, to encourage a sense of responsibility in people who use District equipment. She noted that there are options in place, such as PTAs and other parent organizations, which assist when parents can not afford that expense.

Ms. Marks also questioned whether we are looking at student parking fees. Ms. Comeau explained that student parking fees are looked at every year, but it has been found that when the fees are too high the students park in the streets which can lead to complaints from neighborhood communities.

Ms. Kennedy addressed the issue of possible price increases mentioned in the Food Service Fund, urging caution when setting the price of certain food choices. She indicated that students are pretty savvy about what they get for their money, noting that some would rather make healthy selections but often purchase less desirable choices because they get more food for their money. Ms. Comeau indicated that those issues will be taken into account as food prices are established.

Mr. Steele noted that the memo indicates the use of \$380,500 from the Undesignated Fund Balance is recommended to support the Food Service

budget and questioned what these funds would be used for. Ms. Comeau explained that the money in question is part of the Food Service Fund Balance and would be used to support the Food Service budget in a number of ways which will be detailed when the budget is presented in January.

Mr. Roberts indicated that he had wondered whether improving the quality of food choices would decrease the quantity of revenue, but at a meeting he attended last week the CocaCola vendor indicated that replacing sodas with water in the school vending machines had not changed revenues. Ms. Comeau agreed that, if we do a good job in choosing quality foods to put in the vending machines and setting a reasonable price, then our students will continue to purchase the items available.

Mr. Metcalfe shared some information he had regarding federal tax cuts to high income taxpayers and how those cuts will result in decreased numbers of people qualifying for the food stamp program, subsequently decreasing the number of students who will qualify for free and reduced lunches. He questioned how our budget would be impacted by a decrease in the number of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. Ms. Comeau reported that the Administration is monitoring federal legislative activities due to the critical nature current activities have on education funding. She agreed that cuts to the food stamp program would indeed impact our Food Service budget and that we will have to adjust to whatever revenue we receive. She further explained that we will continue to monitor the situation and advocate for those critical programs.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 121 - Discipline of School Board Member

It is recommended that the School Board appreciate and accept Board Member Mary Marks' apology although regretting the actions that led up to it.

ACTION:

Moved by: Tim Steele  
seconded by: Macon Roberts

that the School Board, while strongly disapproving of her actions, acknowledge and accept Board Member Mary Marks' apology for her lack of judgment by driving under the influence of alcohol.

Mr. Friedman asked that the Board agree that, due to a conflict of interest, Ms. Marks be asked to abstain from the vote on this matter. There was no objection to this request.

Mr. Steiner commented that this motion states strong disapproval of Ms. Marks' actions and accepts her apology. He noted that Ms. Marks' statement early in the meeting indicated that she more than disapproves of her actions, she has acknowledged her error in judgment and has accepted the consequences of those choices. He noted that she addressed herself to students, recognizing the importance of the example we set for them. The issue of driving under the influence is a public safety issue and Mr. Steiner appreciated that Ms. Marks acknowledged that she made a very poor choice and has accepted both the personal and public consequences of that choice.

Mr. Dan Loring addressed the Board reminding them that he had spoken on this subject at a recent meeting. At that time he had asked the Board to support Ms. Marks, rather than to seek her removal from the Board. He added that, while he does not wish to have Ms. Marks removed from the Board, he feels that a public apology does not go far enough. He believes that some type of discipline is in order, just as students who violate alcohol policy go through a suspension or expulsion process. He suggested discipline which would provide long-term benefits, such as assessment and evaluation, followed by counseling if deemed necessary. Mr. Loring noted that there is currently no policy addressing the situation of Board members convicted of misdemeanor offenses, pointing out the need to develop a policy to deal with this issue in order to be publicly accountable to both our students and the citizenry of Anchorage. In light of the current situation, he encouraged the Board to accept Ms. Marks' apology on behalf of the citizens of Anchorage and the students in the District, and in addition require an assessment and possibly counseling.

