

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING OF MAY 1, 2006

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, May 1, 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, Macon Roberts, Crystal Kennedy, Jeff Friedman, Jake Metcalfe, Mary Marks, and Tim Steele

Others Present: Rhonda Gardner, Leslie Vandergaw, Mike Henry, Patricia McRae, Enid Silverstein, Jerry Sjolander, Jeff Wood, Eric Tollefsen, Michelle Egan, Larry Wiget, Janet Stokesbary, George Vakalis, Ralph Feriani, LTC David Jones, William Johnson, Ray Amsden, Johanna Lee, the press, and other interested people.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Friedman announced that there is an addendum to the Personnel Report. The agenda was approved by unanimous consent with the addendum.

C. FY 2005-2006 PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Mr. Friedman indicated that this is traditionally an opportunity for the outgoing Board president to review the accomplishments of the last year. As both outgoing and incoming president he chose to look toward the future and the hopes for what will come. Mr. Friedman highlighted three points. The first is the notion of high expectations. One key for achievement is to expect more of our students, many of whom come with challenges. While it is harder for those students, they can achieve and they will achieve if they know that we believe in them and that they can succeed. In the end, students only hit the goals they aim for and we do them a grave disservice if we let them set those goals too low.

Another key issue that faces ASD is the high drop out rate. We know that the District is successful in teaching students who come to school and attend classes. We can teach anybody who comes. The hard part is getting them to come. The District is doing a number of things to address this issue already, but Mr. Friedman hoped that in the coming year even

more solutions can be found to address this. We have to find a way to reverse the high number of dropouts. He noted that this is not just a high school problem. There are a number of things that can be done in elementary and middle school that can impact the dropout rates.

Mr. Freidman then turned to the notion of fiscal responsibility. He indicated that it is time for the District to once again take a hard look at how we are spending money and ways to do it better. He believed that we should have a citizen's task force on building plans, building design, and building construction to see if there is a way to save money in the process. The District will also need to revisit the budget review teams once again. He acknowledged that it is a very time consuming process but believed that it is time and money well spent in terms of future savings and building community support. Along with fiscal responsibility, Mr. Friedman encouraged the Policy subcommittee to look at the notion of Best Value Contracting this year. This is a concept that recognizes that the lowest price isn't always the best buy.

In conclusion, Mr. Friedman stated that our District is truly lucky. We have great staff, great administrators, and great students.

D. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Comeau reported that the Mayor sent a thank-you to the District for being one of the banquet sponsors for the Good News, Great Kids and Spirit of Youth programs. There were ten teachers at the Good News, Great Kids program who were recognized by their students for having made a significant impact in their lives.

Mr. Steele reported that several members of the Board as well as the superintendent spent last weekend in Juneau meeting with legislators. He noted that there were also several teachers and principals there. He is hopeful that there will be some additional money available and that districts around the state will benefit, especially in terms of one time money.

E. AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

F. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

1. Student Advisory Board

Mr. Feriani reported that, at the last meeting of the Student Advisory Board, Mr. Henry spoke to the group about school bonds and vending machines. Mr. Arndt was also present and spoke about Title IX. Chugiak High School recently held the "Every 15 Minutes" alcohol awareness program. This was a very successful and meaningful event. South High School hosted ASAG last weekend.

Mr. Feriani reported that, due to time constraints, Military Appreciation week will not be held until next year. The next SAB meeting is scheduled for May 15 at 8:30 am at the King Career Center.

2. Military Delegate

LTC Jones indicated that he had nothing to bring to the attention of the Board.

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

Mr. Johnson reported that the MECAC will have their next business meeting on May 18th at 12:00 pm in Room 320. As always, the public is welcome to attend.

The last meeting was on April 20th. He reported that business was light and discussion was heavy. The MECAC had the opportunity to thank Ms. Christensen for her support of MECAC over the years and to welcome Ms. Gardner to her new position.

Mr. Johnson reported that he is approaching the end of his term and will be presenting his closing remarks at the next meeting.

G. PERSONS TO BE HEARD NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Ron Fuhrer addressed the Board on the issue of attracting and retaining highly qualified professional educators to serve the students, parents, and community of Anchorage. He indicated that the single most essential ingredient in a child's education, after their parents, is the classroom teacher. He referenced advisory arbitration awards that indicate that teachers deserve increased pay and benefits. The District has been encouraged to plan for those increases. He believed that, contrary to this, teacher compensation has declined as a percentage of the operating

budget. He stated that the Board has a responsibility to the students, parents, and community to implement a teacher compensation plan to make the ASD a leading competitor for professional teaching services.

