

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 11, 2007

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, June 11, 2007, at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President, Tim Steele, presided.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE, Tim Steele Presiding

Board Members Present: John Steiner, Macon Roberts, Crystal Kennedy, Jeff Friedman, Chris Tuck, Mary Marks, and Tim Steele

Others Present: Carol Comeau, Rhonda Gardner, Leslie Vandergaw, Mike Henry, Patricia McRae, Enid Silverstein, Jerry Sjolander, Jeff Wood, Eric Tollefsen, Michele Egan, George Vakalis, William Johnson, Lt. Col. Luu, Jose DelReal, Ray Amsden, Pam Chenier, Robb Boyer, Chad Stiteler, Rick Rios, Johanna Lee, the press, and other interested people.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was reported that there was an addendum to the Personnel Report.

The agenda was approved with the addendum by unanimous consent.

C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Marks reported that the National Congress of American Indians is currently holding their national conference here in Anchorage. She reviewed several items on their agenda and welcomed them to Alaska and to Anchorage.

Ms. Comeau invited the community to be involved in a celebration marking the beginning of the Clark Middle School project. Details regarding specific activities are still being developed but the event is scheduled for June 20, 2007 at 11:30 a.m. at the Clark Middle School site.

Ms. Comeau reported that the School Board will hold a joint meeting with the Anchorage Assembly on June 22, 2007 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room.

D. AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Ms. Comeau introduced Deb Maynard and Mary Paige Lucas. Ms. Lucas updated the Board on the work that has been done in the district to address the issue of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). The project began several years ago with grant funding and has grown from a small awareness project to a much more sophisticated and far-reaching effort providing training and materials throughout the district. She noted that some of the grant money received this year was also used to produce a video training presentation. In addition some current funding has been used in an ongoing process to work with children in school teams to identify better ways to help kids with brain based disabilities. This is one of very few programs in school districts across the nation that presents a systems response to addressing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and is the only one in Alaska.

Ms. Lucas reported that there is an ongoing teacher training for school representatives in every school and core team specialist who can train other teachers. The project provides teacher toolkits with materials for every school. The video project has been piloted at Mears Middle School and Eagle River High School with a total of 340 students. The video is a project that was created and presented peer-to-peer and student-to-student.

Ms. Maynard introduced the *FASD: Keys to Understanding; Life or Life Sentence* video clip. She explained that this video was made by students for students over a two-year period. The information contained in the video and accompanying material is cutting edge. There is a comprehensive facilitator's manual that goes with the video. The program is made to be discussion-based so that students can work with their peers to help them understand not only what FASD is and how it affects people but also how they can support others who may have FASD.

The Board was able to view some clips from the video and review the written material.

Mr. Steiner asked how this project was funded and what is going to be done with it next. Ms. Maynard explained that the project was funded by a grant through the Department of Behavioral Health. Each year the district applies for a renewal grant. The first two years focused entirely on getting information out to teachers. The last two years the program has

been geared toward teacher training, parent training, community outreach, and material development. Mr. Steiner asked whether the materials are just being used by the Anchorage School District. Ms. Lucas explained that it was the intention of the grantees statewide that any of the materials developed or acquired would be able to be shared with others in the coalition. The district does not have does not have proprietary rights to the materials. We have given a copy of the video and accompanying material to the granting agency. She believed that the agency plans to make it available to the whole coalition. It is their responsibility to use it as they see fit. Ms. Maynard explained that the STEP Center represents the district on the Anchorage FASD Council and has made the materials available to members of that council.

Ms. Comeau noted that the State Board of Education would be meeting in Anchorage in September. She believed that it would be good to ask for time on their agenda to make a presentation to them regarding this program.

Ms. Kennedy noted that she, Mr. Steele and Mr. Tuck had the opportunity to see the full video. She voiced her appreciation for the efforts made by students to get this very important information out to their peers.

Ms. Cheri Scott shared that she was here to celebrate Deb Maynard for the work that she has done with FASD. She explained that she had been involved with the FASD support group since it first started in 1991. She voiced her appreciation to the district for their ongoing support of FASD families from the beginning. She credited Ms. Maynard for helping to focus the efforts to move this project forward and to improve the support of all students and families affected by FASD. Ms. Scott shared a message from Ms. JoAnne Luther whose foster son experiences FASD. Ms. Luther wanted to recognize both Ms. Maynard and Ms. Joy Morton, a teacher at East High School, for their support and the help they gave to her son.

E. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

1. Student Advisory Board

Mr. Jose DelReal noted that the Student Advisory Board (SAB) does not meet during the summer months. The SAB will resume meeting in September.

2. Military Delegate

Lt. Col. Luu noted that he had nothing to report this evening.

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

Mr. William Johnson reported that the MECAC held a planning retreat this past weekend. The group had planned topics and tentative dates for parent forums to be held during the 2007-2008 schoolyear. The first, tentatively planned for September will be "Cultural Diversity and Discrimination: How It Continues to Effect Our Children's Education and Academic Success." The next forum will be "How Do We Keep Our Elementary and Middle School Students Engaged" and is tentatively planned for December. The last parent forum, tentatively planned for March of 2008 will address the question "Are Any of Our School Failing and What Can We Do About It?"

The MECAC has discussed the issue of the Six Year Curriculum Plan. They strongly suggest adding a measurable requirement to the Plan to hold our principals and house managers accountable to insure their school houses embrace a hospitable environment. In addition, they strongly suggest adding a measurable requirement that our teachers, counselors, and other professional staff members reflect the diversity in the community. He noted that as our student population diversifies the district needs to be vigilant to the subject of discrimination in all forms. He acknowledged that the district is working on this issue and is eager to address specific situations when they are identified.

Mr. Johnson announced that this will be his last meeting as he had submitted his resignation from the MECAC. He voiced his appreciation to the Board for their support.

Mr. Johnson reported that the next MECAC business meeting is planned for June 21st at 12:00 noon in the Board Conference Room. As always, the public is welcoming to attend.

Mr. Steiner noted that Mr. Johnson will be sorely missed by the MECAC and by the Board. He noted that he had attended the planning retreat and was impressed with the issues identified and the discussion on how to address those issues over the coming year.

Mr. Friedman thanked Mr. Johnson for his service to both the MECAC and to the Board.

Ms. Marks voiced her disbelief that Mr. Johnson will be leaving the MECAC. She thanked him for the work that he has done for his community. She also offered her appreciation to his family for supporting him and allowing him the time to serve.

Ms. Marks asked Mr. Johnson for his insight from the discussion at the MECAC retreat on what it means to be culturally diverse and what it means to be hospitable. Mr. Johnson noted that several anecdotal examples were brought to the table during the discussion regarding the perceived treatment of individuals at schools. He shared his understanding of how every person should be acknowledged and treated. The MECAC is concerned that all parents be treated equally and with respect.

Ms. Marks noted that the Six Year Instructional Plan is on the agenda this evening. She believed that it is important to understand what culturally diversity really means.

Mr. Roberts expressed his appreciation to Mr. Johnson for the years of services he has given to MECAC and to the Board.

Mr. Steiner asked about comments made regarding the need for the six year plan to include goals and benchmarks for staff diversification. Mr. Johnson noted that while the six year plan is a very powerful and solid document it is missing hard, measurable points to hold particularly house managers to some standard as to the diversity of their staff from year to year.

Mr. Steele added his appreciation for the advocacy role that Mr. Johnson has filled over the years.

Ms. Comeau thanked Mr. Johnson for his service over the past several years. She requested a written report from the MECAC retreat noting that it would be very helpful for both the Board and the administration to be able to follow up on the concerns and recommendations.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD NON-AGENDA ITEMS

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 - February 20, 2007
- b. Special Meeting - May 31, 2007

2. ASD Memorandum # 340 - Naming of the Fairview Library in Memory of Charles Benson

It is the Superintendent's recommendation that the School Board approve the request of the Fairview staff and Fairview Community Council to name the school library "The Charles Benson Memorial Library" in honor of his long-time community leadership and advocacy for the students, staff, and families of Fairview.