Mr. Roberts remarked that he believes that Ms. Marks has suffered enough and that she has learned her lesson and has paid the ultimate

price for her lapse in judgment. He believes that the Board should accept her apology, noting that she is a valuable member of this Board. He has the utmost confidence that she will do the right thing both for herself as a public servant and as a private citizen. He does not believe that it will serve any good purpose to force any particular course of action on her. He applauded the actions she has already taken in light of this situation and voiced his confidence in her ability to move forward.

Mr. Metcalfe noted that no one condones Ms. Marks' behavior and there were certainly negative consequences resulting from that behavior both to Ms. Marks and to the District. Speaking from his experience as a prosecutor, he noted that compliance with court orders is a significant indication as to an individual's successful rehabilitation. He explained that Ms. Marks had immediately acknowledged her actions and accepted the punishment. In his experience Mr. Metcalfe has found that people who respond in that way are the least likely to re-offend. Mr. Metcalf noted that the community condemnation is more extreme in this case than in most DUI offenses. He is confident that all of those factors will go a long way toward her rehabilitation. He believes that this memorandum is sufficient action by the Board and he will be supporting it.

Mr. Steiner noted that some people in the community suggested that the Board should remove Ms. Marks from her position. He explained that the Board does not have that authority even if there was a desire to do so, which there is not. He wished to make the community aware that Ms. Marks, who has been on the Board of the Alaska Association of School Boards (AASB), has voluntarily declined to run for that position again, believing that, due to this current issue, she would not be as effective for that organization which reflects her recognition of the seriousness of the issue. Mr. Steele added that Ms. Marks was in line for President of that organization so it was a difficult decision for her to step down. He noted that this is a personal issue which rises to the public level because of Ms. Marks' position as an elected School Board member and a community role model. He suggested that we use this lesson as an opportunity to talk to our children about how substances, both legal and illegal, can affect our driving ability.

VOTE:

Ayes: Kennedy, Steele,  
Friedman, Steiner,  
Metcalf, Roberts

Nays: None  
Abstain: Marks  
MOTION PASSED

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. ASD Memorandum # 103 - Project Status Report

This is a report of activities and project status changes in Major Capital Projects during the period of October 14, 2005 through November 1, 2005.

2. ASD Memorandum # 118 - Student Membership Projections for September 30, 2006

The attached document presents the fall forecast for the September 30, 2006 Anchorage School District student membership. Table I compares the projections for September 30, 2006, by program, with the actual totals for September 30, 2005.

3. ASD Memorandum # 89 - Evaluation of 2004-2005 Six-Year Instructional Plan

The Anchorage School Board adopted the Six-Year Instructional Plan at their meeting on May 10, 2004, and four additional department plans were added in 2005. One of the additions is devoted to cultural responsiveness, which will assist in addressing the new Board goal on diversity. Each of the plans is evaluated and presented to the Board for approval.

Ms. Comeau indicated her hopes that the Board had taken the time to review this evaluation. She was impressed with both the quality of the work and the significant progress made in moving the Six-Year Plan forward under significant budget constraints and a whole range of changing demographics and other challenges. There is a lot of information presented here which, combined with the Profile of Performance, allows us to identify ways in which we have focused energy on student achievement. She noted that, following last year's Profile of Performance, she initiated a full K-12 review of the entire math curriculum and training. This thorough and methodical review of the entire math program explains, in part, the reason that we do not see as much progress as we had hoped in the area of mathematics. She

applauded the efforts of the entire Instructional Division for the work they have done on the Six-Year Plan.

Ms. Christensen voiced her pleasure at being able to present the evaluation of the second year of the Six-Year Plan. Notations are included as to whether objectives were met, partially met or not met and rationale provided for any shortcomings. Representatives are here from the various divisions to respond to questions. She noted that this same group will be meeting tomorrow to begin work on revisions to this plan which will be presented to the Board in December.

Dr. Hunter explained that each time the document is revisited more and more connections are made between programs and departments. This serves to streamline the whole process, to enhance it, as people realize that they can accomplish much more together than they can apart. She noted that this is the only document that she has seen that is truly organic, meaning that it is constantly changing and moving and truly doing what a strategic plan is meant to do.