Mr. Rich Kronberg, AEA president, addressed the Board on the topic of valuing District teachers and other professional educators. He voiced his disappointment with not having reached a settlement. While the AEA actively supports increased state funding, Mr. Kronberg indicated that, regardless of budget constraints, the District has the obligation to provide every student access to quality teachers and other professional educators.

Ms. Larissa Wright-Elson, an English Teacher at South Anchorage High School, spoke on the importance of retaining quality educators. Quality educators have earned and deserve continual respect. Salaries and contributions to health insurance is really only a small part of how respect is shown. Professional respect is shown by providing adequate and consistent planning time. Respect is also created by tone which is set through the language at the bargaining table and in the written contract. The contract that is being negotiated now will set the tone for the kind of educators Anchorage is able to attract in the future. It must treat the educators of Anchorage as respected, well-considered professionals.

Ms. Jessica Cook, a teacher at Ptarmigan Elementary, spoke to the Board on the quality of Title I schools. She noted that Ptarmigan had failed to meet AYP by an extremely small percent in one subcategory. She voiced her concern with the top-down decision making that characterizes life at Title I schools. She indicated her belief that the new Houghton-Mifflin reading curriculum is very weak in the writing component and requires extensive supplemental teaching. She noted that many quality teachers in Title I schools are leaving because of their frustration with the lack of time in the duty day to meet all the requirements they are tasked to meet. The District is losing a vital key to student success, quality educators in Title I schools, because of added mandates and pressures, inadequate compensations packages, and lack of administrative support.

Mr. Robert Taylor, a teacher at Bartlett High School, reiterated that good teachers make a difference. It is imperative to do everything necessary to keep good teachers in ASD classrooms. Mr. Taylor reviewed the efforts that teachers have made to lobby legislative support for education funding. He indicated that it is no longer enough to sit back and allow others to advocate. It is no longer enough to just lobby legislators to get them to understand that they are bankrupting public education. He encouraged people to provide time and financial support to help put candidates who support public education in office.

Ms. Tara Bivins asked the Board to be mindful of the significant role teacher quality plays in raising student achievement. There is no question that effective teachers have a substantial impact on student learning. The District is accountable for insuring a positive teaching and learning climate and has a responsibility to students to attract and retain quality teachers. Though competitive pay and benefits play a key role in this process, working conditions are also important. Working conditions are often cited as the reason teachers leave their jobs. Conditions proven to increase retention include appropriate work assignments; support from administrators; salary increases; access to mentoring and induction programs; effective school discipline systems; time to interact and share ideas with colleagues; and opportunities for professional development. Many of these employment conditions are defined in the teachers' contractual agreement. She asked the Board's help to secure an agreement that supports teachers in their efforts to create an optimal learning environment for students.

Mr. Todd Torczon, a parent and Anchorage homeowner, addressed the Board on the issue of the recently defeated bonds. He indicated that voters have been conditioned to automatically reject bonds because the requests are on the ballot so frequently. He voiced his concern with borrowing money to perform major maintenance which then adds interest expense to the budget. He encouraged the Board to look at a different approach. He reference figures from the 2006 CIP indicating that there is more than ample elementary classroom space to handle the number of elementary students in the District. He encouraged the District to make better use of current space before doing any more construction. He also suggested that it was time to go to the voters with a request to raise the tax cap rather than continue to float bonds and incur interest expense.

H. CONSENT AGENDA

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

1. 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.

2. ASD Memorandum # 218 - Middle School Boundary Changes (Second Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on Second Reading the middle school attendance boundaries for the 2007-2008 school year for the Anchorage Bowl area as shown in Scenario 1 on Attachment A. It is further recommended that the School Board approve the move of Fort Richardson students to Gruening for the 2006-2007 school year. The final decision regarding Eagle River/Chugiak area middle school boundaries for the 2007-2008 school year will occur following additional public process in the fall of 2006.

3. 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.

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

It is the Superintendent's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading the following attendance boundary for the 2006-2007 school year for Bear Valley, Willard L. Bowman, Huffman, O'Malley, and Rabbit Creek Elementary Schools.

