

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 25, 2006

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, September 25, 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: Macon Roberts, Crystal Kennedy, Jeff Friedman, Jake Metcalfe, and Tim Steele. John Steiner joined the meeting by phone at 7:05 p.m.

Board Members Excused: Mary Marks

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

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Comeau reported that the Budget Review Team process will begin with a kickoff meeting at Wendler Middle School at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup>. A total of 250 community members have volunteered to serve on the budget review teams to date.

D. AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

1. Chugiak Swing Choir, Mr. Ron Lange, Director

The Chugiak Swing Choir, under the direction of student Rachel Boyer, performed several numbers for the Board.

2. ASD Memorandum # 71 - Recognition of Anchorage Police Chief Walt Monegan for Support of the Anchorage School District

Mr. Tim Steele read that Police Chief Walt Monegan became an Anchorage police officer in 1974 and later went on to become chief of the entire Anchorage Police Department (APD) in 2001. During his time at the APD, he has been a strong supporter of our schools and has done everything in his power to ensure student safety.

During his tenure, Chief Monegan worked diligently to establish the School Resource Officer (SRO) program that placed uniformed officers in our schools. This program was designed to reduce juvenile crime through law enforcement, education and prevention programs. In the past four years since the SRO program began, it has proven itself time and time again. Officers have been successful in working to keep drugs, violence and gang activities outside of our schools. Statistics show the effectiveness of the SRO program, proving it is an investment in safety which benefits the entire community.

At the end of September, Chief Monegan will retire from the Anchorage Police Department. He will leave behind a solid working relationship between the school district and the police department.

“Walt has been a solid supporter of our students, their families and our staff,” said Superintendent Carol Comeau. “We have appreciated his strong support very much.”

The Anchorage School Board recognized Chief Monegan for his unwavering dedication to our students and their safety. They wished him luck in his future endeavors.

Ms. Comeau extended her personal congratulations to Chief Monegan. She noted that the community will help celebrate Chief Monegan’s retirement this Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, at 2:00 p.m. at the Loussac Library.

Chief Monegan introduced his wife, Terry. He explained that the School Resource Officer program was probably the most pro-active thing that APD had ever ventured into. The program is not only effective in reducing juvenile crime through law enforcement, education and prevention programs, it also allows officers to interact with our youth in more positive situations than they typically would. The program is good for the District, it is good for the police department, and overall it benefits the community.

Ms. Comeau noted that Chief Monegan should be commended for his part in developing a solid relationship between the school district and the police department.

3. Chamber of Commerce ATHENA: Camp \$tart-Up Presentation

Ms. Comeau noted that three District students had won an opportunity to attend Camp StartUp over this past summer. She introduced Ms. Gayle West, co-chairman of the Camp StartUp committee.

Ms. West explained that the Chamber's Athena Society is the organization that provides the scholarships to Camp StartUp. The organization supports and promotes women in business. Camp StartUp was held at Cornell University this year and the Athena Society provided scholarships for three young women to attend. The young women meet successful women business owners, learn leadership and business skills, develop their own business and marketing plans, and present those plans to a group of interested investors. All three of the scholarship winners this year were from Chugiak High School.

Two of the students, Cheyenne Walsh and Chelsey Homan, provided a presentation on Camp StartUp and an overview on what they had learned from their experience there. The third scholarship winner, Shawna Moore, graduated from Chugiak and is now attended UAA as a business major. The students indicated that they will be actively involved in recruiting applicants for this year's scholarships by doing school presentations at assemblies and targeted high school business classes, passing out flyers, working with the Career Resource Advisors, and utilizing word of mouth to their friends.

Cheyenne and Chelsey extended their appreciation to those who made their attendance at Camp StartUp possible. They indicated that they learned much more than they expected and are now even more inspired to go into business. The experience was phenomenal and is something that neither one will ever forget. It is a great opportunity for young, aspiring girls.

Following the presentation Mr. Roberts asked what the students believed would be the biggest challenges to starting a business and what would be the greatest rewards. The students indicated that the

biggest challenge would be to get everything organized. The greatest reward would be the opportunity to be your own boss and to be able to follow your passion. In response to a question from Mr. Metcalfe, the students both indicated that they plan to attend college and major in business.

Ms. Comeau suggested that the students work through Mr. Henry to get the word out to other schools about this scholarship opportunity.

4. ASD Memorandum # 62 - Recognition of State Teacher of the Year Finalist

Ms. Kennedy read that Charles Strauss, math teacher and department chair at South High School, has been named a 2007 Alaska Teacher of the Year finalist. Mr. Strauss has taught math classes in the Anchorage School District since 1981. He not only teaches his students mathematics principles, he helps them understand how math has direct applications in every day life. It's Mr. Strauss' love for the subject and his students that makes him such an outstanding teacher.

Mr. Strauss has an open door policy in his classroom and can frequently be found before school, during lunch and after school tutoring students. He encourages students to approach him for help and looks forward to the one-on-one time with each of them.

