

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 10, 2006

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, April 10, 2006, 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: John Steiner, Crystal Kennedy, Jeff Friedman, and Jake Metcalfe. Macon Roberts and Tim Steele joined the meeting via telephone.

Board Members Excused: Mary Marks

Others Present: Jan Christensen, Leslie Vandergaw, Mike Henry, Patricia McRae, Enid Silverstein, Jerry Sjolander, Jeff Wood, Eric Tollefsen, Michelle Egan, Janet Stokesbary, George Vakalis, LTC David Jones, William Johnson, Ray Amsden, Pam Chenier, Steve Kalmas, Stan Syta, Jim Utter, Rhonda Gardner, Johanna Lee, the press, and other interested people.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Steiner noted that the Personnel Report has been revised. Ms. Comeau noted that revisions have also been made to the Goldenview Recognition memo.

The agenda was unanimously approved with the noted memoranda revisions.

C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

D. AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

The Goldenview Middle School Choir, under the direction of Mr. Sam Struempfer, performed several numbers for the entertainment of the Board and other members of the audience.

ASD Memorandum #204 – Recognition for Goldenview Student Research

Ms. Comeau explained that former Goldenview students, now high school students, are being recognized for their Project Citizen project on revising the school calendar.

Ms. Kennedy read the memorandum which explained that on May 9, 2005, the Anchorage School Board adopted a change to the school calendar. The change created an earlier start and earlier end to the school year. Countless hours of research and public outreach were conducted to gather information about the impact the calendar change would pose to students, staff and community members. Some of this research was also conducted by a group of nine Goldenview Middle School students as part of an assignment called Project Citizen. The group presented their findings to Goldenview's PTSA, Mayor Mark Begich and the School Board, who ultimately approved the same recommendation made by Goldenview students. The dedicated work of these students is featured in a national publication. The company Holt, Rinehart and Winston used the students' project on a feature page of their new 2007 publication of the textbook Civic Engagement.

It is requested that the School Board recognize the following students for their outstanding academic achievements and civic service to the community: Kathryn Anderson, Andrew Dougherty, Bryce Eckroth, Amanda Francis, Lauren Hess, Rachel Markwood, Molly Solmonson, Stephen Thornquist and Caitlin Van Nostrand. The students received guidance from teachers Pam Collins and Diana Daniels. The School Board recognized these students and their teachers for their outstanding academic achievement and civic service to the community.

Ms. Marie Renicamp, of Holt, Rinehart and Winston publishing company, explained that by having their research published in a textbook, these students have left a legacy that will be in the hands of students across the United States for years to come. She thanked the students and their teachers for making a difference in policy, in government and for taking their civic responsibility seriously. The publishing company presented each student a framed copy of their page of the textbook, a copy of the publication and a special letter for their portfolios. Rachel Markwood thanked their entire eighth grade social studies class who had worked on the project and participated in the process. They are pleased that their work was published and hoped that it would encourage other students to

get involved and be excited about the impact they can make in their local communities.

Mr. Friedman reminded the audience that when this group presented last year there was a gentleman in the audience who had planned to speak against the calendar change. After listening to the presentation, he was impressed enough by the information to change his stand on the issue and testified in favor of it.

Mr. Steiner commented that there was another controversial issue about school boundary changes before the Board. He recognized that these students took just such a controversial issue and were not afraid to tackle it, do the research and step out with confidence to make a recommendation to the Board.

ASD Memorandum #241 – Recognition of 2006 Student Library Bookmark Winners

Mr. Metcalfe presented the winners of the 2006 Student Library Bookmark award. He noted that each year Anchorage school librarians organize a publicity campaign for the District as part of an effort to remind the public about the vital and unique role of the school library using the American Library Association's @your library™ national campaign. The annual campaign includes a bookmark design contest for all students in grades K-12. The contest invites students to use their imaginations and any ideas that relate to reading, literacy, the love of the library and the current year's selected theme. The winning designs for the bookmarks have are reproduced and distributed to District schools during National Library Week.

The Board recognized this year's winners of the library bookmark design contest: Carina Welker, O'Malley Elementary School, Shawnee Wackerman, Chugiak Elementary School, Monique Del Rosario, Clark Middle School, and Kyle Hoffer, East High School.

ASD Memorandum #243 – Recognition of Presidential Scholar Candidates

Mr. Steiner presented the candidates for the Presidential Scholars Award. He explained that the United States Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964 to recognize and honor some of our nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. Presidential Scholar

candidates are selected on the basis of broad academic achievement as well as leadership, character and commitment to high ideals. The competition for candidates is fierce and the prestige associated with this honor is unparalleled. The Anchorage School District is proud to be home to 23 candidates this year.

The School Board recognized the following students for their hard work and dedication that led them to become Presidential Scholar candidates: Heather Benz of East High, Jennifer Blankenship of Dimond High, Christine Dawson of South Anchorage High, Brendon Eby of Polaris K-12, Jean Falconer of Service High, Daniel Gillespie of Service High, Samuel Gottstein of Service High, Alexandra Lagasse of South Anchorage High, Katherine Lindsey of Dimond High, Scott Mahar of Dimond High, Molly McDermott of Service High, Ian Petersen of West High, Olivia Putman of Dimond High, Benn Schlapia of South Anchorage High, John Swanson of West High, Timothy Treuer of West High, Kristopher Katkus of Chugiak High, Matthew Smith of Chugiak High, Lindsay Benolkin of Chugiak High, Ben Martinson of Chugiak High, Devin Preston of West High, Allison Strom of Chugiak High, and Ryan Hammel of South Anchorage High.

Mr. Steiner extended the Board's best wishes and good luck in the final competition for the Presidential Scholar's Award.

ASD Memorandum #255 – Recognition of Alaska Middle School Principal of the Year

Ms. Kennedy explained that Sherry Ellers, principal at Hanshew Middle School has been recognized for her outstanding school leadership and success in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students by the Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals (AASSP) who recently named her the 2006 Alaska Middle School Principal of the Year. Ms. Ellers is now eligible for the National Middle School Principal of the Year award which will be presented in February 2007.

Ms. Ellers is an expert in reading instruction and has created innovative reading support elective programs at Hanshew which have dramatically improved student test scores. In addition, she was the key instructional leader in the creation of the District's current middle school summer school model.

The School Board recognized Sherry Ellers for her well deserved selection as the 2006 Alaska Middle School Principal of the Year, noting that she is a credit to her profession, this community and the Anchorage School District.

E. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

1. Student Advisory Board

In Mr. Feriani's absence, Ms. Comeau announced that the next meeting of the Student Advisory Board will be held on April 17, 2006 at 11:30 a.m. at King Career Center.

Ms. Comeau reported that Mr. Feriani has just been appointed to be a summer intern for Senator Ted Stevens.

2. Military Delegate

LTC Jones congratulated Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Roberts and Mr. Freidman on their recent reelection to the Anchorage School Board. He reported that he had recently been privileged to attend the annual JROTC Awards Banquet and commented that he is impressed with the outstanding students in the JROTC program throughout the District.

LTC Jones noted that the military is publicizing the upcoming Parent Teacher Conferences and encouraging commanders to allow their service members time to participate in those conferences.

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

Mr. Johnson reported that the MECAC will hold their next business meeting on April 20<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm in Room 320 of the Administration Building. The public is always welcome to attend.

Mr. Johnson also extended his congratulations to the newly reelected Board members.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Todd Torczon addressed the Board on the issue of improving the school boundary change process. He explained that his proposal strives

to create a positive environment around boundary changes, one in which a process based on clear logic and choice avoids the sense of winners and losers that he feels persists today. He contends that this process reduces cost and puts students in the best learning environment. The community should perceive this process as clear and fair, particularly as students would have the opportunity to finish at their current school. His recommendation includes allowing zone exemptions for students moved out of their school by a boundary change; proactively making boundary changes to avoid serious overcrowding; fully utilizing all District facilities before building more schools or setting portables; use building capacity instead of current enrollment to set boundaries; and use consistently aligned feeder schools through the three levels, limiting the need boundary changes to the elementary level.

Mr. Steele and Mr. Roberts joined the meeting via telephone. Mr. Friedman explained that Board action on the proposed boundary changes had been postponed to allow additional public hearings, causing a conflict with pre-arranged travel plans for three board members. In addition to joining the meeting by phone, all three members will be provided video of the meeting to review prior to the next meeting.

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 January 9, 2006 6:30 p.m.
- b. Special Meeting February 27, 2006 4:30 p.m.
- c. Special Meeting March 6, 2006 4:30 p.m.

2. ASD Memorandum # 240 - Resolution in Support of Administrative Professionals Day

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt the attached resolution designating April 26, 2006 as Administrative Professionals Day in the Anchorage School District.

3. ASD Memorandum # 252 - Adoption of Tentative Agreement: Bus Drivers and Attendants Unit, General Teamsters Local #959, 2006-2009

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and adopt the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the District and General Teamsters Local #959, which will establish terms and conditions of employment for Bus Drivers and Attendants during the period between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2009.