5. ASD Memorandum # 237 - Personnel Report

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

Mr. Friedman indicated that there are speakers to be heard on ASD Memoranda #218, #219, and #220. Ms. Marks requested that ASD Memorandum #248 be pulled for discussion.

With only one item on the Consent Agenda remaining it was decided to address each item on the agenda individually.

ACTION:

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Moved by: Mary Marks | To adopt the Administration's |
| Seconded by: John Steiner | recommendation and approve the |
| | Educational Specifications for the |
| | Clark Middle School Renewal |
| | Project. |

Ms. Comeau explained that the District has been engaged in a lengthy process to develop the Educational Specifications (Ed Specs) for the Clark Middle School remodel. Unfortunately, the design money for the project was on the recently failed bond proposition. She noted that this is a very important document that will be used to guide efforts to fully design and construct the renovation once funding is available.

Mr. Ray Amsden introduced Ms. Mary Cary, an architect and one of the managers on this project, Ms. Cessilye Williams, principal at Clark Middle School, and Mr. Michael Logan, one of the project support staff. Mr. Amsden voiced his appreciation for the public process that has been instrumental in developing these ed specs. He reported that they are based on a 1,058 model capacity. The goal was to develop ed specs that with flexible that would allow movement toward a more traditional middle school model as the opportunity arises. There are several unique elements at Clark Middle School that led to the development of separate, stand-alone Ed Specs rather than using the current general districtwide middle school ed specs. These elements include the lower than normal student to teacher ratio; the preponderance of special education students; the high number of English as a Second Language (ESL) students; and the cultural diversity of the students and community served at the school. Mr. Amsden briefly reviewed details of the ed specs and how the space has been allocated.

Ms. Cecily Williams reported that the Clark Middle School community has been actively involved and is pleased with the ed spec development process. It has been an open process and efforts have been made to be as inclusive as possible with staff, parents, and members of the community. The most important goal is for the students to have an environment that is sound and productive for educational purposes.

Ms. Comeau pointed out that this renovation and remodel has all been done in collaboration with the entire Mountain View community as part

of their community revitalization process. One of the important issues identified is that the school will be welcoming and continue to serve as a center for community activities.

Ms. Marks questioned whether the issue of asbestos has been addressed. Mr. Amsden indicated that, due to the age of the building, there is some asbestos present which has been monitored for some time. He reported that this project would remove asbestos throughout the facility as a part and parcel of the development of the work. Ms. Marks wondered whether there was a plan for how the asbestos would be removed in light of the need to do the renovations while school is in session. Mr. Amsden noted that asbestos removal would not be done with students and staff present. That activity will be scheduled during the summer when school is not in session.

In light of that information, Ms. Marks wondered how summer school at the facility will be handled. Mr. Amsden explained that there are many issues that will need to be worked out once construction is imminent. Ms. Comeau explained that once construction begins summer school would not be scheduled at Clark.

Ms. Marks wondered whether there will there be enough square footage given that Clark is a Title I middle school. Ms. Kerry explained that efforts have been made to design a facility that allows flexible and adaptability in the usage of space.

Mr. Steele indicated that he was very impressed that comments and suggestions from teachers and community members have been woven into the ed specs. He is also pleased with the amount of flexibility built into the design.

Mr. Steiner requested a review of the changes made after the document was completed. Mr. Amsden explained that the biggest change was in the summary of the way classrooms were counted. Ms. Cary noted that notation regarding "auxiliary teaching spaces" has been added. This is a location where teaching is taking place but the space is typically a smaller resource room rather than a regular sized classroom. This notation was added to make clear how many total teaching spaces are in the facility.

In response to a question from Ms. Kennedy, it was explained that Clark Middle School is currently at 133,592 square feet and it will be 174,405 square feet, amounting to a gain of approximately 40,000 square feet. It is important to note that there are also 10 relocatables at Clark. Ms. Comeau

stated that every available space in that building is being used with some spaces double and triple booked throughout the day. Getting a true picture of the overcrowding at Clark involves much more than just looking at the number of students enrolled. There are so many specialized programs that take space to accommodate the needs of the students being served.