He started the Math Tutorial program at Chugiak and South high schools, created Pi ( $\pi$ ) Day at South, put on many math contests and is forming a cribbage club. In addition to classroom activities, Mr. Strauss also volunteers his time at other school functions and even brings students on five day backpacking trips to teach them life skills.

Mr. Strauss' efforts have not gone unnoticed, in the past two decades he has also received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics, BP Teacher of the Year, Chugiak High School Teacher of the Year and Anchorage Education Association Teacher of the Year. Now, he is one of four finalists statewide for the Teacher of the Year award. His vast knowledge and dedication to our students make him worthy of this honor.

The School Board recognized Mr. Charles Strauss for his selection as an award finalist.

E. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

1. Student Advisory Board

Mr. Feriani reported that the Student Advisory Board met on September 12, 2006. There were four speakers at the meeting, Ms. Gardner, Mr. Henry, Ms. Comeau, and Ms. Waters, the executive director of AASG. Ms. Waters talked about the upcoming AASG conference and the Sister School Project through the Rose Urban Rural Exchange. Mr. Feriani petitioned Anchorage area high schools to participate in this program which matches large urban schools one-to-one with rural schools to collaborate with one another and assist each other with identified issues.

King Career Center provided a presentation to the SAB on their after school classes which will begin October 9, 2006.

The next Student Advisory Board meeting will be held on Oct 10, 2006 at 11:15 a.m. at the King Career Center.

2. Military Delegate

Lt. Col. Luu thanked the Board and the superintendent for the warm reception he received. He also voiced his appreciation for everyone who participated in the deployment workshop that took place last Wednesday. As the military community nears the time for the planned deployments and so many members are being extended overseas they recognize that there are certain issues facing students and their family members that must be dealt with. The assistance provided by the District, the principals, teachers and staff at all of the schools is extremely important and very much appreciated.

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

Ms. Damita Owen reported that the MECAC met on September 21<sup>st</sup>. The MECAC is working on a Parent Forum that is tentatively scheduled for November 11<sup>th</sup>.

MECAC has also been discussing concerns regarding the EEO plans for providing equitable representation of teachers and counselors in relationship to the student population. They have also been discussing customer service issues.

The MECAC is in the process of interviewing potential new members. Ms. Owen noted that the committee is still accepting applications. She briefly reviewed the role of the MECAC, noting that the committee is tasked to advise the Board on issues that minority students and parents may have in relationship to the Anchorage School District.

The next MECAC meeting is scheduled for October 4<sup>th</sup> and everyone is welcome to attend.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Tommy O'Malley, a teacher with eighteen years experience in the District, spoke on the issue of quality and the willingness of consumers to pay more for a quality product. He associated this with the quality of the teachers in the school district, noting that education is a service industry and that the service is being provided by the teachers. He reported that he had spoken to legislators and believes that they hesitate to give additional money to the Anchorage School District because they didn't know where the money is going. He voiced his displeasure at the efforts made to include community members in the budget process, indicating that this leads one to believe that the administration doesn't know what is going on with the budget. He indicated that the ASD needs to spend its money on quality teachers not on buildings. He believed that the focus should be on paying teachers more and that doing so would increase the likelihood of securing additional funding from the legislature.

Mr. Thomas Pease, a teacher in the District, spoke on behalf of AEA. He called on the Board and the Superintendent to offer salaries and benefits that are competitive with neighboring districts. He voiced his concern about the future of the teaching profession in Anchorage. Mr. Pease offered his interpretation of how the last tentative agreement compares to the teacher contract in the MatSu Valley.

Mr. Kurt Mueller, a special education teacher, indicated that he is very proud of the level of services that the District provides to students with special needs. He indicated that he is also aware of the extraordinary effort that is put into recruiting special education teachers. It takes a great deal of time and energy to provide classroom experience and mentoring to teachers who are new to the field of special education. He believed that, after spending all that time to develop a specialist in a shortage field, these

individuals are, all too often, recruited away from the District. He requested that the Board consider what needs to be done in order to hold those teacher specialists.

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 - June 12, 2006
- b. Regular Meeting - June 26, 2006
- c. Special Meeting - September 11, 2006

2. ASD Memorandum # 46 - Alaska Association of School Boards  
Core Resolutions

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board move to approve and adopt the Anchorage School Board Legislative Subcommittee's changes and additions to the Association of Alaska School Boards' (AASB) Belief Statements and Core Resolutions (Attachment A).

3. ASD Memorandum # 70 - ASD Resolution Regarding Changes to the Public Employee Retirement System and the Teacher Retirement System (PERS/TRS)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the Anchorage School Board Legislative Subcommittee's resolution on Attachment A relating to the changes to the employer reimbursement rate for FY 2007-2008. It is further recommended that the Superintendent transmit copies of this resolution to all candidates for the legislature and higher state office, as well as all major entities which are affected by these changes in the reimbursement rate for TRS and PERS.

4. ASD Memorandum # 52 - Nomination for AASB Board of Directors

It is recommended that the School Board nominate Mary Marks for a seat on the Association of Alaska School Boards' Board of Directors.

