

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING OF OCTOBER 16, 2006

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, October 16, 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, Macon Roberts, Jeff Friedman, Jake Metcalfe, Mary Marks, and Tim Steele.

Others Present: Carol Comeau, Rhonda Gardner, Leslie Vandergaw, Mike Henry, Patricia McRae, Jerry Sjolander, Jeff Wood, Eric Tollefsen, Michelle Egan, Robb Boyer, Janet Stokesbary, George Vakalis, Ralph Feriani, Lt. Col. Luu, Ray Amsden, Pam Chenier, Stan Syta, Marie Laule, Johanna Lee, the press, and other interested people.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Comeau noted that there was a revision on the date on ASD Memorandum #66, Weighted Grades for International Baccalaureate Higher Level Classes. The date was changed from October 2, 2006 to October 16, 2006. There were also revised maps provided for ASD Memorandum #58, Enrollment Status Update: September 29, 2006.

The agenda was approved with the noted revisions by unanimous consent.

C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Marks reported that she had recently attended the Council of Urban Boards of Education Conference. She noted that she had attended the conference in light of the programs that were offered on Indian Education. She explained that the ASD is already doing many of the items brought to light during the conference. The most important item was making native families feel welcome. She also reported that the cross-cultural training that is taking place in Anchorage is not happening in other areas of the country. She thanked the administration for providing a welcoming atmosphere to all of the families in the District and making them feel

comfortable in the schools. Ms. Marks also took advantage of an opportunity to visit a local school while at the conference. Some of the students attending the school are not U.S. citizens. She was impressed by the student-led conversation on the importance of getting an education.

Ms. Marks announced the National Indian Education Association Conference will be held at the Egan Center this weekend. It will be the first time that the NIEA has held a conference in Alaska. She encouraged others to join her at that conference. The following weekend the AFN will hold its annual convention here in Anchorage.

Mr. Steele reported that October is Community Council Appreciation Month. He hoped that citizens around Anchorage will make it a point to attend their community council meetings.

Mr. Roberts voiced his agreement with Ms. Marks regarding the progress that the ASD is making with Native students and making our schools more user-friendly. Since the AFACT conference held eighteen months ago he reported that he has received a lot of feedback indicating progress with student's transitioning from small villages to larger schools in the District.

Ms. Comeau noted that the administration will be discussing this issue in much more detail during the work session on the Profile of Performance in early November. She briefly reported that Romig and Willowcrest have done a wonderful job of working through many of these issues.

D. AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Comeau introduced Ms. Marman, principal at Turnagain Elementary School. Ms. Marman introduced students from the Pioneer class of the Russian Immersion program. These third grade students have been studying Russian since first grade. The students performed a short play, a fairy tale called "Turnip" for the entertainment of the Board and members of the community.

1. ASD Memorandum # 90 - Recognition for 2006 H.U.G.S.S. and Coats for Kids

Ms. Marks read that for the sixth year in a row, thousands of students started off school on the right foot thanks to the tireless efforts of the local community.

Catholic Social Services, the Salvation Army and Lutheran Social Services have partnered with numerous agencies and businesses, including the Mt. View Boys and Girls Club and the Anchorage School District, to help children start the school year with proper supplies and coats through the H.U.G.S.S. (Helping Us Give School Supplies) and Coats for Kids project.

During the summer, community members and businesses are asked to donate school supplies and gently used coats or to make cash donations to ensure children in the local community will have adequate supplies to start school.

This year, a record 5,322 students received supplies, backpacks and winter clothing through the program. Approximately 25,000 students have benefited from H.U.G.S.S. since its inception in 2001.

The program couldn't have happened without significant assistance from TOTE, Carlile Transportation, 3M, Providence Alaska Medical Center and Wells Fargo. Each of these organizations provided services ranging from storage to shipping to significant financial donations.

Also, thanks to Barb Dexter with the ASD's Child in Transition/Homeless program, 400 additional homeless students were identified at this year's H.U.G.S.S. distribution. Those students will now be able to get help and support through the Child in Transition/Homeless program.

The School Board recognized the above mentioned organizations and businesses for their continued dedication and efforts put forth to make this a truly successful project for all involved.

2. ASD Memorandum # 96 - Recognition of National Merit Scholar Semifinalists

Mr. Steele read that the Anchorage School District is proud to have 29 semifinalists for the 2007 National Merit Scholarship Program.

The students are: Duncan Arie, West High School, Justin Birchell, West High School, Alice Bradley, Chugiak High School, Gavin Bryant, West High School, Nicholas Bybee, South Anchorage High School, Emily Cohn, West High School, Matt Crimp, Steller Secondary, Stephanie DeMay, Chugiak High School, Joseph Falcone, South

Anchorage High School, Anne-Marie Freudenthal, Service High School, Alena Gerlek, West High School, Amber Gunn, Bartlett High School, Russell Haering, West High School, Amelia Josephson, West High School, Brittany Keates, Service High School, Lauren Knox, Chugiak High School, Merrra Lundell, Chugiak High School, Ellie Millen, West High School, Reuben Mikes, Service High School, Celia Miller, Polaris -12 School, Anson Moxness, West High School, Christopher Oliver, East High School, Megan Rawson, East High School, Max Rosefigura, West High School, Jennifer Rinker, Service High School, Hayden Ripple, South Anchorage High School, Hillary Walker, East High School, Rosalind Worcester, West High School, and Nathan Zencey, West High School.