Ms. Kennedy has some concern with the fact that the size of the school is to increase by about 30% in light of the difficulty experienced in getting the bonds passed. She would like to look for more efficiency in the use of space. She does understand that the students attending Clark are not even being effectively housed at this point. Ms. Kennedy asked for an explanation of the number of smaller, non-core classroom spaces, indicating that there appears to be some redundancy. She would like to understand how these rooms are going to be used. Mr. Amsden responded that the expectation is that all of those resource classrooms will be utilized consistently throughout the day by a variety of different programs. Those spaces are absolutely critical to the success of schools like Clark where there are lots of small groups that have to be pulled out for various programs to meet the needs of the students. Mr. Logan explained that having the smaller spaces builds in efficiency by having areas available to provide services to smaller groups of students without taking up a regular classroom space. Mr. Metcalfe indicated that, with the explanations given, he sees this plan as much more efficient and not redundant in the number of spaces available for the services being provided.

Mr. Steiner questioned whether building so many smaller spaces based on the type and number of programs currently provided increases the risk of not having the appropriate size spaces when program numbers and needs change. He wondered whether there is any flexibility to modify the space should program changes occur. Mr. Amsden reported that he is unaware of any time when fewer programs and less space were needed after building or renovations were complete. Ms. Cary reported that there are rooms with partitions that can be moved to create larger spaces should the need arise. Ms. Comeau emphasized how important this building is for the students, the staff, and the community. The plans may not be the same as has been seen in other middle schools but it is designed to meet the needs of these students and these programs for the long term.

Mr. Steele commented on the process. He indicated the need to address some of the misconceptions such as those mentioned by an earlier speaker. He recognized that there is some available capacity in some

schools which is one of the driving reasons for the boundary change process the District is currently going through. He noted that the District spends about \$20 million in minor maintenance every year. Major maintenance is bonded for because it covers items that are amortized over the twenty year life of the bond. While there are logical reasons for actions taken by the District, we do not always tell the story very well. Clark Middle School desperately needs to be renovated and it will take a major investment. Bonding is the way to secure the funds to complete the project. The District is catching up with the pent up demand from the last two decades and trying to get schools back in shape for the twenty-first century.

Mr. Friedman added that the Legislature of our state, who makes these determinations, has said that it is public policy that school districts should bond for construction and major maintenance. If they do, the Legislature will pay part of the cost. If they do not, local taxpayers pay all of the cost.

Mr. Roberts voiced his appreciation that something is now being done to address the needs of this school and in this part of town. The Clark middle school community has been very patient and it is high time that renovations be made to that facility.

Mr. Metcalfe reviewed the election results and the voting percentages from the various neighborhood communities, noting that only 9% of the Mountain View district voted. He found it hard to believe that the voters have really spoken with only 24% voter turnout in the community overall. Mr. Metcalfe stated that efforts need to be made to increase voter turnout.

Ms. Kennedy indicated her absolute belief that the issues at Clark need to be addressed. Her concern is making sure that bonds will pass when they come up on the ballot. She requested an explanation of the different purposes for the behavioral support, the in-school suspension and the intervention classrooms. Ms. Cary explained that the behavioral support room is a Special Education classroom. The purpose of the in-school suspension room is self-explanatory. The Intervention classroom will be used for the Teen Impact program.

Mr. Steiner noted that the average number of students per teaching station has changed from 23 to 21.6 since the last meeting. Ms. Cary explained that the change reflects a recalculation, not a change in the number of teaching stations. Mr. Steiner asked if the figure reflects the number of teachers that currently serve this population or does it reflect a proposed increase in teaching staff. Ms. Cary explained that the calculation is based

on a hypothetical number for a typical middle school. This plan does not mean that staffing at Clark will increase. It means that the staff will finally have the proper facilities to provide needed programs and services to their students.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

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

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

ACTION:

Moved by: Tim Steele
seconded by: Mary Marks

To approve, on second reading, the middle school attendance boundaries for the 2007-2008 school year for the Anchorage bowl as shown in Scenario 1 on attachment and to approve the move of the Ft. Richardson students to Gruening Middle School for the 2006-2007 school year. The final decision for the Eagle River/Chugiak area middle school boundary for the 2007-2008 will occur following additional public process in the fall of 2006.