5. ASD Memorandum # 63 - Approval of Aquarian Charter School Enrollment Adjustment

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to approve an increase in Aquarian Charter School's budgeted enrollment to 360 students for the 2006-2007 school year.

6. ASD Memorandum # 55 - School Board Policy Revision: Section 765 Vending Machine and Other Food Sales (Second Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt on Second Reading the recommended policy revision of School Board Policy 765, Vending Machine and Other Food Sales.

7. ASD Memorandum # 54 - Acceptance of Continuation Grant Award: Alaska Community Learning Centers - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers FY 2007

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a grant award from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development in the amount of \$1,634,924. Funding will continue after-school programs in thirteen high-needs elementary schools and one middle school: Fairview, Government Hill, Mountain View, Muldoon, North Star, Northwood, Ptarmigan, Russian Jack, Taku, Williwaw, Willow Crest, Wonder Park, and Clark Middle School.

8. ASD Memorandum # 43 - Acceptance of Grant Award: AASB 1:1 Student to Computer Pilot Project Grant

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept grant funds from the Alaska Association of School Boards (AASB) in the amount of \$164,517.57 or two-thirds the cost of this project. The remaining one-third cost of this project will be paid by a four-year lease agreement with ASD and Apple. The 1:1 grant is a partnership with ASD, AASB and Apple to provide computer hardware and software as well as professional development services to a select group of Wendler Middle School teachers and students. The targeted population for this grant will be an entire 7th grade teaching team (students and teachers) with a focus on increasing student achievement as measured by the SBA achievement tests.

9. ASD Memorandum # 39 - Personnel Report

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

Mr. Friedman asked that Memorandum #63, Approval of Aquarian Charter School Enrollment Adjustment, be pulled. Ms. Comeau requested that Memorandum # 70, ASD Resolution Regarding Changes to the Public Employee Retirement System and the Teacher Retirement System (PERS/TRS) be pulled.

Ms. Comeau also requested that Memorandum #45, Summer School Update, be pulled from the Superintendent's Report. Ms. Comeau also noted that there will be presentations on Memoranda, # 33, High School Innovations: Dimond and Service High Schools, and # 60, School Business Partnership Report, 2005-2006.

ACTION:

Moved by: Jake Metcalfe  
Seconded by: Macon Roberts

To approve the minutes of the Regular Meetings of June 12, 2006, June 26, 2006, the minutes of the Special Meeting of September 11, 2006 and Memoranda #46, #52, #55, #54, #43, and #57.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

Excused: Marks

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 70 - ASD Resolution Regarding Changes to the Public Employee Retirement System and the Teacher Retirement System (PERS/TRS)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the Anchorage School Board Legislative Subcommittee's resolution on Attachment A relating to the changes to the employer reimbursement rate for FY 2007-2008. It is further recommended that the Superintendent transmit copies of this resolution to all candidates for the legislature and higher state office, as well as all major entities which are affected by these changes in the reimbursement rate for TRS and PERS.

ACTION:

Moved by: Jake Metcalfe  
Seconded by: Tim Steele

To approve the Administration's recommendation that the School

Board approve the Anchorage School Board Legislative Subcommittee's resolution on Attachment A relating to the changes to the employer reimbursement rate for FY 2007-2008. It is further recommended that the Superintendent transmit copies of this resolution to all candidates for the legislature and higher state office, as well as all major entities which are affected by these changes in the reimbursement rate for TRS and PERS.

Mr. Metcalfe provided the background on this resolution, explaining the course of action taken by the Legislative Subcommittee. He requested that the Board pass this very important resolution. Mr. Metcalfe voiced his opinion that SB141 is the single worst piece of legislation in his lifetime. He believed this, in part, because of the impact it has had on our ability to recruit and retain teachers. The bill has had a wholly negative impact on the entire public employment retirement system and to all public employees. He believed that we need to send a message to the legislature that they need to take care of this financial liability and not put in on the backs of school districts and local governments around the state.

The resolution was read into the record by members of the Board.

**WHEREAS**, The Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) and the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) are both seriously under-funded, a problem the Legislature and the Governor have been aware of for many years, and

**WHEREAS**, the adoption and implementation of SB 141 takes new employees out of the system and does not provide a mechanism for bringing in new resources to deal with the under-funded liability, and

**WHEREAS**, from the 2002-2003 school year to the 2007-2008 school year, the employer contribution rates for the Anchorage School District have increased 391% for TRS and 337% for PERS, and

**WHEREAS**, from the current school year to the 2007-2008 school year, the employer contribution rates have increased 108% for TRS and 69% for PERS, and

**WHEREAS**, similar increases exist throughout Alaska, affecting every government entity from state offices in Juneau, to the university system, to the smallest village, and

**WHEREAS**, the process of preparing a budget for the 2007-2008 school year has begun in order to meet the state and local deadlines for submission of this budget, and

**WHEREAS**, if there is no adopted relief from the State of Alaska, the Anchorage School District will be required to issue layoff notices to more than 500/600 tenured certificated employees on or before March 15, 2006, and