These 29 students are now among the approximately 16,000 semifinalists nationwide in the competition for 8,200 Merit Scholarship awards, worth \$33 million, that will be offered next spring.

Students qualify as semi-finalists based on their PSAT scores. To become a finalist for the Merit Scholarship award, a student must have an outstanding academic record, be endorsed and recommended by the school principal, and do well on the SAT. In the application, the student must also include a self-descriptive essay and information about his or her participation and leadership in school and community activities.

Merit Scholarship winners of 2007 will be announced in between April and July.

The School Board recognized the above mentioned students for their outstanding academic achievements.

E. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

1. Student Advisory Board

Mr. Feriani reported that the Student Advisory Board met last week. Elections were held. Mr. Feriani was elected president and Edwin Kim, South High School, was elected vice-president. Ms. Sue Holway, Activities Principal at East High School, spoke to the Board about Flag Football and Title IX issues. The students voiced concern about the drop in vending machine revenue. Service High School reported a decrease from \$8,500 to \$1,200 a month.

Mr. Feriani reported that Youth Vote will be having a debate at West High School on from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. on November 7th which will be broadcast live on Channel 2. There will also be a forum from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on November 6th at the downtown Kaladi Brothers location. He encouraged the youth to take these opportunities to get involved with the community and see what the gubernatorial candidates are all about.

A representative from Covenant House attended the S.A.B. meeting to speak about the candlelight vigil which is scheduled for November 16th at 6:00 p.m. in town square. This event will benefit students who are in transition.

Mr. Feriani reported that AASG was postponed due to the flooding in Valdez. It will now be held November 9-11, 2006.

The next SAB meeting will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. on November 7, 2007, at King Career Center.

Mr. Steiner asked what months the reported drops in vending machine revenue took place. Mr. Feriani indicated his belief that the figures represent only the month of September. Ms. Comeau added that this report represents a trend that the administration is watching. This problem was anticipated and the Board had made a commitment to watch this and find a way to make up some of the revenue losses incurred as a result of the new wellness policy because it will have a significant impact on activities.

2. Military Delegate

Lt. Col. Luu thanked the administration for opportunity to talk to elementary principals last week regarding deployments and their effect on the children of military members. He appreciated the ideas that were discussed during that meeting and the heartfelt conviction that was expressed for helping military children and their families.

Lt. Col. Luu reported that he read an issue of The Army Times last week that included an article which ranked school districts serving fifteen different Army posts. He was pleased to report that the Anchorage School District and its teachers are ranked among the highest. This ranking takes into account not only test scores but also many intangibles experienced by military members with children attending school in these districts.

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

The MECAC representative was not able to attend the meeting.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Gretchen Wehmhoff, a teacher in the District, addressed the negotiation situation. She believed that the teachers, the administration, and the Board all hold some responsibility for the situation. She explained that the situation is one in which the teachers are working without a contract. She noted that pulling out of this will take some work. Ideally quality cooperation between the District and the AEA would probably solve many of the issues but there are some major factors to overcome. Time is not on either side and she does not believe that the time between bargaining sessions has been used effectively to avoid the current situation. She asked everyone to consider a plan to avoid ever showing up in this situation again. She indicated that neither the District nor the AEA can afford to wait until the middle of negotiations to solve their problems. She felt that when the AEA and the administration work together outside of the bargaining process there have been some successful results and she shared several examples. She felt that too much time is being spent arguing rather than finding ways to work together. Her suggestion was to develop a joint committee after these negotiations have been settled whose primary job would be to look at the long term goals to compensate our teachers, truly bringing a quality teacher to every classroom without increasing class size.

Mr. David Kohler, the chair of the special education department at Service High School, spoke in response to Mr. Friedman's comments at the end of the Board year this past April. At that meeting Mr. Friedman had encouraged the Board to apply the notion of best value contracting which recognizing that the lowest price can cost more in the long run. Mr. Kohler noted that the same notion applies to teachers. Having less than the best teachers can cost more in the long run as students begin to fall through the cracks. The recruitment and retention of better teachers would save money in the long run by creating a more stable work force which needs less repair and replacements.

Ms. Elnora Wands, a teacher at Bartlett High School, shared the reason she believes that the Board and the administration should be doing everything in their power to make Anchorage teachers not only the highest paid teachers in Alaska but among the highest paid teachers in the nation. She explained that there have been many studies that show that teachers are the most important factor in a child's education. She encouraged the

Board and the administration to find the money that is necessary to make Anchorage a truly quality district that attracts and retains teachers.