4. ASD Memorandum # 218 - Middle School Boundary Changes (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading the following middle school attendance boundaries for the 2007-2008 school year for the Anchorage and Eagle River areas as shown in Scenario 1 on Attachment A.

5. ASD Memorandum # 219 - Boundary Changes for Airport Heights, Mountain View, Ptarmigan, Russian Jack, William Tyson, Williwaw, and Wonder Park Elementary Schools (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading the following attendance boundaries for the 2006-2007 school year for Airport Heights, Mountain View, Ptarmigan, Russian Jack, William Tyson, Williwaw, and Wonder Park Elementary Schools as shown on Attachment A.

6. ASD Memorandum # 220 - Boundary Changes for Bear Valley, Willard L. Bowman, Huffman, O'Malley, and Rabbit Creek Elementary Schools (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading the following attendance boundaries for the 2006-2007 school year for Bear Valley, Willard L. Bowman, Huffman, O'Malley, and Rabbit Creek elementary schools (shown as Attachment A).

7. ASD Memorandum # 229 - School Board Policy Revisions: Section 349 - Evaluation (Second Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt on Second Reading the recommended policy changes for School Board Policy 349, Assessment & Program Evaluation.

8. ASD Memorandum # 230 - School Board Policy Revisions: Section 722.2 - Budget Contents (Second Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt on Second Reading the recommended policy changes for School Board Policy 722.2 Budget Contents.

9. ASD Memorandum # 239 - Prior Approval of Grant Award: Title VI-B Individuals with Disabilities Education Entitlement and Pre-School Disabled Incentive

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to submit the Title VI-B Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Entitlement Grant and the Preschool Disabled Incentive Grant for FY 2006-2007. Based on the attached budgets, the total amount for both grants combined is \$10,286,903.

10. ASD Memorandum # 233 - Prior Approval of Grant Award: Alaska State School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept the Department of Education contract for the instructional support component of the Alaska State School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Funds in the amount of \$319,000 will be used to include supervisor, administrative assistant, counselor, psychologist, interpreter coordinator, and travel for parents of the students to come to Anchorage for IEP meetings.

11. ASD Memorandum # 256 - Prior Approval of Discretionary Grant: Carol M. White Physical Education Program

It is the Administration's recommendation that the Anchorage School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to apply for a grant from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools' Carol M. White Physical Education Program.

12. ASD Memorandum # 231 - Acceptance of Grant Award: Alaska Community Foundation MicroSociety at Eagle River Elementary School

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a grant from the Alaska Community Foundation for \$5,000 for Eagle River Elementary

School. Funds will support the implementation of the MicroSociety program at Eagle River Elementary School.

13. ASD Memorandum # 244 - Amendment to Boniface Lease

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to amend the lease with Boniface Mall, LLC in the added amount of \$661,654 for an annual lease cost not to exceed \$1,799,464 to incorporate the current tenants at the District's leased 4600 DeBarr Road location; exercise the first renewal option; and to transfer \$95,242 from Custodial Services, Salaries and Benefits; Maintenance Contracted Services - Grounds; and Non-Departmental Unallocated Adjustment accounts to the Non-Departmental Rental - Land and Buildings account.

14. ASD Memorandum # 248 - Approval Educational Specifications for Clark Middle School Renewal

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the Educational Specifications for the Clark Middle School Renewal Project.

15. ASD Memorandum # 237 - Personnel Report

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

Mr. Steiner noted that there are speakers signed up for the Boundary Change Memoranda #218, #219, and #220. In addition, Mr. Steiner requested that Memorandum #248, Approval of the Educational Specifications for Clark Middle School Renewal, be pulled for discussion.

Ms. Kennedy requested that Memorandum #230, School Board Policy Revisions: Section 722.2 Budget Contests (Second Reading) and Memorandum #244, Amendment to Boniface Lease, be pulled for discussion.

Mr. Roberts requested that Memorandum #252, Adoption of Tentative Agreement: Bus Drivers and Attendants Unit, General Teamsters Local #959, 2006-2009, be pulled for discussion.

ACTION:

Moved by: Crystal Kennedy  
Seconded by: John Steiner

To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 9, 2006, the Special Meeting of February 27, 2006, the Special Meeting of March 6, 2006, and ASD Memoranda #240, #229, #239, #233, #256, #231, and #237 (as revised).

The Resolution in Support of Administrative Professionals Day was read by the members present in honor of administrative professional across the Anchorage School District.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Marks

MOTION PASSED

Ms. Comeau introduced the newly appointed Principal for West High School, Mr. Rick Stone. Mr. Stone is currently the Assistant Principal at Bartlett High School.

ASD Memorandum # 252 - Adoption of Tentative Agreement: Bus Drivers and Attendants Unit, General Teamsters Local #959, 2006-2009

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and adopt the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the District and General Teamsters Local #959, which will establish terms and conditions of employment for Bus Drivers and Attendants during the period between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2009.

ACTION:

Moved by: Jake Metcalfe  
seconded by: Crystal Kennedy

To approve ASD Memorandum #252, Adoption of Tentative Agreement: Bus Drivers and Attendants Unit, General Teamsters Local #959, 2006-2009.

Mr. Roberts expressed his appreciation to bargaining team members for both the District and Local #959. He also expressed his appreciation for the bus drivers and the attendants for their efforts to insure safe travel for District students.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Marks

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 218 - Middle School Boundary Changes (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading the following middle school attendance boundaries for the 2007-2008 school year for the Anchorage and Eagle River areas as shown in Scenario 1 on Attachment A.

ACTION:

Moved by: Mr. Steiner  
seconded by: Ms. Kennedy

To adopt the Administration's recommendation and approve, on first reading, the middle school attendance boundaries for the 2007-2008 school year for the Anchorage and Eagle River areas as shown in Scenario 1 on Attachment A and detailed in Memorandum #218. With no objections, reading of the full text was waived.

Mr. Friedman explained that there are two readings for any action on boundary changes. This will be the first reading and the first opportunity for the Board to listen to comments on the recommendations. Board members will have the opportunity to review the proposals in light of public comment and to make amendments before making final decisions on the proposals at the second reading.

Ms. Comeau commented that she recognized that this is an emotional issue. She thanked the members of the task force, the administration, the staff, parents and, at the middle school level, students who have worked very hard on the process of developing these recommendations. She noted that this has been a very public process. There have been numerous public hearings and all of the emails on these recommendations have been compiled, distributed and reviewed by board members and the administration.

Ms. Karrie Rehe, a parent in the Ptarmigan Elementary attendance area, testified regarding her family's concern that her children will not go to the new middle school as they had anticipated. Throughout the planning stages the Ptarmigan community felt that, due to the location of the new middle school, there was no question but that they would attend the new school. Ptarmigan is within walking distance of the new middle school while Clark is three miles away from the Ptarmigan community. The Ptarmigan community is associated with the "Muldoon" not the "Mountain View" area so the new middle school is their neighborhood middle school. Ms. Rehe wanted to know why Ptarmigan was not placed within the boundaries for the new middle school in any of the possible scenarios.

Mr. Donald Seliger explained that during the initial planning phase Ptarmigan was mentioned as attending the new middle school. He noted that he had been deployed during the task force meetings. He also questioned why all of the scenarios exclude Ptarmigan from the attendance area for the new middle school. He noted that when he voted on the bonds he believed that Ptarmigan would be going to the new school and perceives the recommendation as a "bait and switch" tactic. He added that the increased fuel costs should be considered before deciding to bus students to another school when they are within walking distance of a school in their own neighborhood.

Mr. Steiner asked what the early discussion was regarding the inclusion of sixth graders in the new middle school during the beginning stages of planning for that school. Mr. Seliger explained that he recalled that the new middle school was to include sixth, seventh and eighth grades from the earliest meetings about building development, design, and location.

Ms. Karen McCoy, an Eagle River parent, explained that she had testified two years ago during the boundary discussions for Eagle River High School. Many of the same issues discussed at that time have once again come into play. Ms. McCoy highlighted her continued concern regarding the importance of students moving between elementary, middle and high

schools with their peers. While she was told that the Board and administration did not feel the issue would negatively impact students in Eagle River affected by the boundary changes, it has since become an important consideration and priority as the decision was made to move Ft. Richardson students to Gruening so that they can transition to ERHS with their peers. At a task force public hearing last year this discrepancy was noticed by countless parents in the area who then requested that, since their students would have to attend Chugiak High School, they should be allowed to attend Mirror Lake so that they, too, could transition with their peers. At one of the recent task force hearings she was surprised to find that the feasibility of this change had not even been discussed. Ms. McCoy indicated that the task forces are not being given all of the pertinent information needed to make their recommendations. She noted that is the only explanation for the fact that the current recommendation leaves Eagle River Elementary with only six (6) sixth graders in the school. She encouraged the Board to seek input from elementary principals and PTA boards on the impact these recommendations will have on their sixth grade curriculum. Ms. McCoy noted that when the public feels that they are treated equally and that their concerns are truly valued and addressed the School Board will be on a much better footing with the public on a wider range of issues. Mr. Steiner clarified with Ms. McCoy that her request is that the high school boundaries and the middle school boundaries are more closely aligned.