**WHEREAS**, similar notices will be issued by every other school district in Alaska, forcing teachers and other public employees to move out of state if they wish to remain in their chosen profession, thereby causing a loss of experienced public employees and a long-lasting negative impact on the entire state.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Anchorage School Board calls on the Alaska Legislature to address the crisis in the state retirement systems as its first order of business when the Twenty-fifth Alaska Legislature Legislative Session convenes in January 2007, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Anchorage School Board requests that, at a minimum, funding for the increase in TRS and PERS be adopted and transmitted to the Governor during the first two weeks of the session, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Alaska Legislature adopt a long term solution to this crisis during the remainder of the legislative session, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Governor work with the Alaska Legislature, local governments, universities, and local school districts, on both the immediate and long term solutions so that the short term funding bill can be signed in January 2007, and the long term legislative solution can be signed in May 2007.

Mr. Friedman noted that the Board and the administration will be encouraging other school districts and other local entities to address this issue in the next few weeks. Hopefully the sense of urgency will be adequately relayed to the legislature.

Mr. Steiner commented that this resolution does not really address the rather controversial provisions of SB141, other than to note that it did nothing to resolve the dollar crisis that we face due to the degree of underfunding. This resolution is really not controversial at all. It simply explains the problem and requests the legislature to address these issues in a timely manner.

Ms. Kennedy noted that this issue is very much on the radar screen of the legislators. They recognize the problems with this issue and are already talking about ways to begin to resolve it.

Mr. Steele noted that time is of the essence. He also noted that the District is planning to have a Candidates Forum and indicated that candidates should be asked how they intend to deal with this issue. He hoped that other districts and municipalities around the state would join with the Anchorage School District in seeking action from the legislature to address these issues.

Ms. Comeau noted that, when the resolution is passed, copies would be forwarded to the Assembly, the Mayor, and other public employee groups. It is critical that every public employee group weigh in on this issue to reinforce to the candidates and the legislature how critical it is that this be fixed early in the legislative session.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

Excused: Marks

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 63 - Approval of Aquarian Charter School  
Enrollment Adjustment

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to approve an increase in Aquarian Charter

School's budgeted enrollment to 360 students for the 2006-2007 school year.

ACTION:

Moved by: Tim Steele  
Seconded by: Macon Roberts

To authorize the Superintendent to amend the charter of Aquarian Charter School to allow a maximum of 360 students in that contract.

Mr. Friedman explained that he had requested a change in the wording of the motion from what was presented in the memorandum based on his interpretation of policy. He believed that policy suggested that, rather than just approving a budgeted enrollment increase, the Board should change the charter and let the superintendent adjust the budget accordingly.

In response to a question from Mr. Steiner it was noted that the current charter enrollment cap is 336 students. The current budget was built to 319 students. The building capacity is 360. Mr. Steiner further questioned what figure would be used to build the budget at Aquarian. It was explained that the budget would depend on actual enrollment through the count period.

Ms. Comeau indicated that the administration supports this change. She explained that Aquarian Charter School is a very viable and successful school with an extensive waiting list. This change in the cap will allow the school to plan prospectively for the future.

Mr. Matthew Fagnani indicated that the decision to request an increase in the enrollment count was not an easy one. A balance needed to be struck between the small school flare and the desire to accommodate siblings of current students in the program, as well as the number of new families on the waiting list. Mr. Fagnani noted that this action will allow the school to max out the classroom capacity and to max out the waiting list.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

Excused: Marks

MOTION PASSED

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. ASD Memorandum # 56 - Project Status Report

This is a report of activities and project status changes in Major Capital Projects during the period of August 25, 2006 through September 11, 2006.

2. ASD Memorandum # 45 - Summer School Update

Summer School 2006 in the Anchorage School District again served just under 5,000 students. This year, the District provided 17 summer school sites. Following are reports from Patricia McRae, Executive Director of Elementary Education; Leslie Vandergaw, Executive Director of Middle School Education; Mike Henry, Executive Director of High School Education; and Jerry Sjolander, Executive Director, Special Education.

Ms. Comeau noted that the District had a very successful summer school program thanks to a lot of hard work on the part of the executive directors, the principals, the teachers and the support staff.

Ms. McRae reported that elementary summer school serves students identified as being below proficient or not proficient in reading, writing or math. The pupil/teacher ratio is 15 to 1, with class sizes being much smaller than that in many cases. There were 1,050 elementary students registered this summer and 804 of those students completed the summer school program. The administration is very pleased with the achievement gains seen in those students. The same curriculum has been used since the District began holding summer school. It is an intervention program where learning builds every day upon the previous day's learning. So it is very important that students are in school every day. The program entails two-and-a-half hours of direct instruction each day.

One of the new challenges this summer was providing Title I funded transportation to and from all of the Title I summer school sites. She noted her appreciation to the transportation department for their support in those efforts. Efforts were made to expand the level of parent involvement this year, adding math to the previously established reading program.

Ms. McRae noted that the Elementary Division will now review all of the data collected to identify possible changes and improvements. She indicated that, overall, they are very happy with the results.