Ms. Kennedy expressed appreciation for how this document brings together our plans, our goals and its' ability to change as circumstances change. She particularly likes how the document has sparked conversation about why we are doing what we are doing and what we going to do with what we are doing. Ms. Kennedy requested information from the panel as to what kind of things are being looked at to improve the plan, what needs to be added and what needs to be removed. Ms. Christensen noted that the revisions coming forward in December will indicate what changes the panel would like see, either because objectives have been met or because what we have is not the appropriate remediation strategy for the objective we are trying to reach.

Dr. Hunter gave an example from the Curriculum Plan where a committee was convened to examine cultural responsive concerns. That committee was able to use the Six-Year Plan document to stay on track and, ultimately develop the Culturally Responsive Six-Year Plan, which wasn't even on the horizon when the original plan was written. The same thing happened with the Houghton-Mifflin adoption. The key is to not throw out things but to keep a perspective on them so that new things can come in that will make the program better. Rather than throwing out items that don't appear to be working people are adjusting and learning, not eliminating. Ms. Comeau added that it is very important, in particular, that the panel identify areas that need to

continue but have a lack of resources. These items need to become part of our budgetary discussions and part of our discussion with the Legislature as to why we need additional funding. It is clear that there are some things in this plan that are very important but we do not have the resources to accomplish. Those items need to be identified and prioritized as we go through this process.

Mr. Steele indicated that this is a fantastic document and just what we wanted it to be, a document that guides where we go and how we go. It brings all the elements and components together so that we don't waste time, money or resources. Upon review of the plan, Mr. Steele was impressed that we met many of our objectives. There are a few measures, such as what we found when we went through our goals, which probably need to be looked at in terms of whether they are appropriate or perhaps too ambitious. He added his belief that this is a first rate plan and his appreciation for all of the work that has gone into its' development. Ms. Kennedy added that the Six-Year Plan is a valuable tool when talking to Legislators.

Ms. Marks noted that the first goal in the Six-Year Plan is to increase achievement for all students and to reduce the achievement gap. She voiced her belief that technology would enhance those efforts and help students who are struggling, students we are having difficulty reaching. She indicated that she has spoken with Mr. Sjolander regarding how we can use technology with our Special Education students and how technology can support our goal of creating an effective learning environment. This is an area that she would to see discussed further at a future work session.

Mr. Metcalfe indicated that the Six-Year Plan is a nice guide to being accountable. It serves as another example of the Anchorage School District filling the leadership vacuum he sees at the state level. He imagined the benefits that would result if there was a six-year fiscal plan for education in place at higher levels of government and if state leaders would develop similar means of accountability.

Mr. Friedman noted the usefulness of reviewing the document. It serves as a concrete example of our progress and our plans for improvement. He indicated his desire that proposed revisions be made not from the point of view of what can be achieved in light of budget constraints, but rather to develop a plan and then find a way to budget for it. He noted that the budget is just a tool to meet our goals. Ms. Comeau agreed that she expects the objectives to be developed in

that way. If the objectives that were not met are determined to be important then they need to remain in the plan. We will then need to either find a way to get the funding or prioritize the objective over something else in the plan. If we feel an item is that critical then we need to find the funds to do it, and if it can't be done within our current budget we need to find a way to educate the public and the Legislature as to why we need those monies.

Ms. Kennedy questioned whether the plan will always look out six years, so that we add a year on every year or are we looking at this plan as having a definitive ending date. Ms. Christensen indicated that the time frame for the plan is an issue of ongoing debate. We are not prepared to add a year to the plan at the December meeting. At this time we are looking at simply revising what was original set forth. Ms. Kennedy noted that with our Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan we add a year every year in order to always have a set view of future plans. She believed that the same process should be looked at for this plan. She hoped that this would become a format that could be used and adjusted year-to-year.

Mr. Roberts questioned whether information reported could be quantified and graphed to show cumulative progress over the years. Ms. Christensen indicated that such reporting could probably be done but that it would need to be looked at as a task/time issue.