Ms. Grace Wilson, Ptarmigan PTA president, testified in support of the earlier comments from Ptarmigan parents. She noted that there is a feeling among the Ptarmigan community of having been deceived during the planning and bonding stages for the new middle school. The proposed boundary changes will break the connections built between children in the neighborhood. She also feels that the changes represent a safety issue as children are made to ride a bus for 15-20 minutes to Clark Middle School as opposed to walking two to three blocks to the new middle school. She strongly urged the Board to reconsider the proposal and to include Ptarmigan in the boundaries to attend the new middle school.

Mr. Todd Torczon explained that he had studied this proposal from the point of view of the factors being considered, one of which was building capacity. All of the scenarios that have been presented leave middle schools in south Anchorage over capacity. In addition, he highlighted his dissatisfaction with the feeder-school patterns noting that students in some elementary schools are split between several middle schools. Mr. Torczon also voiced concern regarding the issue of geographic proximity

noting that some students are being transported considerable distances while there are schools much closer to their homes.

Mr. Robert Melton, father of three Ptarmigan students, voiced his concern that the recommendations should take into account the population growth in the Mountain View area before deciding to bus students outside the area to Clark Middle School. It is his belief that Clark will be extremely overcrowded in the very near future. The Municipality has development plans in place for that area and they need to be looked at closely and taken into consideration before approving the proposed boundary changes.

Ms. Crystal Strager addressed the Board on the issue of peer transitions. She referenced the minutes of the February 7<sup>th</sup> Task Force meeting which state that focus should be placed on high school boundaries and make sure that middle schools feed into the appropriate high schools. That issue was not addressed or considered when looking at middle school boundaries in the Eagle River area. There are currently students at Homestead Elementary, and with the proposed changes there will also be students at Eagle River Elementary, who are separated from their peer group when they transition into middle school and will be separated from that middle school peer group and shifted back when they transition from middle school into high school. She has been forced to zone exempt her seventh-grader in order to avoid the extremely difficult transition that her high school freshman is currently experiencing. She strongly urged the board to re-evaluate the recommendation in light of these unresolved issues in the Eagle River area.

Ms. Jodi Melton, mother of three Ptarmigan students, voiced her concern with students from Ptarmigan having to separate from their elementary peers to go to Clark Middle School and then to have to separate from those middle school peers to reconnect with elementary peers to go to Bartlett High School. The majority of elementary students in the ASD are able to make lifelong friendships through thoughtful alignment between academic levels. Ptarmigan students are being denied this opportunity. Ms. Melton also testified that Ptarmigan was listed as a feeder school for the new middle school when the bond for the school was on the ballot.

Ms. Comeau explained that she had done some research today, on behalf of a board member, and found that none of the publications promised any of the elementary schools that they would be included in the boundaries for the new middle school. The District was also very clear that the school would be a sixth, seventh and eighth grade program when the bonds were presented to the voters.

Ms. Vandergaw acknowledged the members of the middle school task force. She explained that the number one cause for changing the boundaries was the building of the new middle school in the Muldoon area which is scheduled to open in August of 2007. After that, the task force was to look districtwide to see if there was a way to balance enrollment in the middle schools throughout the District. Finally, they were asked to look at the feasibility of moving sixth grade into other middle schools. The policy and guidelines that the task force considered included geographic proximity, neighbor and feeder school boundaries, school demographics, hazardous conditions, school building capacities, and appropriate program placement and needs.

Ms. Vandergaw explained that one of the variables that the task force looked at was aligning the middle school boundaries with the high school boundaries, although that could not be accomplished in every case. She highlighted the major changes proposed in Scenario One. While the task force was not able to accomplish everything that they had hoped in reference to school capacity, this recommendation will significantly improve overcrowding in several area schools.

Ms. Vandergaw explained that a great deal of information was taken into consideration when making the proposal for the boundary configuration for the new Muldoon middle school, including current elementary and middle school capacities and residential construction statistics received from the Municipality. The task force did not want to open the new middle school over capacity because of the new construction going on in the area. A number of computations were looked at in an effort to meet a target of 330 sixth, 330 seventh, and 330 eighth graders in the new middle school. The proposal before the Board provided the best fit. It also provides relief to the current overcrowding at two of the affected elementary schools by taking sixth-graders out of the schools. In addition, by including these same two schools in the new middle school boundaries some relief can be provided for the overcrowding at Wendler. A ripple effect is then seen carrying into the South Anchorage area. While this was not an easy decision, each one of the subcommittees came up with the same recommendation.

Ms. Comeau reiterated that any scenario that did not incorporate Susitna and Scenic Park elementary schools into the boundaries for the new middle school would result in continued overcrowding at those schools and the need to look at building a new elementary school in that area in the near future. At the same time Ptarmigan, Nunaka Valley and Baxter

are currently under capacity. Ms. Vandergaw explained that there was much discussion and a variety of options were looked at to try to include Ptarmigan within the boundaries for the new school because of the proximity of the two locations. She noted that taking the sixth graders out of Ptarmigan Elementary would drop their enrollment to approximately 67%. That action could not be justified when such significant impact could be made on the issue of overcrowding by including Susitna and Scenic Park in the boundaries.

Mr. Steele asked what impact the low number of sixth-graders remaining at Eagle River Elementary will have on the program there. Ms. Comeau explained that she had requested the delay in enacting the middle school boundary changes until fall 2007 in order to review some of these issues, including the one being discussed at Eagle River Elementary. She noted that as the administration processes through this issue they may present another recommendation for the Eagle River area.

Mr. Steiner questioned whether the Board can consider expanding the areas zoned into Mirror Lake at the seventh and eighth grade levels, with sixth grade remaining at the elementary level for some schools.

Ms. Comeau noted that anything can be explored. She explained that the issue in Eagle River is complicated by the fact that Eagle River High School has a capacity of only 800 students, and will remain at that level for quite some time, while Chugiak High is considerably larger. The demographics don't fit into a nice package. It is important that the issues raised by the speakers this evening and through several emails from the Eagle River area be thoroughly reviewed. While any option can be explored, she does not want to see any shift of sixth graders out of Mirror Lake Middle School.

Ms. Comeau explained that this is an interim recommendation for the Chugiak/Eagle River area until the elementary issues can be processed and addressed. Mr. Steiner asked whether the recommendation for the Chugiak/Eagle River area can be left out of this recommendation. Ms. Comeau stated that she would like for the Fort Richardson community to have some certainty that there is a commitment to move them to Gruening Middle School. She does not, however, have any problem with indicating that the Chugiak/Eagle River area portion of the recommendation is a tentative recommendation and making a public commitment to hold a series of meetings in that area over the next year to make sure that all available information is taken into consideration and that all concerns are addressed. Her recommendation is to move this forward on first reading

and to make very clear on second reading that issues in the Chugiak/Eagle River area would continue to be reviewed over the next few months with the possibility of another recommendation being brought forward.

Mr. Steiner questioned the decision to move sixth grade into the new Muldoon area middle school. That decision limits the ability to relieve overcrowding at other middle schools and uses up capacity in that school that could otherwise go to Ptarmigan students. He wondered what the implications would be if the shift of sixth-graders into the new middle school were postponed until Clark Middle School is also ready to take sixth-graders. Ms. Comeau reiterated that voters were told that the new middle school would be sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. In addition, this entire boundary change process would have to be started over if it were decided not to move sixth grade into the new middle school.

Mr. Metcalfe asked what the impact would be to the new middle school population if Ptarmigan is included in the boundaries. Ms. Vandergaw responded that it would add 202 additional students into the school. Ms. Ophelia Dargan-Steed noted that those numbers would put the new school over capacity.

In review, Ms. Vandergaw noted that the task force had looked at aligning the schools in the Chugiak/Eagle River area but all options discussed left one school significantly over capacity and another significantly under capacity. She also explained that both Romig and Clark middle schools will be renovated and that the renovations will in all likelihood have to take place while school is in session. In light of that, it was decided to keep those schools slightly under capacity to ease the impact of construction.

Mr. Friedman suggested that one of the board members may want to propose an amendment on second reading that would clarify that the boundary recommendation for the Chugiak/Eagle River area is a tentative recommendation. He also pointed out that a broad discussion about moving sixth-graders to Gruening Middle School could result in excess capacity in the elementary schools in that area. Part of that discussion may, unfortunately, move toward closing one of those elementary schools. It is a discussion that needs to take place but it is not going to be easy.

Following discussion, Ms. Kennedy moved to divide the question on the middle school boundary memorandum.