Ms. Vandergaw reported that middle school also had another successful summer. Summer school was offered at Hanshew, Clark, and Guening middle schools. There were 678 summer school students who completed the program, 441 of those entered the regular remediation summer school and 237 entered the enrichment programs. Of the 678 students, 107 receive special education services during the regular school year and 217 receive bilingual services during the regular school year.

Ms. Vandergaw explained that there are three programs offered at the middle school level. The Standard Remediation Program is a six week, full day program offering vocabulary, spelling, reading, writing, math and a daily fitness program. There are two different offerings under the enrichment program. The Enrichment Institutes are half-day programs that run for six weeks. These include band, fastForward, algebra readiness, and readiness for pre-algebra. Enrichment Camps are also available. These are two week long, half-day programs such as Writers Retreat, CSI Anchorage, Cyberquest, and Artists Studio.

Ms. Vandergaw was pleased to report that gains were identified in every level within the remediation program. She highlighted the reading comprehension scores. When these raw scores are converted to an average reading ability a significant average increase in reading ability was identified.

Mr. Henry reported that 2,917 students completed high school summer school. He explained that high school students can earn up to three (3) half credits during summer school. There were a total of 4,308 half credits earned during summer school this year. About one-fourth of those credits were original course attempts, not for credit recovery or grade improvements.

Mr. Henry highlighted several areas. He noted that this summer was the first time that SAVE high school remained open. SAVE student earn their credits in a different manner, not necessarily going by semesters, so it was a big success to allow those students to continue their course work through the summer. The summer session at King Career Center (KCC) was also a real success. A large number of younger students who had never had access to KCC before attended

summer school there. The comprehensive programs were offered at five different locations. Both Dimond and Service high schools offered extended year programs. This program ran the ten day immediately following the end of last year, before summer school started, for the ninth graders who had failed a class or two, so they could convert those failures into passing grades. Mr. Henry also highlighted a new program this year. This program was a class offering an entire year, one full credit, of Algebra I. The classes ran six hours a day for 29 days. The reviews were very good from the teachers that taught those classes. In fact, those teachers have recommended that the program be expanded to include Geometry next year.

Mr. Sjolander indicated that the report on special education summer schools speaks specifically to those students eligible for extended school year services under the IDEA federal law. The report only provides data on a small number of special education students who were actually served during the summer. There were a significant number of students who chose summer school who are listed under their individual grade level summer school reports. The summer programs have been very beneficial to the District's special education students. One of the most interesting and exciting items is the Assistive Technology Camp that is available for a group a students who use technology as a means of communication. This camp gives these students, who might be the only student in their regular school using the technology, an opportunity to come together with other students using similar devices.

Ms. Kennedy indicated that she was very impressed with the surveys. She noticed that about 20% of the elementary students who registered for summer school did not complete the program. That figure roughly correlated to the percentage of the teachers who felt the curriculum didn't meet the needs of the students. She wondered whether the curriculum being used had anything to do with the number of students who did not complete the program. Ms. McRae did not believe that there was any correlation between the curriculum and the student attrition. The attrition figure is pretty constant with what is seen every year. She noted that this survey response would be discussed with summer school principals and staff during debriefing on the program to see what their specific concerns were with the curriculum. Ms. Kennedy noted that, also according to survey results, parents indicated that they were satisfied with the curriculum.

Ms. Kennedy commended the high school division on providing such wonderful opportunities for our high school students. She was particularly pleased with the response to the program at King Career Center.

Mr. Steele, referencing the middle school staff survey results, asked about the adequate assistance provided to students with IEP and also bilingual students. Ms. Vandergaw indicated that it is made quite clear that summer school does not have the resources to run the full program that is run during the school year. That does not mean that attempts aren't made to make modifications and accommodations as necessary. The survey definitely provides an opportunity to look at the programs in a different way based on the results.

Mr. Steele commented that summer school is a costly program but one that meets the needs of so many students. It is exactly what needs to be done in terms of trying to improve performance and decrease the achievement gap. He indicated that it would be a shame if we had to cut these programs.

Mr. Steiner noted that the elementary report provides percentage of students who achieve gains but no quantification of the gains. In the middle school the report provided average gains. He wondered whether there was any additional information available that would provide a better sense to what degree the students were making gains in the elementary level and how the average gains were derived at the middle school levels. Ms. Comeau noted that she would ask the Assessment Department if that information was available and, if so, would get the information to him under separate cover.

3. ASD Memorandum # 51 - Update on Security and Emergency Preparedness

This is an update about the status of the District's security and emergency preparedness.

4. ASD Memorandum # 59 - Facility Contract Modification Report and Completed Projects for the Month of August 2006

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

5. ASD Memorandum # 33 - High School Innovations: Dimond and Service High Schools

There have been numerous innovations in the high school division over the past few years. This memo will highlight just a few and includes only Dimond and Service high schools. These schools and projects are representative of the outstanding work in all of our high schools in the Anchorage School District.