3. ASD Memorandum # 341 - Setting the Date of the Region IV Cross-Country Running Meet: September 21, 2007

It is the Superintendent's recommendation that the School Board approve Friday, September 21, 2007, as the date for the Anchorage School District's Region IV Cross-Country Running Varsity Boys and Girls Championships so as not to conflict with Yom Kippur which begins at sundown on Friday and continues through Saturday, September 22, 2007.

4. ASD Memorandum # 283 - Gifted Plan of Service

It is the Administration's recommendation that School Board approve the Gifted Education State Plan of Service (POS) proposed by the Gifted Education Program and presented in Attachment A of this document. It is further recommended that the Board authorize the Superintendent to submit the Gifted Education Plan of Service to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

5. ASD Memorandum # 339 - School Board Policy Addition: appendix A Student Rights and Responsibilities - Cellular Phone and Other Electronic Communication Device Usage & Cyberbullying (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt on First Reading additions to the Student Rights and

Responsibilities document (Appendix A to Board policy 450) defining the rights and responsibilities of students regarding cellular phone and other electronic communication device usage and cyberbullying.

6. ASD Memorandum # 280 - Prior Approval of Discretionary Grant: Smaller Learning Communities

It is the Administration's recommendation that the Anchorage School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to apply for a grant from the U.S. Department of Education for seven of Anchorage's comprehensive high schools. The schools are Bartlett, Chugiak, Dimond, East, Service, South, and West high schools.

7. ASD Memorandum # 292 - Award of Contract: Zero Balance Banking Services

It is the recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to enter into a contract with Key Bank, for a three-year period, July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2010, with the option to renew on a year-to-year basis, and that the Minimum Deposit Account be authorized at \$1,203,863.92 for Zero Balance Banking Services.

8. ASD Memorandum # 325 - Award of Contract: Hanshew Middle School Ice Mitigation Roof Repairs

It is the Administration's recommendation the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to award a contract for Hanshew Middle School Ice Mitigation Roof Repairs to S R Bales Construction, Inc. for the Base Bid award amount of \$274,000, Alternate Number 1 in the amount of \$154,500, and Alternate Number 2 in the amount of \$16,340 for a total award of \$444,840.

9. ASD Memorandum # 326 - Personnel Report

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

Mr. Steele noted that there are speakers for ASD Memorandum #341, Setting the Date of the Region IV Cross-Country Running Meet: September 21, 2007, and requested that it be pulled for discussion.

Mr. Steiner requested that ASD Memorandum #283, Gifted Plan of Service, be pulled for discussion.

Ms. Comeau requested that ASD Memorandum #340, Naming of the Fairview Library in Memory of Charles Benson, be pulled for discussion. She also requested ASD Memorandum # 241, Six Year Instructional Plan Extension, be pulled from the Superintendent's Report for discussion.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner
Seconded by: Mary Marks

To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 20, 2007 and the Special Meeting of May 31, 2007 and Memoranda #339, #280, #292, #325, and #326 with addendum.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

Ms. Vandergaw introduced Mr. Bobby Jeffs as the new principal at Gruening Middle School.

Mr. Sjolander introduced Mr. Ed Schear as the new principal at Whaley School.

ASD Memorandum # 340 - Naming of the Fairview Library in Memory of Charles Benson

It is the Superintendent's recommendation that the School Board approve the request of the Fairview staff and Fairview Community Council to name the school library "The Charles Benson Memorial Library" in honor of his long-time community leadership and advocacy for the students, staff, and families of Fairview.

ACTION:

Moved by: Mary Marks
Seconded by: John Steiner

To approve the request of the Fairview staff and Fairview Community Council to name the school library "The Charles Benson Memorial Library" in honor of his long-time community leadership and advocacy for the students, staff, and families of Fairview.

Ms. Comeau noted that she was thrilled to bring this recommendation forward. She recalled that Charles really loved Fairview Elementary School. He was absolutely adamant that the school be replaced and rebuilt. The beautiful school that we have now is a direct result of his hard work and advocacy coupled with that of many others in that community.

Dr. Mark Robinson thanked the Board for considering this recommendation. He also thanked Mr. Darryl Hess, chair of the community council, and the Fairview PTA for supporting this recommendation.