INTERIM MOTION:

Moved by: Ms. Kennedy  
seconded by: Mr. Steiner

To divide the action on Memorandum #218 such that the action on the proposed middle school boundary changes in the Anchorage Bowl, including the issue of moving the students from Ft. Richardson to Gruening Middle School, be considered one question and the proposed boundary changes in the Chugiak/Eagle River area be considered another question.

Mr. Metcalfe questioned the need to divide the motion. Ms. Kennedy explained that she felt the need to divide the question because of the issues that remain unresolved regarding the proposed boundary changes in the Chugiak/Eagle River area and the importance of establishing a commitment to thoroughly review the issues before approving any changes. Mr. Metcalfe questioned why those concerns could not be addressed in the intent of the main motion before the Board. Mr. Friedman indicated that dividing the question would simplify future action on the portion of the memorandum dealing with boundary changes in the bowl area.

VOTE on INTERIM MOTION TO DIVIDE THE QUESTION

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

Nays: None

Absent: Marks

MOTION PASSED

Mr. Friedman called for the question on the proposed changes to the middle school boundaries in the Chugiak/Eagle River area, specifically the dividing line between Gruening Middle School and Mirror Lake Middle School.

Mr. Steiner disclosed that he is part of a development entity developing some property in the Eagle River area. The property in question is not impacted by either scenario so he did not believe there is any conflict of interest but requested a determination as to whether he should refrain from participating in the vote on this question. With no objections from

other members, Mr. Friedman ruled that there was no conflict that would preclude Mr. Steiner from participating in this vote.

The question before the Board is to approve the portion of Memorandum #218 that establishes the boundary between Gruening and Mirror Lake middle schools.

VOTE on the First Portion of the Divided Question:

Ayes: Steele

Nays: Steiner, Roberts,  
Kennedy, Friedman,  
Metcalf

Absent: Marks

MOTION FAILED

Ms. Strager requested that complete and accurate demographic information be made available for the public in the Chugiak/Eagle River area. Ms. Comeau assured her that the information would be provided when public meetings are scheduled to again address these issues in that area.

The Board resumed discussion on the matter of the second half of the question which addressed the proposed boundary changes in the Anchorage bowl including Ft. Richardson. Ms. Kennedy asked a question concerning pedestrian safety issues of Ptarmigan students crossing DeBarr Road to attend the new middle school. Mr. Kalmes explained that DeBarr is considered a hazardous route and students would be allowed to cross only with the assistance of a crossing guard or they would have to be bussed to the school.

Mr. Steiner considered the possibility of leaving sixth-graders from Ptarmigan at Ptarmigan and allowing those students to advance to the new middle school in their seventh grade year. He calculated that the change would allow the new middle school to open at approximately 103% of capacity. Ms. Comeau reviewed the fact that the vacant land immediately adjacent to the new school is currently for sale and a variety of affordable housing is slated to go up there in the very near future. She strongly believes that the school should not open with an enrollment above capacity. Mr. Steiner comments that he respects the response from the administration and believes that sound decision making has been done. He also, however, understands the excitement of opening a new school and the disappointment being felt by members of the local community who will not be zoned into that school. Ms. Vandergaw

explained that the task force had discussed the possibility of leaving some sixth-grades in their respective elementary schools. She noted that the issue of school climate had to be taken into account and what would happen to the students who are not allowed to become part of the culture of the school until seventh grade. There was a consensus among task force members that the cohort of sixth, seventh and eighth graders should be allowed to be together throughout their entire middle school years.

Mr. Steiner pointed out that incorporating Scenic Park into the new middle school is key to alleviating the overcrowding at Wendler Middle School. While he understood the disappointment being felt in the Ptarmigan community, he believed that finding a solution to overcrowding had to be a higher priority.

Mr. Friedman called for the vote on the remaining portion of the divided question on Memorandum #218 which would approve, on first reading, the proposed middle school boundary changes in the Anchorage bowl to include moving Ft. Richardson students to Gruening Middle School.

VOTE on Remaining Portion of Divided Question :

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

Nays: None

Absent: Marks

MOTION PASSED

The Board went into recess at 8:20 p.m. Mr. Friedman called the meeting back to order at 8:30 p.m.

ASD Memorandum # 219 - Boundary Changes for Airport Heights, Mountain View, Ptarmigan, Russian Jack, William Tyson, Williwaw, and Wonder Park Elementary Schools (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading the following attendance boundaries for the 2006-2007 school year for Airport Heights, Mountain View, Ptarmigan, Russian Jack, William Tyson, Williwaw, and Wonder Park Elementary Schools as shown on Attachment A.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner  
seconded by: Crystal Kennedy

To adopt the Administration's recommendation and approve, on first reading the attendance boundaries for the 2006-2007 school year for Airport Heights, Mountain View, Ptarmigan, Russian Jack, William Tyson, Williwaw, and Wonder Park Elementary Schools as shown on Attachment A and detailed in Memorandum #219.

Ms. Betsy Goudreau addressed the Board with two other parents, Ms. Kara Thrasher-Livingston and Ms. Maria Roark, and on behalf of their children who are students in the K-2 autism classroom at Airport Heights Elementary School. She noted that the proposed boundary changes recommend that the autism classroom be moved to another, as yet undetermined, school. She reported a complete lack of communication regarding even the possibility that boundary changes would have any impact on the Autism program. The underlying concern voiced by Ms. Goudreau is the District's practice to base decisions to move Special Education programs largely on available space without regard to the extreme and adverse impact frequent changes have on the lives of children in these programs. Despite outstanding educators, support staff, and very involved parents, it has taken their students significantly longer than typically developing students to adjust to new people and environments. Educational regression due to change is common in students with autism. The educational needs of these children include both a cognitive component, which they get in the classroom, but also an affective component, which involves developing relationships with peers and staff outside the classroom. Students in an Autism program that is nothing more than a transitory part of a school stand very little chance of developing such relationships.

Ms. Goudreau noted the importance of consistency, predictability and familiarity on an autistic child's ability to function and to learn. There is significant concern that another move will result in another period of unnecessary regression for their students. Also, given current practice, there is concern that there is nothing to prevent those same students being subjected to another move next year or the year after that because of space issues that might arise in whatever school the program is placed.

Ms. Goudreau commended the ASD and specifically, the Special Education department for creating a program that has been effective in meeting the needs of these students. She respectfully requested that the Board prioritize long term stability and quality in any action that is taken with regard to the location of the Autism program currently situated at Airport Heights Elementary.

Ms. Kennedy asked whether the start of every new school year is like starting over completely for students in the Autism program or does returning to the same school facilitate an easier and more rapid readjustment. Ms. Goudreau, speaking from personal experience, explained that her son had great difficulty in his initial transition to Airport Heights but had no issues readjusting to the school in his second year there. His familiarity with the people and the environment facilitated an easy adjustment after the summer break.

Mr. Metcalfe requested additional information regarding specific difficulties that are experienced related to moving between different schools. Ms. Thrasher-Livingston explained the importance of the child being able to develop a sense of trust in their teachers and aides. Every time her son has had to move he has regressed significantly as he has been forced to re-establish a sense of trust in the adults around him. She also noted that families with special needs children have to contend with a lot of stress in their lives and school should not add to that stress. Ms. Goudreau noted that moving children with autism doesn't just impact the child, it impacts the entire family. All of the efforts that are made to assure consistency and reinforce positive behavior are lost when the child regresses during the transition between schools. Mr. Metcalfe wondered whether program staff will follow the students to whatever new location is determined. Ms. Goudreau indicated that it is her understanding that the program staff will go with the students. She wanted to focus on the fact that school is a bigger thing than just what goes on inside the classroom. She wants people to understand that, for kids with autism, building relationships, making friends, being able to say hi to people in the hallways, are all issues that accompany their disability and those experiences are all part of their education experience. For instance, interacting with other students is part of Ms. Goudreau's son's IEP.

Mr. Roberts asked how many autistic and intensive needs students will be affected by the move. It was reported that there are about 15 students in four classrooms that would be affected by the move. Mr. Steiner questioned whether the capacity at Airport Heights, reported as 91% under the new boundary scenario, assumed the relocation of those special

education program classrooms. Mr. Metcalfe also asked what the enrollment percentage would be if the intensive needs and autism classrooms remained at Airport Heights. Ms. Dargan-Steed responded that the programs were not included in the capacity figures for the new scenario. Ms. Reeve, principal at Airport Heights, explained that Airport Heights will find themselves in a situation where they have a high population of students who are not making AYP and who have real comprehensive educational needs and no place to deliver the services. Mr. Steiner pointed out that, with only 20 classrooms at Airport Heights, the school's program capacity would certainly be over 100% if the special education programs were to remain there.

Mr. Steiner requested additional information regarding the autism program. Ms. Dana Dugdale, Director of Elementary and Pre-School Special Education, explained that the Autism program has been growing rapidly and will expand to twelve classrooms this fall. In light of the program growth, the decision has also been made to move kindergarten to the pre-school program, also starting in the fall. The program will then be composed of three levels: Pre K-K, primary (grades 1-3), and intermediate (4-6).