Mr. Todd Torczon testified that the Board has the opportunity to fix the overcrowding at Clark with the opening of the new Muldoon Area middle school. He indicated his belief that it doesn't make sense, in terms of capacity, to move sixth grade into the middle school. He noted that more efforts should be made to move middle school students out of Mears and Hanshaw before adding elementary students to the middle school population. He stated that the proposed boundary changes appear to be

based entirely on matching middle school and high school boundaries without regard to the fact that some schools will remain significantly over capacity. He suggested that sixth grade be left out of the middle school, that additional seventh and eighth graders be moved into the new Muldoon Area middle school, and that boundary changes be made with the emphasis on bringing enrollment at all middle schools close to 100% capacity. He encouraged the Board to postpone action on this memorandum until it can be fixed.

Ms. Grace Wilson, a parent from Ptarmigan Elementary School, read a letter she sent to Ptarmigan parents regarding a petition that was circulated by two Ptarmigan students in an effort to let the District know how the students feel about being left out of the boundaries for the new Muldoon Area middle school. She reiterated that the Ptarmigan community has believed since 1999 that they would attend the new middle school and that they had been told this by ASD representatives in community counsel meetings. She urged the Board to keep the promises made to the Ptarmigan community by adding Ptarmigan to the boundaries for the new middle school. There are over 150 signatures on the petition.

Ms. Carrie Rehe, a Ptarmigan parent, testified that she would like to see Ptarmigan students to go to the new middle school. She pointed out that the development near the new middle school, which was cited as the reason to keep enrollment down when the new school opens, is on the Municipalities 2020 plan and should not have an impact on current boundary plans. She pointed out the increased cost to the District to bus students from the Ptarmigan area to Clark Middle School. She voiced her dissatisfaction with the diversity on the boundary task force noting that it did not include any elementary representation from the affected area.

Ms. Laura Waldon voiced her disappointed and asked that the Board reconsider the Clark Education Specification memorandum approved earlier. She indicated that she is not satisfied with renovations or patch work. She wants a brand new school from top to bottom. She noted that Clark has been neglected for many years and reviewed what she feels their teachers and students there deserve. She does not feel that the needs of the community are being taken into consideration.

Mr. Donald Seliger testified in support of including Ptarmigan into the boundaries for the new middle school. He took issue with how the District is spending money in light of the increased transportation costs that will result from the proposal to bus Ptarmigan students to Clark. He

also voiced disappointment with not having representation from elementary schools in the decision making process for the middle school boundaries.

Ms. Comeau asked Ms. Vandergaw to explain how the Middle School and Elementary Divisions communicated on these boundary recommendations. Ms Vandergaw reported that the Elementary Education Division was represented at all of the middle school boundary meetings. Care was taken to coordinate the task force meetings as there were three different groups going through the process concurrently.

Ms. Comeau explained that the reason the administration is strongly supportive of moving the Ft. Richardson students to Gruening next fall is that the transition at the high school level has been very successful. While she understands how passionately the Ptarmigan community feels about the recommended boundary changes, Ms. Comeau reiterated that the bonds that were sold to build the new middle school were very clear that the school would house sixth, seventh and eighth graders. In addition, the task force did the very best they could knowing that there is overcrowding schools at Scenic Park and Susitna that could be alleviated by including them in the boundaries for the new school. She also reiterated that there was never a commitment to the Ptarmigan community to include them in the boundaries for the new school.

Mr. Steiner voiced his concern with whether District facilities are being used most efficiently. He proposed that only the sixth graders from the overcrowded elementary schools be moved up to the middle school and that the students from the elementary schools that are under capacity move to the middle school for seventh and eighth grade. He believed that this proposal would provide relief at the elementary level and also at Clark Middle School. Ms. Comeau responded that all of the under capacity elementary schools in this area are Title I schools. She noted that even though the number of students indicates that the schools are below 100% capacity, the room utilization shows that every classroom is used in each of these schools. The administration does not believe it is in the best interest of starting a brand new school to have a split grade level configuration. She is convinced that the school and students need to start on the right track to build a school culture. The sixth graders should be allowed to form a team and a bond. This model was extremely successful at Mirror Lake and serves as an example for future programs.

Mr. Steiner questioned why it would matter whether some of the students start middle school in the sixth grade and some start in the seventh as

long as students from each elementary school were moved as a group. Ms. Comeau asked Ms. Fisher to discuss the importance of having a complete cohort of students. Ms. Fisher explained that it is extremely important that all of the sixth graders start together to avoid tension between groups when the students go into the seventh grade. There is also a true benefit for the student to attend middle school for three years. They are able to get physical education, music, and the rich curriculum for three full years. She voiced her concern with dividing the community between the haves and the have-nots if some of the sixth graders were able to reap the benefits of being in the middle school while others were kept at the elementary level.