Ms. Comeau reported that there are two large comprehensive high schools in the District who have taken on some massive restructuring to meet the needs of their students. Mr. Henry noted that making meaningful changes take outstanding teams of administrators and teachers. He noted that although Dimond and Service are presenting an overview of their programs this evening, they are not the only schools making efforts to better serve their students, particularly their freshmen.

Mr. Henry introduced principals Lou Pondolfino and Cheryl Guyett who will be leading the presentations.

Mr. Pondolfino introduced Service High School Freshman Academy teacher Devon Roberts, and assistant principals John Gaskins and Lin Hinderman. He explained that the Board gave the go-ahead for the Freshman Academy in the spring of 2005. He also noted that two additional programs were begun this year at Service. The programs are the Leadership Academy and the Discovery Academy. All of the efforts at Service High School are geared toward helping the students get connected to school and find academic and social success.

Mr. Pondolfino reported that fights decreased 41% schoolwide last year at Service High School. While the data has not been disaggregated to find out specifics, Mr. Pondolfino attributed much of the success in that area to the insulation, the protection and the opportunity for ninth-graders to start their high school careers in a safe environment with a separate schedule, with a phenomenal group of teachers, and with an administrator and counselor who really took care of them.

Mr. Devon Roberts explained that the Freshman Academy at Service High School is meant to ease the transition from middle school into high school. The team of flexible, dedicated teachers in the program all volunteered to be involved in the program. There is also a

designated counseling staff and dedicated security personnel. The Academy is physically located in one of the wings of the school. The program has had open-minded and encouraging administrative support. There has been visionary leadership for the program.

Team teaching and block scheduling has helped to make the Freshman Academy what it is. The alternative scheduling has all four of the academic areas offered in the morning and early afternoon. Blocking these together allows for flexibility for other activities. A focus on implementation of study skills has been added to the academic courses. Mr. Roberts reviewed some achievement data. Last year was the first SBA results and so this year will be the first opportunity to compare results.

Anecdotally, Mr. Roberts reported that teachers who teach predominately sophomores have contacted him to relay that sophomores are reportedly missing their freshman year. In addition, Freshman Academy teachers have reported large numbers of sophomores slipping down to the Academy during lunch hours to visit with the staff. This would seem to attest to the positive feelings students have about the Academy.

Ms. Comeau asked how bilingual and special education services have been incorporated into the Freshman academy. Mr. Roberts reported that there are two full-time special education teachers teaching almost exclusively as part of the Academy.

Ms. Kennedy asked for an explanation of how the Freshman Academy differs from middle school. Ms. Hinderman explained that the early part of the day, while the students are taking their core curriculum is quite a bit like middle school. However, the last two class periods the students are mixing with upperclassmen as they take electives.

Ms. Hinderman noted that an unexpected added benefit of this program is the profession development and collegiality that has developed because all of the teachers are in one location.

Mr. Steele noted that this program appears to be similar to the small learning communities and houses at the upper levels. Mr. Roberts agreed that this is exactly what is being done with small learning communities where the goal is to create a safe environment in which students can learn.

Mr. Friedman indicated his hopes that the school will find ways to take some of the things that are working with the Freshman Academy and bring that to the higher levels.

Ms. Comeau commended the administration and staff for all of their efforts. She noted that the freshman failure rate had been terrible in the past and she acknowledged the successes the Academy has had in addressing that issue.

Ms. Kennedy asked whether there is a need to start the freshman a few days earlier than the other high school students in order to provide them a solid orientation. Mr. Roberts explained the process that took place during the first week of school for the Freshman Academy. The first day the students attended their regular classes so that they could see what their schedules looked like. The second and third day the Academy utilized the core classes, which are blocked together in the mornings, to do some special activities to orient the students to the school and the program. He did not believe there is a need for ninth-graders to start any earlier than other students.

Ms. Comeau introduced Cheryl Guyett, principal at Dimond High School. Ms. Guyett began with a presentation on Late Start, Get Smart. This is a pilot program that began at Dimond in late January. Ms. Guyett introduced teachers Jennifer Childress and Marcus Reese and parents Linda Wamsganz and Shannon King.

Ms. Guyett noted that high school teachers typically teach in isolation without shared planning times with other teachers in their department or grade level. Dimond's Late Start program creates 45 minutes every week that there is school on Monday for teachers to collaborate across curriculum, within curriculum and vertically on curriculum projects. The program operates at zero cost to the District because it runs within the teaching day, requires no additional staff and operates within the existing bus schedule. Families can choose to send their students to school at the regular time or to come 45 minutes later when first period starts. Students who arrive early can get study help. An average of 400 students arrive early every Monday. The Dimond staff has created twenty-four professional learning community (PLC) groups that ranged in size from three to ten members.

Mr. Marcus Reese reported that each PLC is different. There is a range in focus from cross-curricular connection to alignment within a discipline. He noted that connected curriculum benefits students and

teachers. The goal is to help teachers become connected, but not necessarily to be in lockstep, with each other. They believe that students benefit when teachers are aware of what is happening across the curriculum and what is aligned within disciplines. Mr. Reese noted that this program is a work in progress and he thanked the Board for allowing them the opportunity to explore this process.