Darrell Horton, a teacher from Mt. Spurr Elementary, read a letter he received from the District advising him that, beginning in October, there would be an increase in the amount deducted from his paycheck for his health insurance premiums. He found fault with the letter as it went on to say, in so many words, that the reason for the increase is that the union rejected the last contract offer. He found that portion of the letter to be inappropriate, believing it to have a mocking, taunting tone.

Ms. Ilona Barber, an itinerant beginning band teacher who travels to seven elementary schools, reviewed a list of her responsibilities. She noted that the District has not offered a contract that the teachers believe to be fair, compensatory and acknowledges their work, effort and success. She discussed the advantages of providing that type of contract for teachers. She referenced a study that found that enthusiastic employees far out produce and out perform the average workforce. The study goes on to report what employees believe makes a good boss. Fairness was ranked as the number one item. The teachers want to be recognized and rewarded fairly for what they contribute.

Mr. David Bisegger, a teacher at South Anchorage High School, indicated that it was no surprise to him that the last tentative contract failed. He reported that a large number of teachers in the District have to supplement their teachers salaries with second jobs. He addressed several issues including the 188 teacher work days, the benefit package, and the idea of three months of summer vacation. He indicated that he would like to hear the administration and the Board to speak up in support of the teachers rather than putting them down in the press. He closed by saying that he could not encourage students to go into the teaching profession.

Mr. Eric Rassler, a teacher at Abbott Loop Elementary, compared the beginning wages for professionals in Anchorage. He noted that salaries for several professions, including RNs, police officers, and fire fighters start in the low \$50,000 range. He reported that the starting salary for teachers in the ASD is slightly over \$36,000 a year. Mr. Rassler also highlighted how the new retirement system negatively impacts the economics of teaching in the District.

Mr. Cory Aist, a teacher in the District, shared his concerns as a parent of two elementary children. He noted that half of the teachers who have taught his children are no longer with the District. Mr. Aist shared reports

that indicate that one-fourth of new teachers leave the profession within the first four years of teaching. Many critics and researchers have compared the teaching profession to a revolving door. These same individuals also argue that school staffing problems are caused by too many teachers leaving the profession, not by an insufficient supply of qualified individuals. As a parent he believed that teacher expertise is the most important factor in his child's education and academic achievement. He encouraged the Board to focus their efforts on retaining talented and committed teachers.

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 - August 14, 2006
- b. Regular Meeting - August 28, 2006
- c. Special Meeting - October 2, 2006

2. ASD Memorandum # 95 - Recommendation regarding ASD Land, (Tract B, T131N, R3W, Section 12) on Muldoon Tract B

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board declare the southern portion of Tract B in the vicinity of Bartlett High School as excess to District needs and that the School board approve the transfer of management authority of this parcel back to the Municipality of Anchorage.

3. ASD Memorandum # 91 - Acceptance of Grant Award: Foreign Language Assistance Program - Mission is Russian (Project MIR2)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a grant from the U. S. Department of Education's Foreign Language Assistance Program, in the amount of \$217,887 for the first year of a three-year grant. The project will expand the District's Russian partial immersion program from the primary grades through grades three, four, and five.

4. ASD Memorandum # 92 - Acceptance of Grant Award: Youth-Directed Peer Education Initiative

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a continuation grant from the Alaska Highway Safety Planning Agency, in the amount of \$197,863 to fund the Safe and Drug-Free Schools (SDFS) Program's peer education initiative.

5. ASD Memorandum # 80 - Approval of Sole Source Award for Construction Academy at King Career Center

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to enter into a contract with Alaska Works Partnerships (AWP) in an amount not to exceed \$364,500, and with the Alaska Department of Labor (DOL) in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 to provide training for adults and graduated Anchorage School District students attending the Anchorage Construction Academy courses and workshops at King Career Center for the period of October 17, 2006, through June 30, 2007.

6. ASD Memorandum # 66 - Weighted Grades for International Baccalaureate Higher Level

It is the Administration's recommendation that the International Baccalaureate program be removed from pilot status and, further, that each of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Higher Level classes receive weighted credit beginning in the 2006-2007 school year.

7. ASD Memorandum # 39 - Personnel Report

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

Mr. Metcalfe requested that ASD Memorandum #80, Approval of Sole Source Award for Construction Academy at King Career Center be pulled for discussion. Mr. Steiner requested that ASD Memorandum #95, Recommendation Regarding ASD Land (Tract B, T131N, R3W, Section 12) on Muldoon Tract B, be pulled for discussion. Mr. Friedman requested that ASD Memorandum #66, Weighted Grades for International Baccalaureate Higher Level Classes, be pulled for discussion.

Ms. Comeau requested that ASD Memorandum #58, Enrollment Status Update: September 30, 2006, ASD Memorandum #81, Elementary Reading Initiatives Update and ASD Memorandum #68, 2005-2006 Certificated

Recruitment Report, all be pulled from the Superintendent's Report for discussion.