Mr. Steiner indicated that one of the things that we have not yet accomplished with this document but that we are moving toward is identifying whether particular initiatives result in accomplishing particular objectives. The diagnostic step of identifying which things are really making a difference is a key component. Ms. Christensen indicated that this issue being addressed somewhat in the program evaluation and by the extra position in Assessment. She noted, for example, that the math program is being looked at to try to identify which variables are making a difference and which are not. They have found, however, that it is a much more complicated process than anticipated. Dr. Hunter noted that some of these items are things that are theoretically never going to be met, such as "creating a community of learners." These are things that are almost timeless and perhaps a distinction should be made between those types of goals and ones that can be more specifically defined and quantified. Ms. Comeau noted that she had noticed that as the plan evolves those types of philosophical statements will need to be narrowed down to items that can be measured. She reiterated that we must start from a global

perspective and keep narrowing it down. She pointed out how far we have come since the audit three years ago.

Ms. Marks identified objectives from Indian Education which had not been met and questioned what plan of action had been developed to address these issues. Ms. Doreen Brown, Supervisor of Indian Education, explained what the focus has been this year and reported that each of these items will be addressed in the revisions. In light of the graduation rate results, Ms. Brown reported that individual students who had not passed HSGQE last year were identified in order to begin making accommodations and plans for this year. Indian Education staff then went to schools even before registration to make sure that those students were appropriately placed to provide the best assistance in attaining the skills needed to pass the HSGQE exam. Tutoring opportunities were also set up in cooperation with high school staff and administration to assist students in meeting that goal. In response to an additional question from Ms. Marks, Ms. Brown indicated that the PLATO program is being used as a tool to assist these students.

Ms. Comeau noted that Indian Education has to work closely within the context of the schools they are in and that efforts must start in the lower grades in order to reach our goals for successful completion of the HSGQE and graduation. The new Native Advisory Committee has some good ideas and is working very well with the Administration. She emphasized that, as with other similar programs such as Bilingual and Migrant, these programs will not ever be able to be the only factor in student success. While they are an important factor, they cannot operate in isolation in order to be successful in our high schools. Ms. Brown explained that she views Indian Education staff in the high schools to be points of contact, helping to address the needs of the students by coordinating all available resources.

On the issue of parent involvement, Ms. Marks questioned whether plans have been made to implement or re-evaluate the evening programs at North Star Elementary. Ms. Brown explained some of the activities being planned as a result of feedback from students and parents. She noted that the goal was not met because it was initially indicated that the program would be run at two sites and was only able to be accomplished at one. She explained that changes in the program were a result of funding issues.

Mr. Steiner requested clarification on the numbers of Alaska Natives reported as having passed the HSGQE. It was clarified that the reported number is indicative only of those students who were on track for graduation. Mr. Steiner expressed his concern that reporting the number without indicating that it pertains only to a sub-group of a given student population is misleading. The goal was written to encompass all students who are eligible for the Indian Education Program and to state the results without qualification is not accurate. Even though the results might be relevant, they need to be reported in the context of the larger picture. He has a similar concern with the way the total number of seniors who have passed the HSGQE is reported, without indication that the percentage is based on only those students who are on track to graduate.

Mr. Friedman expressed that he had thought that a year would be added to the Six-Year Plan each year so that it would always project out six years. Even if that can not be accomplished this year, he would like to see the plan get back on track to be set up that way in the future.

4. ASD Memorandum # 83 - Class Size Report 2005-2006

This report for the 2005-2006 school year is divided into the following categories: Elementary Education, Middle School Education, High School Education, Special Education, Bilingual Education, and Charter Schools. In addition, the Administration has compiled information on class sizes in the alternative programs and the student-to-counselor ratio at the eight major high schools.

Ms. Comeau reported that, overall, the class sizes look very good. As the Board reviewed the data she noted that Charter Schools have total control over how they do their staffing allocations.

Mr. Steele commented that he is pleased to find that teacher assistants have been added to those classrooms with more than 30 students. He indicated that we appear to be doing a good job of trying to balance the classrooms.

Mr. Steiner reviewed a discussion from a recent meeting regarding the relevance of class size and peak thresholds. He is interested in hearing how we deal with larger classes and whether efforts are being made to avoid larger classes in schools where student achievement is the neediest. Ms. McRae explained that, in some cases, it is a building decision to leave class sizes larger noting that combination classes

could be created to alleviate larger class sizes. She pointed out that class sizes reduction positions have greatly lower class sizes in kindergarten and first grade. Ms. Comeau added that, in her experience as a sixth grade teacher, the dynamics within the group of students had much more impact on the classroom environment than the actual number of students.