Mr. Metcalfe raised a question on the capacity figures as reported for Airport Heights and Williwaw elementary schools. Ms. Comeau explained that the figures reflect program capacity and the ability to meet the needs of the students at the schools.

Ms. Dugdale explained that she was not aware of the proposed movement of the intensive needs classrooms. Knowing the number of preschool children who will be moving up into those programs she clarified that there would be 21 - 26 children in those classes next year. The intensive needs classroom have been there for many years and are well engrained into the culture of the school. Any movement of those classes would affect families greatly.

Mr. Steiner wondered whether there is any way to find a location that would provide certainty and continuity for the programs. Ms. Comeau responded that, while that would be ideal, with the rapidly increasing population growth and density in this part of town, there is no way to guarantee a permanent program site. Ms. McRae noted that Airport Heights does not have both a gym and multipurpose room, which complicates the space issue. The school also has a Campfire program which also uses a classroom. Ms. McRae indicated that they would very much like to have an articulated program for special needs students that

would allow them to stay in one school community but space is at a premium. Ms. Comeau indicated that, in order to address this situation for the long-term, revisions need to be made in our educational specifications at all levels to build extra classrooms for the special education population so that they can have a permanent location.

Ms. Mallory Hamilton, the parent of a second-grader in the intensive needs classroom at Airport Heights, testified as to the extreme difficulty her child has adjusting to change and the impact the proposed move is likely to have on all of the students in that program. Ms. Hamilton acknowledged the difficult decisions before the Board and simply requested that they take the tremendous impact that moving this program would have on special needs students into consideration when making those decisions.

Ms. Comeau explained that all of the schools affected by these boundary changes are Title I schools, so the issues are complicated not only by the number of students but also by multiple special programs and their accompanying staff. She noted that the proposed recommendation is a good recommendation but that the administration will need to review the issues regarding the special needs program that has been brought to light.

Ms Julie Ginder and Ms. Eunice Long presented an overview of the proposed changes. Ms. Long acknowledged task force members in attendance. Ms. Long reviewed the proposed changes and explained the impact the changes will have on the enrollment and capacity numbers at each of the schools. She noted that the 91% enrollment/capacity at Airport Heights after the change does not include the autism or intensive needs classrooms. She explained that it was never a recommendation from the task force to move those classrooms out of Airport Heights. The main objective was to make sure to maintain neighborhoods. The need to move the special education classrooms is the unfortunate result of trying to meet that objective.

In response to a question from Mr. Steiner, it was noted that there is very little, if any, growth anticipated in the Russian Jack community. Mr. Steiner questioned the possibility of Russian Jack absorbing some additional Airport Heights students to allow the Special Education to remain at Airport Heights. Ms. Comeau indicated that Russian Jack houses the Alaska State School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ASSDHH) which uses seven classrooms in that facility. The school also has three relocatables on site and so would not be able to absorb any additional students. A question was raised whether the reported

percentages for enrollment/capacity reflect sheer student numbers or program capacities. Ms. McRae noted that all available spaces at Russian Jack are being used and that portables were added last year. Ms. Sharon Story, principal at Russian Jack, noted that the school is at program capacity so the 84% reported must reflect sheer numbers. Mr. Metcalfe voiced a similar question regarding Ptarmigan Elementary. He wondered whether they would be able to absorb additional students since they remain at 72% of capacity. Ms. Comeau indicated that there is considerable growth expected in the Boniface area that will impact future enrollment at Ptarmigan.

Mr. Steiner raised general concern about the reported capacity/enrollment numbers. It was his understanding that these reflect program capacity and, if they don't, he is concerned about basing decisions on these numbers. Ms. Dargan-Steed indicated that the reported numbers are program capacity numbers. She further explained that the ASSDHH program was taken into consideration when calculating the number for Russian Jack. In light of the confusion, with reported numbers well below capacity while the administration believes the programs to be at or over capacity, Ms. Comeau indicated that these numbers will be closely reviewed and clarified before the next meeting and the second reading of the memorandum.

Mr. Steele and Mr. Roberts both indicated that they are concerned about moving the special education programs out of Airport Heights but otherwise they support the proposed boundary changes.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by: Jake Metcalfe  
seconded by: Macon Roberts

To amend the motion on the floor to keep the autism and special needs students at Airport Heights.

Mr. Metcalfe noted that his understanding is that this action would bring Airport Heights to 96% capacity and that the Campfire program could be moved to a relocatable to make more room. Ms. Long noted that there is no room to accommodate these special education programs at Airport Heights. She reminded the Board that Airport Heights is getting a new program, Reading First, next year and it will need space. Ms. Reeves reviewed her space noting that by bringing the students in from Penland Park and KBL to Airport Heights it brings the student population of regular students to 316, which translates to 14 regular education classrooms out of the 20 available classrooms. That leaves six classrooms

for support. One of those will be an Art Room and one will be a computer lab. Space is also needed for the Reading First program and the Title I staff. Space is also needed for the bilingual tutor, the Indian Education program, OT/PT, and two special education resource teachers. Ms. Reeves noted that Airport Heights is a neighborhood school with a declining enrollment and they need an increase in the number of regular education students in order to continue to offer a traditional education program. Ms. Comeau noted that, while she is sympathetic to the needs of the Airport Heights special education families, she can not support this amendment as it would negatively impact the ability of Airport Heights to deliver a comprehensive education program to its students.

Mr. Metcalfe voiced his concern that the programs being discussed are being moved out of Airport Heights but there is no information about where they are going and he does not believe that action is fair to the families involved. Paraphrasing the Board's mission statement, Mr. Metcalfe indicated that the Board is suppose to create an environment that fosters lifelong learning and develops effective citizens to engage in society. It is hard to live up to that mission statement for special needs students when they are being moved around from program to program or school to school. Mr. Metcalfe feels that it is important that they stay at Airport Heights so that they can remain in a program that will allow them to continue to progress. With reported figures well below 100% capacity at other schools in the area, he feels that adjustments could be made to allow the program to remain at Airport Heights.

Mr. Steiner supports the concept of the interim motion but acknowledged that it would be very difficult to accomplish logistically. Mr. Steiner shared Mr. Metcalfe's concern that the proposed plan is not complete because it removes a program from one school but provides no indication of where it will be relocated. His preference would be to try to find a location for the program that would allow more consistency and stability for the program. He requested that the Board be provided information on the proposed location for the displaced special needs students before the next reading of this proposed boundary change. Ms. Comeau indicated that the information will be available for the second reading.

Ms. Kennedy clarified that there are approximately 139 students in the Penland Park and KBL areas that will move to Airport Heights with the approval of this proposal. That number, coupled with students who will be moving out of the school boundaries, will result in a net gain of 81 students for Airport Heights.

Mr. Friedman voiced his concern about making any decisions until the accuracy of the program capacity numbers are verified. With no further discussion the vote was called.

VOTE on AMENDMENT:

Ayes: Metcalfe  
Nays: Steiner, Roberts,  
Kennedy, Friedman,  
Steele  
Absent: Marks  
MOTION FAILED

Mr. Metcalfe explained that he is having trouble supporting this motion because he is not sure that the numbers are correct and it is difficult for him to support an action when he remains unsure of what will happen once action is taken. Ms. Kennedy also indicated that she is hesitant to support this motion on first reading in light of the number of issues that need to be looked into between the first and second readings.

Mr. Steiner asked whether there would be any action to come back to for second reading this motion is voted down on first reading. He suggested that it might be better, in a procedural sense, to postpone action pending clarification of the numbers.

Ms. Dargan-Steed noted that the capacity figures would change for Airport Heights if the Special Needs and Autism programs remain there. She did note that, to the best of her knowledge, the 84% capacity figure reported for Russian Jack is an accurate program capacity number. Mr. Friedman voiced his concern that, if the number at Russian Jack is 84% then there should be no need for relocatables at that location. Ms. Comeau requested that Ms. Story explain how the space is being used in order to clear up the confusion with the numbers. During discussion it was discovered that the program information was taken from a survey done at the beginning of the school year. While there is confidence that the space is being appropriately utilized, the concern remains that the numbers do not accurately reflect available capacity.

Mr. Steiner questioned whether postponing the vote on this motion and requesting that all of the number be re-evaluated would be detrimental to the process. Ms. Comeau noted that she would, in fact, prefer that the Board postpone action on this motion to allow the administration to address the issues raised this evening.

INTERIM MOTION:

Moved by: John Steiner  
seconded by: Crystal Kennedy

To postpone action on the motion to approve the proposed boundary changes for Airport Heights, Mountain View, Ptarmigan, Russian Jack, William Tyson, Williwaw, and Wonder Park elementary schools.

VOTE on INTERIM MOTION:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Marks

MOTION PASSED

The Board went into recess at 9:35 p.m. The meeting was called back to order at 9:40 p.m.