ACTION:

Moved by: Jake Metcalfe
Seconded by: Mary Marks

To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 14, 2006, the Regular Meeting of August 28, 2006, the Special Meeting of October 2, 2006, and Memoranda #91, #92, #80, #66, and #82.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 95 - Recommendation regarding ASD Land, (Tract B, T131N, R3W, Section 12) on Muldoon Tract B

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board declare the southern portion of Tract B in the vicinity of Bartlett High School as excess to District needs and that the School board approve the transfer of management authority of this parcel back to the Municipality of Anchorage.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner
Seconded by: Tim Steele

To approve the Administration's recommendation that the School Board declare the southern portion of Tract B in the vicinity of Bartlett High School as excess to District needs and that the School board approve the transfer of management authority of this parcel back to the Municipality of Anchorage.

Ms. Steiner voiced his concern with using the word "excess" in this recommendation. The District may not need this specific location for District activities but it should not imply that the District has all of the land needed because there is a need for additional land for future school sites. This particular site is not excess or surplus land, it is just not well suited. Mr. Steiner does not oppose the transfer but he is concerned about the statement of excess and having confidence that the District will get compensating property back from the municipality.

Mr. Steele noted that the current municipality administration has been very upfront about this process. He also desired that the record show that the District does have parcel needs.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by: John Steiner
Seconded by: Tim Steele

Moved to change the wording of the original motion to replace the word "excess" to "not suited".

The amendment was adopted by unanimous consent.

VOTE on MOTION as AMENDED:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 80 - Approval of Sole Source Award for Construction Academy at King Career Center

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to enter into a contract with Alaska Works Partnerships (AWP) in an amount not to exceed \$364,500, and with the Alaska Department of Labor (DOL) in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 to provide training for adults and graduated Anchorage School District students attending the Anchorage Construction Academy courses and workshops at King Career Center for the period of October 17, 2006, through June 30, 2007.

ACTION:

Moved by: Jake Metcalfe
Seconded by: Macon Roberts

To approve the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to enter into a contract with Alaska Works Partnerships (AWP) in an amount not to exceed \$364,500, and with the Alaska Department of Labor (DOL) in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 to provide training for adults and graduated Anchorage School District students attending the Anchorage Construction Academy courses and workshops at King Career Center for the period of October 17, 2006 through June 30, 2007.

Mr. Metcalfe noted that he pulled this memorandum to allow for a presentation on the Anchorage Construction Academy at KCC. Ms. Comeau introduced Ms. Kathleen Castle, project director, Mike Andrews, Alaska Works Partnership director, and Dick Cattenaugh from Alaska General Contractors.

Ms. Castle provided a brief overview of the Anchorage construction Academy. A diverse group of interested parties met with legislators last winter in an effort to begin to address the issue of labor shortages in the construction trades. As a result of those meetings the legislature appropriated \$1 million to start the Anchorage Construction Academy program. There are six partners working together on this project including ASD, AGC, Alaska Works Partnership, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Department of Labor, and the Anchorage Home Builders Association.

Mr. Mike Andrews, director of the Alaska Works Partnership, explained that they began planning with the ASD some time ago on ways to provide career training and vocation education to get high school students on a pathway toward entry level jobs in the construction trades. The first step toward this goal was to work with high school students who graduated last year who had achieved a certain level of math and who had an interest in construction. These students applied to the Academy which

promised them some intensive training and job placement. There were fourteen students who went through the program, eleven of whom went to work with contractors in the area within two weeks of graduating from the program. Of the other three students, one went on to college, one went into the National Guard and one went to work in a family business. This first round was quite successful.

The next challenge was to develop a pathway for adults into the construction industry in partnership with KCC and the District. The goal is to link industry, education, and work force development. The program is now at the beginning stages of building that adult program at KCC.

Mr. Dick Cattenaugh noted that AGC benefits by being the recipient of the graduates of these programs. The key to this program is not just the training; it is the ability to link students to employers and jobs.

Mr. Mike Henry reported that the Construction Academy is truly a team effort. The goal for this year is to prepare 200 individuals to be ready to go to work. He noted that it has been a wonderful partnership already. He explained that the District is receiving a good portion of the money to build the pipeline of students and is now able to offer introductory courses for students at the home schools and during the third session at KCC. This allows the students more opportunity to take focused classes during regular sessions which provide the training needed to go directly to work.

Ms. Comeau noted that the development of this program has truly been collaborative effort and is providing very exciting opportunities for our students.

Mr. Metcalfe reported that his sister works for Mr. Andrews at Alaska Works Partnership. While he does not believe that this presents a conflict, he provided that information in case there is any perception of one.

Ms. Marks asked how the program plans to attract minority students. Mr. Andrews responded that, on the adult side, the program is working with the Cook Inlet Tribal Council Workforce Development program on recruiting and placing people in the Academy courses. The program has also been working with the local chapter of the NAACP. Mr. Andrews reported that over 80% of the people served by Alaska Works are Alaska Natives. They also service veterans who they also hope to recruit for this program. There is also a "Women in the Trades" program to engage more women in construction careers. Mr. Andrews believed that there is a

broad foundation for minority outreach but they remained open to other ideas to assist in those efforts. Ms. Castle noted that, in addition to the many ways that the ASD recruits students into courses and into KCC, presentations about this program are being made at all of the comprehensive high schools.