Ms. Jennifer Childress provided examples of some activities from two PLC groups in the science department. She noted that in a school the size of Dimond teachers can go for days, even weeks, without seeing other teachers who teach the same subject. One of the groups was made up solely of Chemistry teachers. This group had three main goals. The first was to take time to collaborate, share ideas, share activities, and make sure that they were at about the same place in the curriculum. The second goal was to work toward continuity for students. The third was to develop a common assessment which would allow all Chemistry students to take the same final at the end of each semester.

The second PLC was in technology exploration and involved both math and science teachers. There were varied levels of expertise with the technology that is available in the high school within the group. By coming together the teachers were able to share in their areas of expertise and learn from others in areas where they were less comfortable.

Ms. Linda Wamsganz indicated that she is extremely pleased with the later than usual start on Mondays. From her perspective the primary benefit has been more rest for the students. There are numerous studies that indicate that teenagers fall asleep later and do better when they are able to sleep later in the morning. She thanked the administration for this innovative program and would like to see it at all schools. Ms. King agreed, noting the decrease in her child's stress level. She also appreciated her student being able to get extra rest at the beginning of the week. The schedules that teenagers keep are exhausting and Ms. King believed a later start to the day would be beneficial for all of them.

Ms. Comeau asked for additional feedback on the Late Start, Get Smart program from students, particularly those who are taking advantage of the time to receive tutoring. She noted that the administration would like to revisit the whole discussion of school starting times.

Mr. Feriani commented that students who must take the bus but do not want or need extra tutoring are able to purchase breakfast food, finish homework, or just spend time with friends in the cafeteria.

In response to a question from Mr. Steiner, Mr. Devon Roberts reported that it is hard to quantify how the program is impacting student achievement at this point because teachers are still coming together to form professional learning communities and identifying ways that the collaboration can enhance their teaching. While he cannot accurately determine whether students are achieving better than they were prior to this program, he does feel that he is bringing a better product to his students.

Ms. Comeau indicated that the major focus of this program was to figure out a way to enhance opportunities for collaboration and professional development for the teachers at no cost to the District and without losing instructional time. She further indicated that the best assessment of the program will probably be more anecdotal, with teachers sharing how their teaching is enhanced over time. She further cautioned against too quick a jump in trying to replicate this in other schools. She explained that each school would really have to look at their own staff and their own needs and then develop a model that would work for them.

Ms. Julye Neel, Curriculum Principal at Dimond High School, introduced Vicki McConnell, Freshman House Principal. Ms. Neel also introduced Stormy Sagmoyen, a sophomore who participated in the first Freshman House, and teachers Sarah Paulsen, Anna Knapp and Jeff Bevier.

Ms. Neel emphasized that ninth grade is a pivotal year for many students. Research and experience tell us that students who have a successful freshman year are more likely to have a successful high school experience and to graduate. Dimond High School began to develop this program by incorporating a goal of a 5% decrease in freshman failures into their 2005-2006 school action plan. The Freshman House was built with that primary goal in mind.

Mr. Bevier reviewed what the Freshman House at Dimond High School looks like. There are about 500 students in the Freshman House which is located in a separate wing of the school. The program is about a group of teachers who came together to address the issue of freshmen fail rate. In addition to the teaching staff, the program has

both a dedicated administrator and a dedicated counselor. In effect, the students have two counselors, their regular alpha counselor who they will continue to work with as they progress through high school and the Freshman House counselor. There is also a dedicated security specialist for the program. The students have three classes and a separate lunch in the Freshman House. The Freshman House has monthly celebration and a number of additional activities to help ninth-graders engage with the school. It is noteworthy to report that every teacher that taught in the Freshman House last year volunteered to come back.

Ms. Knapp explained that part of what Freshman House is all about is building connections and making the students feel as though they are in a place that is safe and that they are known. One of the goals is to help the students find pathroads for success in academics. Some of tools being used to support academics are early alert interventions, the homework center, after school tutorials, fastForward and Achieve 3000. As Mr. Henry mentioned earlier, Dimond High School provided an extended year for freshman last year. This was a two week intensive, directly following the end of the school year, which allowed freshmen who had failed a class in English, science, or social studies to recover the credit and build the skills that would be needed in their sophomore year.

Ms. Stormy Sagmoyen, a sophomore who went through Freshman House last year, reported that all of the students in the Freshman House participated in each of five different activities; Battle of the Books, History Day, Poetry Slam, Phenomenal Freshman, and Change of Heart. Ms. Sagmoyen described each activity and her feelings about their benefit to students. She felt that the Freshman House was particularly beneficial to mediocre or struggling students because of the variety and amount of assistance available to them.

Noting that communication would be key in the plan to affect freshman success, Ms. McConnell reviewed the number of mechanisms of communication that are used in the Freshman House. They published monthly newsletter, utilized emails, made phone calls, and held conferences in order to facilitate communication with parents. The Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) allowed for increased communication between teachers, both within the House and out of the House. House meetings were essential and well utilized. The House staff met with teachers and administrators from Mears Middle School to share the program with them so that they

could work toward a smooth transition for the eighth graders coming to Dimond next year.