ASD Memorandum # 220 - Boundary Changes for Bear Valley, Willard L. Bowman, Huffman, O'Malley, and Rabbit Creek Elementary Schools (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading the following attendance boundaries for the 2006-2007 school year for Bear Valley, Willard L. Bowman, Huffman, O'Malley, and Rabbit Creek elementary schools (shown as Attachment A).

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner  
seconded by: Crystal Kennedy

To adopt the Administration's recommendation and approve, on first reading, the attendance boundaries for the 2006-2007 school year for Bear Valley, Willard L. Bowman, Huffman, O'Malley, and Rabbit Creek elementary schools, as shown in Attachment A and detailed in Memorandum #220.

Mr. Jeffrey Martin, a Potter Valley resident with one child currently attending Bear Valley and another eagerly awaiting the opportunity to do so, addressed the Board on the issue of the plan to cut the Potter Valley

community out of the Bear Valley boundaries. Mr. Martin indicated that he believes that Bear Valley parents have found a viable solution to avoid moving current students out of Bear Valley. He contended that there are approximately 50 students attending the school who live outside the current boundaries and another 20 who attend on zone exemptions. He believed that this action alone would bring Bear Valley numbers down to a level acceptable to this Board. He suggested that all zone exemptions, with the exception of the children of teachers in the building, should be denied and that all student addresses be verified. Mr. Martin indicated that these actions should be taken and their effect measured before making any changes to the boundaries. If, however, the Board insists upon taking action on boundary changes, Mr. Martin indicated that Potter Valley parents support Scenario 5 without alterations.

Ms. Diane Ekstrand, the mother of three children who attend Rabbit Creek, testified to give voice to the 26 students in her neighborhood who would be moved. She explained where her neighborhood is located and encouraged the Board to follow the recommendations and allow the students to remain at Rabbit Creek.

Ms. Kaya Kade presented The Bottoms-Up concept. Ms. Kade reviewed several research articles pointing out the correlation between academic success and peer relationships. She contended that boundary changes will not significantly reduce class size because teachers are assigned according to how many students are anticipated to attend the school and also that, with 25% of ASD elementary schools operating at over 100% capacity it took time to get in this situation and should be allowed time to fix the problem. Bottoms-Up's main purpose is to lessen the burden on Bear Valley while maintaining established communities and friendship bonds among students. The main premise is to allow zone deferments to all students already enrolled at Bear Valley and their siblings. Ms. Kade is particularly concerned with the students who will be moved away from their current peer group to attend O'Malley until middle school, then leave that peer group, reuniting with the previous group to attend Goldenview Middle School. Ms. Kade reviewed what Bear Valley numbers would look like by adopting the Bottoms-Up concept coupled with the boundary changes. She concluded by stating that Bottoms-Up moves Bear Valley slowly back to an under capacity scenario and allows for already formed and established communities to continue to work together through student's elementary education thus facilitating an easy transition into middle school.

Mr. Thomas Homza reiterated the main focus of the Bottoms-Up idea by stating that the plan would take all kindergarten students, except those with siblings currently attending Bear Valley, within the newly drawn boundaries and enroll them in their newly zoned school. It would also take any new arrivals moving into areas excluded from Bear Valley attendance under the new boundaries and enroll them in the newly designated school for that area. This would significantly reduce enrollment to sub-capacity levels in the very first year and the affects would continue to be seen gradually over subsequent years. Most importantly, this plan eliminates the forced relocation of any students.

Mr. Homza reviewed his recent conversation with Dr. Michael Axelman, a professor of Child Psychology and a Child Therapy Clinician. Dr. Axelman pointed out that "There is a large body of indisputable evidence indicating that educational transitions commonly adversely impact a child's academic and behavioral performance. The child may not adjust well to a new peer group and feel disenfranchised as a result. This disenfranchisement leads to self-blame and lack of self esteem which have a litany of negative affects." Mr. Homza continued to quote Dr. Axelman with respect to behavioral and academic struggles, saying "Often times the fallout from these transitions results in the parents blaming the teachers, the teachers blaming the parents, and the children blaming themselves." Dr. Axelman warned that Anchorage, by implementing the proposed changes, would face an elevated risk of students experiencing behavioral and academic problems. Mr. Homza urged the Board to do a simply qualitative risk assessment to determine if it is worth the risk of academic underachievement and behavioral problems to reduce the Bear Valley enrollment by forcibly relocating students when alternatives exist that satisfy Board goals.

Mr. Homza presented a formal request from 74 families that any decision on the Bear Valley redistricting question be delayed until a scenario is developed that does not forcibly dislocate any children.

Mr. Steiner sought clarification regarding transportation issues. It was his assumption that, under this Bottoms-Up plan, people would have the option to zone-exempt and self-transport. Ms. Kade agreed that families who are zone-exempted would become responsible for their own transportation. Mr. Steiner commented that a "quick cut" solution would cause a temporary disruption for the students but would allow neighborhoods to stay together. It appears that the Bottoms-Up option would result in splintered neighborhoods, with some children attending Bear Valley and newcomers attended whatever school the neighborhood is actually zoned for. Mr. Steiner indicated that splintering neighborhoods would cause equal problems with the same peer group

implications. Mr. Homza respectfully disagreed with Mr. Steiner's assessment. He contended that tight peer relationships are established in the schools not in the neighborhood. He acknowledged that there are issues and situations that need to be addressed, such as the "new kid on the block" being the only kid not attending Bear Valley. That is why the suggestion is to defer any action until these situations can be addressed and the means to meet the needs of all students and families can be identified. It is his contention that running Bear Valley at 111% capacity is manageable until acceptable solutions can be found.

Ms. Dawn Carman, a Bear Valley parent, urged the Board to closely review all scenarios, including Scenario 5 which was recommended by the task force, and take into consideration all of the testimony and research provided, rather than rubber-stamping the superintendent's proposal. She also urged the administration to look at residency verification and to quit giving zone exemptions. She urged the Board to focus on long-term solutions to avoid the need to make further boundary changes to accommodate future growth in the area.

Ms. Julia Hasquet, a Bear Valley parent, voiced her concern for the overcrowding at Bear Valley. She indicated that she can not abide the overcrowding at Bear Valley when other nearby schools are under capacity. She noted that Bear Valley has relocatables and they have lost their computer lab due to space issues. Crowd control in the lunchroom is another huge issue with a very large number of children being served in a limited time frame. She indicated that the parking lot, before and after school, is a tragedy waiting to happen. She stated that what makes great schools are great parents, great families and great teachers and the great families at Bear Valley will continue to be great families wherever their children attend school. She urged the Board to make the difficult decisions and institute a change now to alleviate the overcrowding at Bear Valley.

Ms. Andrea Johnson, a Bear Valley parent, echoed the overwhelming number of people who are in favor of the Bottom's-Up program. She noted that the Board should jump at the chance to accomplish their goals and make everyone happy at the same time, which she believes would be accomplished through the Bottom's-Up approach.

Mr. Gordon Osgood, a Bear Valley parent whose children are not directly affected by the proposed boundary changes, spoke in support of postponing a decision on the boundary changes until a scenario is devised that does not forcibly relocate students. He believed that a win-win

solution is achievable. He noted that the fundamental problem preventing the win-win Bottoms-Up solution is Board Policy 444.24, item 1, which limits zone exemptions to students in the final grade of elementary, middle or secondary schools. Mr. Osgood suggested that this policy be amended to allow more creative solutions to the current problems.

Ms. LeeAnn Osgood joined other speakers in support of postponing any action until a better solution can be identified. She addressed Mr. Steiner's earlier concern regarding the Bottoms-Up plan splintering neighborhoods by explaining that the geography of many of the areas in question lend themselves to friendships developed in the schools whose homes are likely some distance apart. As a parent whose children will remain at Bear Valley regardless of the action taken tonight she indicated that she does not see the immediate necessity of reducing enrollment numbers.

Ms. Erin Borowski testified on behalf of the Bottoms-Up solution. She reminded the Board that if student numbers decrease then staff will also have to be reduced and class size will likely remain the same. She felt that keeping her children with their peer group is the most important consideration.

Mr. Florian Borowski thanked the Board and the superintendent for their work on this issue. He testified that he embraces, endorses and echoes the sentiments shared by earlier speakers regarding the importance of thoroughly analyzing all options and their impact on students before making any decision. He noted that the issue has become very divisive in the Bear Valley community. He reviewed School Board policy 444.23 which states that the Board believes that student achievement is enhanced when students are allowed to remain in the same school. He encouraged the Board to allow time to modify policy to allow for an innovative solution to the issue of overcrowding.

Ms. Molly Connelly, a Bear Valley parent, reiterated several points that had been made by earlier speakers including the fact that studies show that removing a student from their peer group can be detrimental to academic achievement. In addition, she indicated that the task force based recommendation on inaccurate maps. She compared the use of Rabbit Creek as natural boundary to the use of Elmore Creek. She encouraged the Board to embrace the Bottoms-Up proposal.