Mr. Henry noted that the District is able to use this grant money to expand opportunities, not only for a third session at KCC, but also for after school programs at four comprehensive high schools. This program encourages younger students to get involved earlier in their education by providing the means to take these classes outside of the regular school day.

Mr. Steele asked Mr. Cattaugh to discuss the efforts being made to secure future funding. Mr. Cattaugh explained that he has had discussions to have future funding for this program go through the Department of Labor budget rather than through the Department of Education. The funding will be for work force development. Mr. Cattaugh also indicated the need to find a way for this to be an ongoing program beyond the small group involved in the initial collaboration.

Ms. Comeau noted that there will be a need to have some proof that this program is successful and is worth a statewide investment. It will also take a community investment. She emphasized that the program is just getting started.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 66 - Weighted Grades for International
Baccalaureate Higher Level

It is the Administration's recommendation that the International Baccalaureate program be removed from pilot status and, further, that each of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Higher Level classes receive weighted credit beginning in the 2006-2007 school year.

ACTION:

Moved by: Tim Steele
Seconded by: Macon Roberts

To approve the Administration's recommendation that the International Baccalaureate program be removed from pilot status and, further, that each of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Higher Level classes receive weighted credit beginning in the 2006-2007 school year.

Mr. Friedman explained that he had asked that this memo be pulled in order to initiate a discussion of the broader issue of weighted grades in general. He requested a brief explanation of why the District has weighted grades.

Mr. Henry explained that when the District started awarding weighted grades it was for the expressed and sole reason to encourage as many students as possible to take advanced placement courses and to seek the academic rigor that advanced placement courses offer. The efforts to that effect have certainly worked. The process does not give our students an advantage once they leave high school as the first thing that most colleges do when receiving high school transcripts is un-weight the grades, but it does serve as an incentive for taking a more challenging course of study. He also maintained that this will continue to serve as an incentive at West High School for the IB program.

Ms. Comeau noted that when the decision was originally made to offer weighted grades for advanced courses there were a number of schools that had a lot of advanced placement classes and there were other schools that offered very few. She agreed that it is time to look at the entire set of high school graduation requirements, including the issue of weighted grades. Ms. Comeau believed that the discussion should involve the teachers, the principals, the counselors and the students. In addressing the issue before the Board regarding the International Baccalaureate, Ms. Comeau indicated that the rigor of those courses equal or exceed the Advanced Placement courses.

Mr. Steele requested information regarding recruiting efforts and program capacity of the IB program. Mr. Rick Stone, principal at West High School, reported that the program is continuing to grow. Last year there were 85 students in the program. This year there are close to 100. West High School is a closed school due to building capacity. There are students trying to zone-exempt into West for the IB program, the School of

the Arts program and some of the other special programs available there. Ms. Susan Haines, a counselor and one of the IB coordinators at West High School, addressed the issue of attracting students around the District and reported that many highly gifted students are granted zone exemptions to attend West High School. There has been an orientation in the fall and in the spring of each year for students around the District to come and learn more about the IB program. She anticipates that the IB program will continue to grow.

Ms. Comeau added that people who transfer into the Anchorage area, such as those in the military community, greatly appreciate the availability of the IB program because it is a consistent program around the world. This provides a very stable, high level education for students who must move in and out of the District.

Ms. Marks asked how the program identifies middle school students for the program. Ms. Haines explained that the program seeks to attract students from middle school, rather than identify them. Ms. Marks asked how the message is getting out to the middle schools. Ms. Haines noted that she had attended forums for parents looking at high school options. The counselors at the middle schools are also made aware of the variety of high school programs available for their students.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

The Board went into recess at 8:15 p.m. Mr. Friedman called the Board back to order at 8:30 p.m. Mr. Metcalfe was excused from the meeting during the recess.

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. ASD Memorandum # 83 - Project Status Report

This is a report of activities and project status changes in Major Capital Projects during the period of September 27, 2006 through October 10, 2006.

2. ASD Memorandum # 85 - Facility Contract Modification Report and Completed Projects for the Month of September 2006

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

3. ASD Memorandum # 84 - Conflict of Interest Report - First Quarter FY 2006-2007

The attached listing of employee Conflict of Interest Waiver and Disclosure actions is forwarded in accordance with School Board Policy Section 725.44. This information is provided as the first quarter report for the FY 2006-2007 school year.

4. ASD Memorandum # 58 - Enrollment Status Update: September 30, 2006

Enrollment as of September 29, 2006, the official membership date for the District, was a total of 49,068 students. This enrollment is 521 (1.5%) students less than the 49,589 reported for the same time last year.

Ms. Comeau reminded the Board that a slight decline had been predicted in enrollment but the reported enrollment shows a more significant decline than anticipated. The administration is closely looking at the trends in enrollment as those numbers drive the budget assumptions for next year. Ms. Comeau noted that enrollment is down statewide. She reported that MatSu is still growing but not at the rate it has been.