There were no comments or questions for Middle School.

Mr. Steiner questioned the number of counselors assigned to the high schools. He noted that having a relationship with a counselor could be very beneficial in keeping students on track for graduation and he wondered how effectively counselors can develop that kind of personal relationship when they are working with such a large student population. Mr. Henry explained that all of our high schools are working on ways to connect to individual students. Certainly the counselors are limited in what they can accomplish on a day-to-day basis by their case loads. The majority of their time is spent scheduling students and working on four-year plans. Mr. Henry indicated that the time counselors have available for individual students will never be enough but he believes, as we list our priorities, we are doing very well with the personnel we have. Ms. Comeau noted that, in terms of numbers, these are the best we have seen in a very long time. Mr. Henry also noted that having the assistance of Bilingual, Indian Education, and CITC counselors has been very helpful in reducing case loads.

Mr. Steele voiced his concern in terms of the growth rate in Special Education, noting that the number of Special Education students in preschool has doubled in that past two years. He wondered whether the District is getting adequate funding for these students. Mr. Sjolander noted that one of our challenges is that we do not receive funding for children who turn three after the count date until the next school year, and this amounts to a significant number of students. He explained that we have worked to streamline our screening process and our assessment processes in order to insure that students do not sit on a waiting list for assessment and for entering services. As we have moved our services out into the community through itinerant teachers working in the private day care programs we have been able to identify more students, although we still have some students entering kindergarten who have not been previously identified. Ms. Comeau added that the funding is not sufficient. Mr. Sjolander indicated that Federal Funding accounts for about 14.3% of our actual

expenditures. Mr. Steele reiterated that this 14.3% is nowhere close to the 40% promised by the federal government. Mr. Steele hoped that we have information which shows that early intervention is saving students and really making an impact in the long run. While he intuitively believes that is true he would like to see supporting data to that effect.

Ms. Comeau explained the significance of the increase in higher needs students coming into the system. The service intensity for these students is much higher and recruiting, training and retaining staff for this population is getting increasing problematic. This is a very large issue which we will be addressing again at the work session scheduled for November 21<sup>st</sup>.

In light of the Bilingual Program, Ms. Comeau reported that we now have ninety-four (94) different languages represented in the District. Mr. Steele questioned what plans we have for housing our Newcomers Center. Ms. Comeau indicated that, while we do not have a plan at this time, we recognize that this is a wonderful program with growing numbers and that the issue of space constraints needs to be addressed.

There were no questions or comments regarding Charter Schools.

5. ASD Memorandum # 120 - Status Report: Submission of Discretionary Grants, First Quarter 2005-2006 School Year

The purpose of this report is to inform the School Board on a quarterly basis of new grants that have been submitted for funding.

I. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

J. COMMUNICATIONS & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. Comeau requested that any questions regarding Special Education for the upcoming work session be written and forwarded to Mr. Sjolander by tomorrow, November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Kennedy reported that the Wellness Committee is hard at work on the policies that will be coming to the Board for approval in couple of months. She indicated that she believes the District plan will play a major part in the direction taken by the Municipal Task Force on this issue.

Mr. Roberts shared that he had attended that Healthy Futures Initiative celebration at the Captain Cook and congratulated Mr. Damon Carey for being named the Alaska State Physical Education Teacher of the Year.

Mr. Roberts also attended the AWAIC (Abused Women Aid in Crisis) fundraiser. He noted that the issue of abuse against women, which Alaska sadly holds the highest rate in the nation, also impacts children and their ability to learn. He applauded the companies and individuals who support the efforts of this organization.

Mr. Steele noted that he had attended the West High versus South High Volleyball championship. He reported a packed house and wonderful display of athletic ability. He congratulated South High School on their victory.

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION - PERSONNEL/FINANCE/NEGOTIATIONS  
LITIGATION

L. ADJOURNMENT

The Regular Meeting of November 14, 2005, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:46 p.m.

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Jeff Friedman, President

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John Steiner, Clerk

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Johanna Lee, Recording Secretary

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Date Minutes Approved