Ms. Marie Marquardt, a Bear Valley parent, explained the unique demographics of Upper DeArmoun and why she feels the area requires a more unique approach for solving boundary issues there. She brought the Board's attention to the middle school boundary changes approved earlier this evening and pointed out that, with the actions proposed this evening, children on Upper DeArmoun would be forced to leave their current Bear Valley peer group to attend O'Malley. When they move to middle school they will then have to leave their O'Malley peer group to return back to Goldenview while their new friends will go on to Hanshew.

Ms. Kelly Gibson echoed the concern of the previous speaker. She explained that with the proposed changes her children would be separated from their peer group to attend O'Malley for their remaining elementary years and then be separated from that peer group to attend Goldenview Middle School. She questioned the logic behind choosing to move her small, established neighborhood into the boundaries for a different school. According to her calculations, the net result of keeping this small area within Bear Valley's boundaries would be a 4% increase, raising the enrollment to 87% of capacity. Given the fact that one of the goals of this process was to better align feeder schools it would only make sense to keep this small area zoned for Bear Valley. In response to Mr. Steiner concern that the Bottoms-Up plan would fracture neighborhoods, Ms. Gibson explained that this proposal would cut up neighborhoods in much the same way.

Ms Kim McDaniel, a Bear Valley parent, explained that the majority of Bear Valley parents have steered clear of the boundary hearings because of the intense emotions surrounding the issue. Ms. McDaniel reviewed the history of requests made by the Bear Valley community asking the District to address the issue of overcrowding. She explained the problems associated with the high enrollment, the lack of classroom space, and the issues of overloaded buses. Ms. McDaniel also highlighted several new developments in the area and the expectation of population growth in those subdivisions. Her request is that Bear Valley's numbers are taken to a reasonable level that provides some level of assurance that the community will not have to go through this process again within the next few years.

Ms. Kennedy acknowledged that there seems to be a difference of opinion in the Bear Valley area as to whether there needs to be a boundary change at this time. She asked whether there is any information, or even speculation, as to what will Bottoms-Up proposal would do to property values and the impact it might have on the ability to sell a home. It was

Ms. Gibson's opinion that the proposal would not have an impact on home values or home sales. In addition, she does not believe that those are the issues that should concern the Board when making boundary decisions.

Ms. McDaniel estimated that at least 40% of the Bear Valley student population is transient and most of those children are extremely bright and well-adjusted. As a parent whose children have attended three different ASD elementary schools, she also wanted to assure parents that Bear Valley is not unique in having a wonderful staff and producing academically successful students.

Mr. Steele and Mr. Roberts left the discussion at 11:00 p.m.

Mr. Rene Contreras spoke in support of the Bottoms-Up proposal. He indicated that, with the proposal, the enrollment at Bear Valley would drop to an acceptable level the very first year. Mr. Contreras explained the importance of what he termed "social capital". It is his contention that students earn "social capital" with their peer group over time and are able to invest that capital in such things as student government or club leadership positions. When the children are forced to switch back and forth between peer groups, as those being moved from Bear Valley to O'Malley to Goldenview, they miss out on any opportunity to develop "social capital". He noted that the Bottoms-Up proposal brings people together. It is an inclusive and unifying proposal.

Ms. Doris Von Tish, a Bear Valley parent, addressed the earlier issue the impact Bottoms-Up would have on newcomers in affected neighborhoods. It is her contention that not everyone will choose to zone-exempt into Bear Valley and that, over time, the issue would resolve itself as kids who do choose to zone-exempt move up and out of the elementary school. Ms. Von Tish clarified that Bear Valley only lost its computer lab last year for one year. In response to another point made earlier, she indicated her belief that the traffic and transportation issues are well managed at Bear Valley. Ms. Von Tish voiced her strong support for the Bottoms-Up plan because it will gradually and painlessly relieve the crowding at Bear Valley.

Ms. Tobi Harvey voiced her support for the Bottoms-Up program. She explained where her home is located and how the proposed boundaries will have her children going to Rabbit Creek, over 7.5 miles away. Bear

Valley is only 2.5 miles from her home. She requested that the Board reconsider allowing Potter Heights east of Finland to remain in the Bear Valley boundaries. She noted that doing so would add only 4 students back into Bear Valley Elementary.

Ms. Linda Stramm voiced her support for the Bottoms-Up proposal. She also echoed Ms. Harvey's request that the Board consider including Potter Heights east of Finland in the Bear Valley boundaries.

Mr. Steiner questioned whether the speakers access the main route into Anchorage through the Goldenview area or down Potters Creek. Ms. Stramm noted that she travels both ways depending on a variety of factors. Ms. Harvey noted that the proposed bus stop for her children to attend Rabbit Creek is actually a mile farther away from her home than the actual Bear Valley Elementary school building.

Ms. Peggie Gallagher voiced her objection to taking an already isolated area and forcing the children in that area to attend Rabbit Creek Elementary. She further indicated that using concern for bus safety as a reason to make this change is unfounded as buses currently use that same route to transport students to Goldenview without any problems.

Ms. Joan Adler requested clarification regarding how many students are located in the "boot area" as a variety of numbers have been cited this evening. She voiced her frustration with the whole process and how the lines seem to be drawn so arbitrarily so as to balance numbers with little regard for the impact the changes have on students and families. She noted her support for the Bottoms-Up concept. Ms. Dargan-Steed reported that there are a total of 71 students in the "boot area" that will move from Bear Valley to O'Malley.

Mr. Metcalfe explained that he had not yet made up his mind on this proposal and acknowledged the importance of this testimony. He is sorry that there are people in the community who think that they can not make a difference in this process because they absolutely can, and do, impact the decisions made by the Board.

Mr. Daryl McClendon added his voice to earlier concerns identified with the proposed boundary changes in the "boot area", the area that has been carved out of the Bear Valley district to be bused up and around to O'Malley. As was discussed, these children will be separated from their peer groups twice as they bounce between elementary schools and then to middle school. He believed that this decision has been based on

convenience for the bus routes as he was told that the bus “needed a good place to turn around”. It has been said that the District does not like to duplicate bus routes but this change has the Bear Valley bus traveling through the neighborhood in question to pick up students on Upper DeArmoun, the Rabbit Creek bus comes through the neighborhood to pick up their students and now a bus from O’Malley will be added to the same neighborhood to pick up students sandwiched in a small area between the other two schools’ boundaries. He noted that moving the small number of students in this area back into the Bear Valley boundaries would not have significant impact on their capacity and could allow the preschool program to remain at O’Malley. He reiterated that parents want better alignment of boundaries for all three academic levels.

Ms. Sandra Berlin, who has no children in the District, spoke in support of her neighbors whose children will have to change schools should the proposal on the table be approved. She added her support for the Bottoms-Up plan.

Mr. Steiner, noting his understanding that there are 109 students zone-exempted out of Bear Valley, questioned whether that number is accurate and, if so, were capacity numbers calculated based on the assumption that those students would continue to zone-exempt out or that all students within the boundaries would attend the schools to which they are zoned. Ms. Dargan-Steed reported that the assumption was that students who zone-exempt out would continue to do so. Mr. Steiner further questioned whether information was available as to why those students chose to take a zone-exemption. His concern is that families made those decisions because the school was overcrowded and will now return to Bear Valley. Ms. Comeau noted that the reason for families making those decisions is not known. She anticipates that some will come back but most will probably remain in their current programs.

Mr. Steiner indicated that the request to verify addresses mentioned by several speakers this evening is legitimate and wondered whether there is any reason why the District would not ask for this information when students register. Ms. Comeau indicated that it has not been the practice to require address verification but there is no reason why that can not be done. Ms. Comeau noted that she would follow-up on any situations where families have misrepresented addresses, but she needed specific examples in order to do so. She indicated that the District can certainly implement address verification for fall registration.

Mr. Steiner asked for a response from the administration to the transportation issue in the Potter Heights area. Mr. Kalmes indicated that it is the District's recommendation that the students come down to Potter Marsh and board the bus there. Going through Bear Valley is very steep route and goes through neighborhoods as opposed to using a route with feeder-road status.

Ms. Comeau noted that the Bear Valley community has been asking the District to address the issue of overcrowding at Bear Valley for years. Nobody is in favor of overcrowding until it is their child who will have to make a change. She applauds the parents who are advocating for their children and seeking creative solutions to the issue. She explained that there will not be a new elementary school in the Bear Valley area for at least another decade. The challenge is to be confident that the absolute best use is being made of available space before asking the voters to support the construction of a new school.

Ms. Comeau noted that the Bottoms-Up approach can be explored, but the Board has to provide direction to the administration that would allow action contrary to current Board policy.

Mr. Friedman commented that he was willing to consider the Bottoms-Up proposal. It would be very helpful to have a verifiable consensus from the Bear Valley community that they are either for or against leaving the school overcrowded. It is important that the opinion of the entire community be considered, not just the opinion of those who are successful in organizing a vocal group of supporters. He noted that while the consensus this evening seems to be that the community is more than willing to put up with overcrowding, that message is in direct conflict with the message that has been sent over at least the last three years that something had to be done to solve the problem.