Ms. Ophelia Dargon-Steede noted that she believed that military deployments have impacted enrollment. It is extremely difficult to read the trends. Ms. Comeau noted that there are several outstanding issues that the administration will be addressing including the K-12 Chugiak/Eagle River boundaries, and the enrollment imbalance between Tudor and Lake Otis elementary schools.

5. ASD Memorandum # 81 - Elementary Reading Initiatives Update

A School Board measurable achievement goal set in 1997 stating that "All students will be independent readers by the end of the third grade," set the stage for the Anchorage School District elementary reading initiative. The reading initiative began as a K-3 initiative and subsequently expanded to K-6.

Ms. Comeau noted that she is very excited to bring this report to the Board. She was disappointed that so many of the teachers had left the meeting because there is some very good news in this report, much of it due to the hard work of the teachers.

Ms. Patricia McRae introduced reading support teachers Teresa Patka, Anne McLain, and Alice Smith, principals Karen Reeve, John Kito, and reading coach Erin Benik. Ms. McRae indicated that this report is directly related to a goal set by the School Board about nine years ago which indicated that all children would be independent readers by the end of the third grade. That was a visionary goal at the time.

The current School Board goal says that a higher percentage of students will master reading skills and strategies to read proficiently at the end of grade 3. It shows the Board's recognition of the importance of end of third grade as a milestone for students. Students need to know how to read in order to access what they are learning beginning with the fourth grade curriculum. The Reading Initiative started as K-3 program which the superintendent expanded to a K-6 program. There are six reading teachers who each serve ten schools. There is also a multi-sensory instruction support teacher who supports all of the teachers who use MSI. The reading support teachers have trained the classroom teachers and specialists in comprehensive literacy and assessment. The District now has all grade levels of teachers trained in delivering an instructional program in reading and writing based on a comprehensive literacy model. This was accomplished in the first seven years of the Reading Initiative.

The District now has an assessment plan in which the same standard is held in all schools for what is considered proficiency in reading at all grade levels. Ms. McRae reviewed the benefits of a reading core curriculum. One of the goals of the reading initiative is to identify students who are having difficulty at an early stage and intervene as soon as possible.

Ms. McRae reported that the kindergarten DRA scores increased by 6% over the last year. The District has only been doing the DRA at the end of kindergarten for three years. In 2001, 73% of third graders were reading with proficiency. Last year, districtwide, 80.8% of third grade students were reading with proficiency. In further review of the data it was noted that more than 80% of students in all grade levels, third through sixth, meet or exceed reading proficiency.

Ms. McRae introduced a video showcasing the Reading First program. The video shows how a core curriculum is implemented in two different elementary schools and gives perspectives from parents, teachers and students.

Ms. Ella Smith one of the reading support specialists noted that she is extremely proud of the District for implementing this fine program. She provided some history on the beginning activities of the program including training activities, providing books and supplies, and starting leveled book rooms in every building. She was proud that the District had the vision to wait until a curriculum was available that met our standards. The adopted program encompasses sheltered instruction for English language learners, has a strong preventative foundation and intervention components to support struggling readers, and has materials that accommodate students who are above grade level.

Ms. Anne McLain, a reading support specialist, explained that she supports schools that are non-Title I schools. She spends one day each week in each school. She briefly reviewed some of the struggles and successes of implementing a core curriculum program. She acknowledged that anytime change is induced into an institution there are difficulties but she has found that many of the early struggles have turned into success stories. The volume of material is quite overwhelming and one of the first orders of business is getting organized. Teachers appreciate that there are a variety of genres and the students like the stories. The program has a spiraling curriculum so if the student does not achieve mastery the first time around they will have another opportunity. The program allows for accountability across grade levels as teachers know what other teachers are teaching in their buildings. The program aligns with the GLEs so that teachers don't have to do that on their own. Ms. Teresa Patka described a day in the life of a reading support specialist noting that every day is different and brings new challenges.

Mr. John Kito, principal at William Tyson Elementary School, explained that Success for All assessments are done every eight weeks. In the fourth quarter of 2002, thirty percent of first graders were at reading at grade level. In the fourth quarter of 2006, that percentage had risen to 50%. This shows a tremendous amount of growth which, in Mr. Kito's opinion, is happening because of the availability of direct instruction and reading coaches who are able to support teachers on a daily basis. Ms. Erin Benik, reading coach, explained that the Reading

First program is based on the five big ideas of reading; phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Assessment is another key to the program. Ms. Benik explained that screenings are done on all students, kindergarten through third grade, three times a year. As a result of the screenings students are then categorized in benchmark strategic and intensive categories. Further monitoring and intervention of students continues as appropriate. The key is that teachers are constantly looking at their students and how they are doing.

Ms. Karen Reeve, principal at Airport Heights Elementary School, reviewed the process of incorporating Reading First at Airport Heights. She noted that the entire process required tremendous organizational collaboration between school staff. All support staff in the building including those from Indian Education, Bilingual Education, and Special Education need to know the goals for each student.

Mr. Steele offered his congratulations for the success of this program. He wondered whether there is confidence that we have found the right program. Ms. McRae indicated that the reading initiative really set the stage and the teachers liked the comprehensive literacy model which provides the foundation for the reading program. She believed that the District has found the program that best meets our standard.