Mr. Steiner noted that it seems that there is a division in the community now based on those areas zoned for the new school and those who are excluded. He indicated that he is trying to balance what is good for the whole area, even though it might not be quite as good for the new school.

Ms. Marks voiced her belief that having sixth through eighth grade at the middle school would provide a better academic experience. She is very pleased that the District has the opportunity to make this change.

Ms. Kennedy noted that she is really struggling with this recommendation, given the geographic proximity of Ptarmigan to the new middle school. Trying to adhere to the philosophy of keeping cohort groups together adds to the issue of aligning feeder schools. She believes that if keeping cohort groups together is going to be a driving factor in this decision it needs to be the priority in all boundary decisions. Ms. Comeau reviewed the numbers of schools at the three different levels. She explained that there is no way that every cohort of students will be able to move through all three levels together because of where the different schools are located. The task force has looked at this from every angle and continued to feel that the most responsible decision is to move forward with the plan to move sixth, seventh, and eighth grade to the new middle school with the four schools recommended to be zoned into the enrollment boundaries.

Mr. Metcalfe stated that, in his experience, there are always people that are not happy with the boundary changes. Mr. Metcalfe recalled that a major part of the push for the bond during the campaign for the new middle school was building a sixth, seventh, and eighth program. He does not want to change that when the Board spent a great deal of time representing to the Anchorage community that their sixth graders were

going to be in that school. He understood that it is not perfect, but he indicated that he would be supporting the recommendation.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by: John Steiner
seconded by: Crystal Kennedy

That the Muldoon, Creekside and Ptarmigan elementary schools all go to the new Muldoon area middle school starting in seventh grade.

Mr. Steiner explained that he understands that the primary reason for including the schools that were chosen rather than Ptarmigan is because of the overcrowding at Creekside and Susitna. To his mind the most crowded school in this area is Clark Middle School, at 134% of capacity. If anything should be targeted for resolution, Clark should be it. He noted that moving sixth grade to the middle schools will come to the whole area in time, but believed it can wait. He indicated that this action would not change what was said on the bond, it just defers it.

Mr. Steele indicated that enrollment numbers at Clark would be reduced with the original proposal on the table. Boundary changes are never easy. It will only compound the frustration to recommend boundary changes that will need to be changed again in a few years.

The Board went into a brief recess at 8:45 pm to allow staff to calculate the impact the proposed amendment would have on the capacity figures for the new middle school. The meeting was called back to order at 8:55 p.m.

Ms. Gardner reported that the difference in enrollment with the amendment amounts to only 4 students which is a negligible difference in capacity. Mr. Steiner requested a review of the implications on the ability to formulate teams at the sixth grade level with the reduced numbers that would result from the amendment. Ms. Vandergaw reported that significantly reducing the number of sixth graders at the new middle school would result in one sixth grade team functioning at 100 students and would force the need for the approximately 50 additional sixth graders to be accommodated in an integrated team of sixth/seventh combination classes. That reduction in numbers would have a significant impact on the ability of the school to form a well functioning six, seven, eight team structure. Ms. Vandergaw noted that Scenario 1 reduces the number of students at Clark to a level which Facilities suggested would be a safe number to have on the site as that school goes through renovation.

In response to a question from Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Amsden explained that the plans for Clark are to keep the students in the current facility while the new classroom section is being built. The students would then move into the new addition while the older section is being remodeled. It is not possible to project whether students will need to remain in relocatables during the construction.

Mr. Steiner wondered whether the new middle school is designed in a manner that allows for a separation between the sixth grade house and the seventh and eighth grade houses. He also questioned whether decreasing the sixth grade population while increasing the number of seventh and eighth graders would cause an imbalance in how the housing design works. Ms. Vandergaw recalled that the school was designed to support a transitional year for the sixth grade as a separate cohort group while allowing some flexibility so that accommodations can be made for individuals. Ms. Comeau noted that she believed changing the balance in numbers of students at the three grade levels would be a significant detriment to the goal of having a separate area for the sixth graders.