Ms. McConnell reviewed the statistics on failure rates following the first year of the Freshman House. There was a 2% decrease in failures in English, a 4.5% decrease in failures in social studies, and a 6% decrease in failures in Science. There was a 2% increase in failures in math. She explained this increase by pointing out that Dimond had eliminated the Pre-Algebra course. This action forced about 60 students into a higher level math than initially recommended by their middle school teachers. Forty-five of the students forced up were successful at that higher level setting them on a college bound path. After first semester ended the staff was able to address those students who were not successful by adjusting schedules, created math skills classes, and got students into tutoring. A decrease in math failures was seen second semester.

Mr. Friedman commended the efforts at both Service and Dimond for their efforts and their successes. Mr. Roberts voiced his appreciation for the presentations, particularly the information provided by the students.

Ms. Comeau noted that she had been one of the judges for History Day at Dimond. She reiterated what a fantastic job the students do and encouraged the Board to attend this year. She indicated that the student who represented Alaska at the National History Day competition would be asked to share her presentation with the Board.

6. ASD Memorandum # 60 - School Business Partnership Report, 2005-2006

Since 1991, the Anchorage School District has been a part of a unique working relationship between the education and business communities. The Anchorage School Business Partnership (SBP), a highly respected program in the community, is continuing its sixteen-year success story. SPB has been responsible for developing more than 450 partnerships during this time; these had an economic value of over \$2.5 million to the District in 2005-2006. Currently, 95 percent of ASD schools are active with at least one partnership. Supported by both the District and the Chamber of Commerce, Anchorage School Business Partnerships is a 501c3 non-profit corporation. Its board is made up of 27 members of the business community and the ASD.

Ms. Comeau introduced Tam Agosti-Gisler, Executive Director, School Business Partnership. Ms. Agosti-Gisler thanked the Board and the administration for their continued support of the School Business Partnership. She shared a short public service announcement that should begin running on several television stations in the near future.

Ms. Agosti-Gisler recognized members of the School Business Partnership Board including Rhonda Gardner, Michelle Egan, Macon Roberts and Brian Griggs. She noted that the entire Board represents a diverse list of representation of businesses across Anchorage as well as members of the Anchorage School District community. Lt. Col. Luu, Military Liaison to the School Board, recently accepted a position on the School Business Partnership Honorary Board. He joins Col. Harold from Elmendorf AFB and Col. Shutt from Ft. Richardson on the Honorary Board.

Ms. Agosti-Gisler reported that she had replaced Mr. Jim Utter at the School Business Partnership. She noted three themes that have come to the forefront during her first five months in the position. Those themes are relationships, communications, and paradigm shifts.

She noted that relationships are the core of the SBP program. The relationships between schools and business partners are key in order to make this a successful program. A great deal of time is spent assisting partners and schools set up and sign agreements. While many businesses desire to partner with a number of different schools, Ms. Agosti-Gisler advises them to focus on developing a strong relationship with just one school before branching out. This strategy has proven to be the most successful and satisfying for both the businesses and the schools.

The communication piece has been enhanced by the presence of SBP Coordinators in the schools. She thanked the administration for their support of those positions. Ms. Agosti-Gisler noted that she has made it a priority to increase communication and collaboration between these coordinators. Training sessions have been provided to assist in those efforts. Ninety-five percent of the coordinators have already been through the training. A job description has also been developed for these positions in an effort to provide continuity and accountability. An introductory class has also been developed for coordinators. This is an optional class, set up through TPD and UAA, that runs through March and offers a graded graduate credit. The School Business Partnership Board has offered to pay the tuition for

coordinators to attend this class. It was noted that elementary schools do not have coordinators and so, in addition to 17 coordinators currently signed up for the class, there are also two elementary school principals and one elementary principal representative.

In regards to paradigm shifts, Ms. Agosti-Gisler noted that she is a firm believer in being more efficient and making information more accessible. She noted that all of the memoranda of agreements have been scanned and will be put on the School Business Partnership website. All of these have been sent out to coordinators and principals in an effort to encourage them to review their agreements, determine if changes need to be made, and to share the information with staff in order to make the most out of the partnerships. Another means of quickly bringing publicity to businesses who have recently become partners is the Partnership of the Month recognition on the website. This features one of the brand new partnership businesses each month and allows for display of their business logo and a link to their business website.

Finally, Ms. Agosti-Gisler reported that the investment evaluation, finalized by Mr. Utter in the spring, indicates that the value of the partnerships is approximately \$2.5 million. The Anchorage School District has invested about \$76,000 in the program so this represents an impressive return on investment.

Ms. Comeau applauded Ms. Agosti-Gisler's efforts to emphasize quality over quantity. She believed that the first goal should be one quality partnership for each school and then move out from there.

- 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 September 25, 2006, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 10:05 p.m.

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Jeff Friedman, President

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Mary Marks, Clerk

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Johanna Lee, Recording Secretary

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Date Minutes Approved