Mr. Steele referenced recent suggestions that the budget could be positively impacted if the District would quit buying high priced materials. Ms. McRae explained that, in the first year of implementation, each school received a consumable component of the program. The consumable is not necessary to the implementation of the program. The reading teachers have done an excellent job of helping classroom teachers find other resources to meet that need so that the District does not have to keep purchasing the consumable. Schools chose not to purchase the consumable in the second year which did not impact the success of the program. In relation to the cost, Ms. McRae acknowledged that core curriculum is expensive. However, core curriculum provides the consistency of instruction at all grade levels and across all grade levels so that there is equity for all students. There were tough budget decisions made based on the philosophy that prevention is the best intervention and the belief that this curriculum prevents reading difficulties from occurring. Mr. Steele clarified that, in order to add schools to the program, the District

will have to continue to invest in order to get the materials and providing the professional development.

Mr. Steele asked whether teacher turnover has a significant impact on the need for professional development. Ms. McRae noted that, in order to insure fidelity in implementation, continued professional development is necessary. Professional development will not stop even when the program is in all of the schools. Ms. McRae offered a brief review of the various training requirements and opportunities offered to teachers and staff implementing this program. The reading teachers offer training and instruction for classroom teachers on an ongoing basis.

Ms. Marks asked whether additional programs such as Special Education, Bilingual Education, and Indian Education are using the same model. Ms. McRae explained that, as part of the reading initiative, teachers in those programs have always been included in the comprehensive literacy training. The curriculum is well suited to the differentiation. It is decided on an individual basis how to best meet the child's needs. When it is determined that a replacement curriculum is needed, one is available and put into affect immediately. Ms. Marks questioned whether the entire team involved in the student's assessment has access to the report or is it limited to the classroom teacher and the student. It was explained that the goal is for anyone directly involved with the child to have access to assessment results. Ms. Marks also questioned how assessment information is communicated with other schools as the child moves between divisions. Ms. McRae explained that a student's assessments are documented in the ARS so middle school teachers have access to the student's DRA scores and their proficiency levels.

Mr. Steiner asked if there was any disaggregated data available and whether these results addressed the various components that are looked at under No Child Left Behind. Ms. McRae noted that one thing that makes this report so powerful is that the Reading First schools are the most diverse schools in the District. Mr. Steiner identified that there are several programs being discussed including Success for All, Reading Mastery, and Houghton-Mifflin. He wondered whether the District is working toward identifying one program that all schools will use or if different programs be used at various schools around the District. Ms. McRae noted that the Board approved Houghton-Mifflin two years ago and that any new schools coming on board will use that curriculum. When the District received the

Reading First grant there was no Board-adopted curriculum. At that time schools were to choose from a list of scientifically research based programs to implement.

Ms. Kennedy reported that this presentation had been given to MECAC who were impressed with the results and extremely pleased to see how well this program was addressing the needs of minority children at many of these schools. She wondered whether there is a parent involvement component to the core curriculum. Ms. Platka explained that there is a home school connection book that is included in the curriculum. The reading teachers have worked with classroom teachers to incorporate a variety of ideas to engage parents.

Mr. Friedman noted that he has no doubt that the curriculum is effective. He wondered whether there has been any change, on a national level, in the way teachers are being taught to teach reading during their own education. Ms. Platka explained that, at least locally, the university system has requested that the District share what is being done in the classroom and how the program is being implemented. Mr. Friedman wondered whether teachers who were initially resistant to implementing the program are changing their minds after the first year. Ms. McRae explained that a large percentage change their perception after initial implementation. Mr. Friedman indicated his belief that this program represents one of the District's main dropout prevention efforts.

Ms. Comeau noted that the proof is in the pudding of student success. That is why these results are so powerful. The dollars invested in the core curriculum are one of the most significant investments in student success and teacher support and training. It does take an investment but it is necessary to turn instruction around to the point where all students have an opportunity to be successful. Success at the 80% level is significant. The attitude of intervention, differentiation and acceleration is very powerful in this program. The ability for students from different reading levels to be part of a common discussion has a huge impact on that student's ability to become a successful student and to feel part of the whole. Ms. Comeau shared her reasoning behind insisting that the core curriculum be expanding to include upper elementary students. There is now schoolwide focus on reading and moving from learning to read and reading to learn.

6. ASD Memorandum # 68 - 2005-2006 Certificated Recruitment Report

During the 2005-2006 school year, the Human Resources New Teacher Applicant Center collaboratively developed and implemented a Certificated Teacher Recruitment Plan for that school year. I approved the plan in November 2005 and directed Dr. Robb Boyer, Director of Staffing and Recruitment, to prepare an Accountability Report to be shared with me in October 2006.

Ms. Comeau indicated that the Human Resource department has done a phenomenal job of putting this report together. She indicated that it provides more information than has been available in the past about recruitment efforts, what issues have been identified, where efforts are finding success and efforts that have not proven to be worth the investment.