VOTE on the AMENDMENT:

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

MOTION FAILS

VOTE on the MAIN MOTION:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

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: Mary Marks

To approve, on first reading, the recommended 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 referenced in ASD Memorandum #219 revised, dated May 1, 2006.

Betsy Goudreau, the parent of a student in the K-2 Autism program, reminded the Board that she had previously testified against the recommendation to move the Autism program from Airport Heights. She voiced her appreciation for the Board's attention to her concerns. Since that time, a decision had been made to move the program to Ptarmigan Elementary. It was also announced that it is the District's intent to also begin a Preschool - Kindergarten program at that school. A 4-6 Autism program for the future is also being discussed. It was clear to her that an effort was being made to create some long term stability for the program in east Anchorage. Ms. Goudreau noted that the administration and the Special Education department had made considerable effort to respond to the concerns of the parents and generate the best solution possible given this very trying situation.

Ms. Kara Thrasher-Livingston, the parent of two children in the Autism program, voiced her appreciation to the Board for the timely response to the concerns of parents in the program. She indicated that she is very excited about the administration at Ptarmigan, noting that the principal has gone to great lengths to prepare her school and staff to receive the children in the Autism program.

Ms. Comeau thanked the speakers for coming back to update the Board on what has transpired on this issue since the last meeting. She also noted her appreciation for their testimony at the last meeting and for bringing some very important issues to light. Ms. Comeau applauded the staff for their work to develop a workable solution to address those issues.

Ms. Comeau reported that the task force reconvened and had made some minor adjustments between Williwaw and Wonder Park. She concurs with these changes.

Mr. Steiner questioned whether the percentages reported for Ptarmigan include the students in the Autism program. Ms. Dargan-Steed explained that the reported number does reflect the addition of the autism classes to that facility.

Ms. Marks asked whether the reduction in enrollment at these Title I schools will allow more opportunities for services to be offered to students. Ms. Comeau explained that staffing is allocated by the number of students, so there may be some reduction or reassignment of staff. The change in enrollment at these schools should not result in changes to services provided through Title I.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

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: Mary Marks
seconded by: Macon Roberts

To approve, on first reading, the recommended attendance boundaries for the 2006-2007 school year for Bear Valley, Willard L. Bowman, Huffman, O'Malley, and Rabbit Creek elementary schools as shown on Attachment A of Memorandum #220, revised, dated May 1, 2006.

Mr. Jeffrey Martin addressed the Board on behalf of his wife, his two sons, and the Potter Valley community. He questioned why the overcrowding at Bear Valley was not addressed two years ago when first brought to the administration's attention. He believed that incorporating address verification into the registration process and eliminating zone exemptions at that time would have eliminated 70 students from Bear Valley and avoided the need for these boundary changes. He stated that it is his understanding that students who currently zone exempt into Bear Valley are going to be allowed to stay there next year and noted how unfair it seems to force students who currently live in the boundaries to move while allowing students from outside to remain. He wondered why Scenario 5 is no longer being considered since it affects the fewest number of children and families.

Ms. Molly Connelly noted that the original Bottoms-Up idea called for deep boundary cuts. With the latest recommendation, the Bottoms-Up plan doesn't work so well because the boundaries are not cut deeply enough leaving a real risk of overcrowding. The negatives to the revised proposal are that 98 students are being forcibly moved and students are still going to be bounced back and forth between peer groups as they move from elementary to middle school. She does not believe that the real issues have been addressed. Students are still being moved for the ease of bussing and inaccurate maps are still being used to guide decisions leading to chopped-up neighborhoods and split-up families.

Florian Browoski voiced his appreciation to the Board and the administration for their time and willingness to listen to all of the concerns of the Bear Valley community and create a new proposal. He indicated, however, that the new proposal misses the target as it addresses the immediate issue of overcrowding but neglects to recognize the need for long term growth. He encouraged the Board to think about another alternative. He suggested looking again at Scenarios 4, 5, and 6, all of which create sizable changes in the population. He stated that he doesn't believe a policy change is necessary, suggesting instead that the Board allow the Bottoms-Up plan to serve as a pilot program. He noted his belief that the current option is not long term and is not sustainable.

Ms. LeAnn Osgood read a letter on behalf of Erin Borowski. The letter outlined Ms. Borowski's frustration with the current recommendation. She continues to believe that the Bottoms-Up is a workable solution.