Mr. Friedman indicated that he would be willing to consider making an exception to the Board Policy in question. Mr. Steiner requested input from the administration regarding making such an exception. It was his recollection that the policy was put into place with the understanding that the quick cut, while initially traumatic, was really the most workable strategy to changing boundaries.

Ms. Comeau explained that she has been through over 20 boundary changes during her career with the Anchorage School District and that they are never easy. For the most part, however, kids adjust better overall than adults do. That does not mean that some children are not upset but

many children, especially when parents are willing to put a positive perspective on those changes, make a good transition. The one thing that is very clear is how important it is to look at the whole K-12 picture when making boundary changes. Alignment is never going to be perfect, however, because of the different number of schools at the various levels.

Ms. Comeau indicated that she is willing to work with the Bottoms-Up group to explore their recommendation if that is the direction the Board would like to take. She further indicated that she would call a public meeting at Bear Valley to assure that everyone in the community is made aware of and invited to the meeting. The Bottoms-Up group will be asked to explain their proposal and District employees will be available to answer questions.

Ms. Comeau indicated that the administration needs some direction from the Board as to how they want to proceed.

INTERIM ACTION:

Moved by: Jake Metcalfe  
seconded by: Crystal Kennedy

To postpone action on ASD Memorandum #220 until the superintendent can hold a meeting with the Bear Valley community to get an idea of what that community wants to do.

Mr. Steiner wondered whether postponing the question is necessary as the issue does not appear to be the actual boundaries as much as it is whether to allow zone-exemptions in contradiction to Board Policy.

Ms. Kennedy noted that it is worth taking the time to look at specific boundary issues, such as the "boot area" and Potter Heights, before taking any action on the recommendation. She also indicated that she would like to see the Policy Subcommittee review the policy in question. As decisions are made to changing policy or allowing exceptions to policy her concern is that what is done for one school has to be done for all of them. This is particularly true as action is currently being taken on two other boundary areas. She indicated that any policy change should be initiated through the Policy Subcommittee.

VOTE on the ITERIM MOTION:

Ayes: Steiner, Kennedy,  
Friedman, Metcalfe  
Nays: None  
Absent: Marks, Steele, Roberts  
MOTION PASSED

Ms. Comeau noted that she will be in contact with Ms. Pendergrast to determine a time and date for a public meeting with the Bear Valley community.

Mr. Steiner voiced his appreciation to all of the speakers for the time and energy they invested in the process to provide testimony for the Board.

ASD Memorandum # 230 – School Board Policy Revisions: Section 722.2 – Budget Contents (Second Reading)

It is the Administration’s recommendation that the School Board adopt on Second Reading the recommended policy changes for School Board Policy 722.2 Budget Contents.

ACTION:

Moved by: Crystal Kennedy	To approve, on second reading, the
seconded by: John Steiner	recommended policy changes for
	School Board Policy 722.2, Budget
	Contents.

Ms. Kennedy indicated her desire to make the wording of this policy a little stronger and to put it into perspective in terms of helping to align the budget development process to more of a curriculum-driven process rather than a base-budgeting process. She is unsure whether to pass the recommendation as it is and deal with it again as the Board works through policy development this summer or to send it back to Policy Subcommittee now to ask them to address the idea of adding some more documents to be used to develop the budget.

INTERIM ACTION:

Moved by: Crystal Kennedy	To remand this to the Policy
seconded by: John Steiner	Subcommittee.

Mr. Metcalfe indicated that he does not support the motion to remand. He noted that the Policy Subcommittee has thoroughly discussed this policy. One of the considerations that went into the revisions was the PDK Audit that recommended curriculum-driven budgets. Language was added to direct the use of the Six-Year Instructional Plan and Evaluation and the Profile of Performance in the budget preparation process and believes that language addresses the concerns of the audit.

VOTE on INTERIM MOTION:

Ayes: Steiner, Kennedy,  
Nays: Friedman, Metcalfe  
Absent: Marks, Steele, Roberts  
MOTION FAILS

Ms. Kennedy noted that, if the policy really does make sure that the District is putting the Six-Year Plan and Board Goals in the forefront of budget development, she can support the revisions.

VOTE on MAIN MOTION:

Ayes: Steiner, Kennedy,  
Friedman, Metcalfe  
Nays: None  
Absent: Marks, Steele, Roberts  
MOTION PASSES

ASD Memorandum # 244 - Amendment to Boniface Lease

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to amend the lease with Boniface Mall, LLC in the added amount of \$661,654 for an annual lease cost not to exceed \$1,799,464 to incorporate the current tenants at the District's leased 4600 DeBarr Road location; exercise the first renewal option; and to transfer \$95,242 from Custodial Services, Salaries and Benefits; Maintenance Contracted Services - Grounds; and Non-Departmental Unallocated Adjustment accounts to the Non-Departmental Rental - Land and Buildings account.

ACTION:

Moved by: Crystal Kennedy  
seconded by: Jake Metcalfe

To approve approve and authorize the Superintendent to amend the lease with Boniface Mall, LLC in the added amount of \$661,654 for an annual lease cost not to exceed \$1,799,464 to incorporate the current tenants at the District's leased 4600 DeBarr Road location; exercise the first renewal option; and to transfer \$95,242 from Custodial Services, Salaries and Benefits; Maintenance Contracted Services - Grounds; and Non-Departmental Unallocated Adjustment accounts to the Non-Departmental Rental - Land and Buildings account.

Ms. Kennedy requested an explanation of how this action came about and whether the District will be paying double during the transition between buildings.

Mr. Vakalis explained that the District will not be paying double lease costs during the transitions. The reason for the additional appropriation request is because the District currently covers custodial costs but the lease at the Boniface Mall includes custodial costs. The adjustment is cost neutral to the District.

Mr. Metcalfe questioned the anticipated time frame for the move. Mr. Vakalis explained that the move should be completed no later than the end of December, 2006.

Ms. Kennedy clarified that, once the District has moved out of this building they will no longer have any contractual lease on this building. Mr. Vakalis assured her that she was correct.

Mr. Steiner wondered whether this action indicated that the District is exercising the option early for the next period of time on the Boniface Mall for the portion of District offices already located there and, also, whether that action requires any type of public process before proceeding. Mr. Vakalis indicated that this is an early exercise of the option and that no further public process is required on the renewal because the process was

followed on the original lease. Options can be exercised without public notice.

In response to another question from Mr. Steiner, Mr. Vakalis explained that until the end of this lease in 2010 the District will pay the same rate for the space at the Boniface Mall that they currently pay in the Administration Building. On July 1, 2010 the District will pick up the same rate that the rest of the Boniface Mall is paying at that point in time.

VOTE:

Ayes: Steiner, Kennedy,  
Friedman, Metcalfe

Nays: None

Absent: Marks, Roberts, Steele

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 248 - Approval Educational Specifications for Clark Middle School Renewal

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the Educational Specifications for the Clark Middle School Renewal Project.

ACTION:

Moved by: Jake Metcalfe  
seconded by: Crystal Kennedy

To approve the Educational Specifications for the Clark Middle School Renewal Project.

Ms. Kennedy questioned whether staff can be available at the scheduled Special Meeting to answer questions on these Ed Specs and then bring it forward on May 1<sup>st</sup> for the actual vote.

INTERIM ACTION:

Moved by: Jake Metcalfe  
seconded by: Crystal Kennedy

To postpone action on the Educational Specifications for the Clark Middle School Renewal Project to the May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

VOTE on INTERIM MOTION:

Ayes: Steiner, Kennedy,  
Friedman, Metcalfe  
Nays: None  
Absent: Marks, Roberts, Steele  
MOTION PASSED

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. ASD Memorandum # 238 - Project Status Report

This is a report of activities and project status changes in Major Capital Projects during the period of March 13, 2006 through April 10, 2006.

2. ASD Memorandum # 247 - Facility Contract Modification Report and Completed Projects for the Month of February 2006

The monthly Facility Contract Modification Report for the month of February is attached. There are no exceptions to report this month.

3. ASD Memorandum # 253 - Third Quarter End-of Month membership Summary - March 31, 2006

The end-of-month membership report for March 31, 2006 is attached (Attachment A). The total active enrollment at the end of March was 48,914. This enrollment represents a decrease of 675 students when compared to the September 30, 2005 total of 49,589.

4. ASD Memorandum # 254 - Assessment Calendar for 2006-2007 School Year

The 2006-2007 Districtwide schedule of state/federal assessments and District surveys managed through the ASD Assessment and Evaluation Department.

I. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

J. COMMUNICATIONS & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION - PERSONNEL/FINANCE/NEGOTIATIONS LITIGATION

L. ADJOURNMENT

The Regular Meeting of April 10, 2006, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 12:00 a.m., April 11, 2006.

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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