Mr. Robb Boyer briefly reviewed the report. Three-hundred twenty teachers have been hired as of October 1st, almost all of whom have been processed. This is an average year in terms of recruitment and hiring. He reported that a survey was done with the new hires which revealed some fascinating results. He highlighted that 22% of new hires are ASD graduates, 36.9% came from the university system in Alaska, and 83% have less than three years of teaching experience. While the District hires from all over the nation, the majority of hires outside of Alaska come from Oregon, Washington, Montana, New York, and California which correlates with recruitment efforts. Survey results indicate that the District's website is a wonderful tool.

Overall, Mr. Boyer felt that the goals and assumptions of the 2005-2006 Recruitment Plan had been met. He noted that there is a pretty solid pool of applicants. The goal of HR is to dramatically increase the pool to provide a large number of exemplary teachers from which to draw. Results related to achieving diversity indicate that the District is essentially colorblind in our hiring practice and if the overall pool can be increased even greater diversity would be attained.

Mr. Boyer indicated that the Intent protocol needs to be worked on to decrease the number of no-shows. Fall recruitment needs to be increased for programs that graduate students in the fall. He recommended that the District continue to use both Alaska Teacher Place, a local on-line site, and the national site, Teachers Teachers. Efforts will also be made to refocus efforts to easing the whole application process.

Ms. Margo Bellamy added that the effort to increase the pool of applicants requires that the District go to those locations and build relationships with the universities that have the highly qualified and diverse candidates that are needed. It is expensive but the plan provides the opportunity and the collaboration needed. She believed that the District's image indicates that all people, all colors, all teachers, and all categories are welcome. She noted that the efforts are just as important on the classified side although they are not reflected in this report.

Mr. Jerry Sjolander noted that he foresees focusing efforts on building relationships with universities that have strong special education programs in hopes that the District can get connected with candidates while they are still in school.

Ms. Kennedy questioned what efforts have been made to draw in the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce to ask them to help build a program that can be used during recruiting to entice people to come to the Anchorage community. Mr. Boyer indicated that the Chamber has not been approached but explained that the ASD Communications department has prepared a fantastic narrated powerpoint that highlights the area. Ms. Bellamy noted that the District does use a lot of flyers, booklets, and guides provided by the Chamber.

Ms. Kennedy asked about the reciprocity between states for certificated programs. She wondered how difficult it is to get some candidates who are already qualified into our classrooms. Mr. Boyer explained the process and where difficulties arise. Often the problem is simply a matter of getting necessary documentation from the other states. Ms. Bellamy explained that she appreciates the care and diligence taken by the state to certify staff.

Mr. Steiner asked how much credit can be given to an incoming teacher with experience and whether the limits cause problems in recruiting. Mr. Boyer reported that up to five years of credit is available. There are some anecdotal comments regarding the limits to credit for experience but a bigger issue is moving expenses.

Mr. Steiner suggested that it would be useful to find out why people who were offered Intents decided not to come to the District. Mr. Boyer agreed that it would be interesting and perhaps helpful to know those

reasons but explained how difficult it would be to ascertain that information.

Mr. Boyer noted that the District is at a disadvantage because of our size and because of some contractual language that requires that people returning from leave are placed first, then transfers are considered, then displaced individuals and only then can posting and placing intents and other new hires in the pool take place. Ms. Comeau indicated that the problem is that the legislature does not get the funding done until the middle of May. It would be impossible, with current budget issues, to give Intents and hire new staff any earlier than it does now. If the legislature would ever forward fund or make a decision on education funding by March 1st, it would help the District in so many ways including recruiting, hiring, and staffing.

In response to a question from Ms. Marks, it was explained that the diversity plan presented to the Board last year is embedded in this report. The diversity plan provided the goals for the recruitment plan.

Ms. Marks questioned whether the intensity of the initial screening is limiting the ability to attain diversity in the classroom. Mr. Boyer indicated his belief that the initial screening is not too difficult but is rigorous enough to set a level bar. If applicants fail an interview they are given suggestions relative to getting more substitute experience, more interview experience, and other assistance in areas that can be improved.

7. ASD Memorandum # 86 - Operating budget Transfers -
September Monthly Report FY 2006-2007

The attached report of budget transfers for the time period of July, August, and September 2006 that were processed in the Integrated Financial Accounting System (IFAS) includes the following:

Attachment A: Report of Budget Transfers Over \$5,000 –
Report for individual transfers of more than \$5,000,
which includes summarized justifications.

There were no budget transfers during July and August, however, the budget transfers processed during September and the related information are available in the Budget Department office for review by the School Board and members of the public.

8. ASD Memorandum # 88 - Out-of-District Travel - First Quarter Report FY 2006-2007

The attached Travel Report summarizes the travel taken by District employees and School Board members during the first quarter of FY 2006-2007 for both in-state and out-of-state travel. This report complies with the revised travel procedures established in the fall 2004 and in accordance with School Board Policy Sections 156, Board Member Travel, and 526, Staff Travel.

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 October 16, 2006, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 10:45 p.m.

Jeff Friedman, President

Mary Marks, Clerk

Johanna Lee, Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approved