Ms. Dawn Carman asked the Board to reject the current recommendation. She voiced her appreciation for the pledge to do address verification. She believed that too many unknowns remain in the projected growth figures. She stated that Scenario 5 makes the most sense to her in that it relieves the overcrowding at Bear Valley but decreases the likelihood of a second move for the Potter Valley families. It would be irresponsible to make changes now and monitor the situation in anticipation of the need to make changes again in the near future, as is stated in the proposal. Ms. Carmen urged the Board to consider Scenario 5 which would buy more time for the development of a sustainable plan that includes the Potter Valley area and also relieves the overcrowding at Bear Valley.

Ms. Brenda Avery addressed the Board in support of Bottoms-Up and Scenario 5. She explained her family's situation where her cul-de-sac has been scooped out of the Bear Valley zone. She asked the Board to consider added that location back into the Bear Valley boundaries with all of the surrounding neighborhoods. She noted that any change to this location would only affect her two children.

Mr. Rene Contreras testified that he liked the new recommendation. He does, however, continue to support the Bottoms-Up proposal. He reviewed possible alteration to the proposal to limit unknowns in the plan.

Ms. Laurie Wade, a parent in the Rabbit Creek parent, addressed the parents of Bear Valley students who will be moving to Rabbit Creek with the proposed boundary changes. She stated that Rabbit Creek may be an old school but it is a really good school. The school has a really good staff and a terrific administration. She encouraged the parents to visit the school and be open to the possibility of joining the Rabbit Creek family.

Mr. Daryl McClendon voiced his appreciation to the administration for addressing the concerns regarding the students in the "boot area". He indicated that he continues to support the Bottoms-Up plan, believing that it would have marginal impact without affecting the numbers adversely.

Ms. Susan Braukmann thanked the Board and the administration for coming to Bear Valley. She testified in support of the Bottoms-Up plan as originally proposed. The issue through this process that is the most troublesome to her related to the topic of the Bottoms-Up plan resulting in fractured neighborhoods. Her perception is that there is greater concern for the families yet to move into the grandfathered neighborhoods, who would have full disclosure of what schools they would be attending, than

for the families who are being forced to leave. Many families bought their homes, at least in part, so that their children could attend Bear Valley.

Ms. Andrea Johnson, the parent of two Bear Valley students, voiced her appreciation for the careful consideration for the concerns of the families in the "boot area". She supported the superintendents' most recent proposal, believing it to be the most logical and thoughtful scenario suggested because it truly takes into consideration not only immediate enrollment relief at Bear Valley but also the future impact on students in the "boot area".

Ms. Comeau reported that there are currently 17 students zone-exempted into Bear Valley. She also reported that she has already directed the staff to verify addresses by residence, not just post office box, during the activation and registration process in August. That will take place districtwide, not just at Bear Valley. Ms. Comeau indicated that she would look at the area brought up by Ms. Avery before second reading.

Ms. Comeau applauded the supporters of the Bottoms-Up program for their creativity and their passion. She indicated that the administration has studied the plan and continues to believe that it would be a logistical nightmare to administer. She reiterated that these boundary decisions were not made lightly.

Mr. Steele congratulated the Bear Valley families who have dealt with this issue so creatively and so passionately. He applauded the superintendent for being responsive to the concerns of the community.

Mr. Friedman commented on the growth projections. It is very difficult to predict the impact that housing development will have on school enrollment. Mr. Friedman expressed his appreciation for the fact that, no matter how many people complained about having to move out of Bear Valley or having the boundaries changed, he could not remember any negative comments about any other schools. The comments were always presented in the light of wanting to stay at Bear Valley, not in light of not wanting to attend another school.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

Mr. Friedman explained that boundary changes require two readings. Things can be changed between first and second reading. The second reading of the two elementary boundary changes will be next Monday, May 8, 2006.

ASD Memorandum # 237 - Personnel Report

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

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner
seconded by: Macon Roberts

To approve the personnel report and addendum as revised.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

- I. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- J. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

- K. COMMUNICATIONS & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

- L. EXECUTIVE SESSION - PERSONNEL/FINANCE/NEGOTIATIONS
LITIGATION

M. ADJOURNMENT

The Regular Meeting of May 1, 2006, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 10:05.

Jeff Friedman, President

Mary Marks, Clerk

Johanna Lee, Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approved