Mr. Darryl Hess shared some of his experiences with Charles and Celeste Benson. He noted that he had learned the meaning of true community activism from them. He noted that Charles had a true commitment to children and wanted them to have a quality structure. It was very important to both of them that students in the community got a first-class education. One of the last things that Charles was involved with in the community was going to the school every day and reading to the students. Mr. Hess urged the Board to honor Mr. Benson's memory, everything that he did for the school, and for the great diversity in the Fairview neighborhood, by naming the Fairview Elementary School library after him.

Mr. Paul Benson noted that this is a real honor that he believed Charles would really appreciate. He also noted that he could think of no place where he would rather have his name remembered than at Fairview Elementary School.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 341 - Setting the Date of the Region IV Cross-Country Running Meet: September 21, 2007

It is the Superintendent's recommendation that the School Board approve Friday, September 21, 2007, as the date for the Anchorage School District's Region IV Cross-Country Running Varsity Boys and Girls Championships

so as not to conflict with Yom Kippur which begins at sundown on Friday and continues through Saturday, September 22, 2007.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner
Seconded by: Crystal Kennedy

To approve Friday, September 21, 2007, as the date for the Anchorage School District's Region IV Cross-Country Running Varsity Boys and Girls Championships so as not to conflict with Yom Kippur which begins at sundown on Friday and continues through Saturday, September 22, 2007.

Mr. John Clark introduced himself as the coaching representative for Region IV cross country running and the cross country coach for Dimond High School. He asked to clarify what he believed were misrepresentations in the memorandum. He reported that the coaches were asked last fall and had at that time indicated their desire to keep the same format as in years past. He also disagreed with notation in the memo that some of the coaches were in favor of a two-day format. He indicated that cross country is the only sport being asked to make this change and that other sports will be competing on Saturday, September 22nd. It is his contention that if the district is going to set the day aside as a holy holiday then it should be supported by all of the activities and all of the sports. This recommendation would indicate that the holiday is only important if the student is a varsity cross country runner. He noted that none of the cross country coaches were involved in the process of developing this recommendation. He also stated that ASAA does not support this position. Mr. Clark contended that everyone has conflicts in their lives. Educators and coaches should be helping students and athletes make decisions, not avoid them. We demonstrate our convictions and honor whoever that may be by the sacrifices that we make, not avoiding conflicts or asking others to change their schedules.

Mr. Steiner asked when the coaches took a vote on this issue and what the voting results were. Mr. Clark explained that the vote was done via email. He provided his recollection of the timeline of the process over the past two years. He indicated that the vast majority of the coaches do not support moving the meet to a Friday and splitting the event up for that meet.

Mr. Steiner asked for some clarification of the logistical problems that splitting the meet would entail. Mr. Clark explained that a cross country meet is competed over 5 kilometers, so it takes quite a while to prepare the course. It is quite a process and takes a great deal of time, typically the day before a competition. The meet itself involves upward of fifty volunteers in a variety of capacities. To have to do this for two days will take an extraordinary effort and, to his understanding, the logistics have not actually been worked out yet. The idea sounds simply but in actually the logistics are extremely complicated.

Mr. Friedman clarified that this is a qualifying event for the state tournament. He asked whether other sports have a qualifying event on this date. Mr. Clark noted that it was a little misleading to think that other events are not as important to moving individuals or teams into state competition as this meet. For instance, every football game is equally important to moving a team into state competition, particularly late in the season. Mr. Clark also explained that ASAA has determined that athletes who choose not to run in this meet for religious reasons can still compete at the state competition if their team qualifies for the state meet.

Mr. Friedman asked whether it would be better logistically to hold the entire meet on Friday rather than split the meet between the two days. Mr. Clark explained that running any part of the meet on Friday is logistically very difficult for a number of reasons including lighting, the availability of volunteers on a weekday, and the participation of spectators. Mr. Friedman raised the question of looking at moving the meet to Sunday. Mr. Clark indicated that there had been no discussion of moving the meet to Sunday as that was not offered as an option. The scheduling of any event on a Sunday opens a much larger discussion than just scheduling this cross country meet.

Ms. Ellen Kirchner shared a recommendation of the Jewish community and other supporters that the Board approve Friday, September 21st as the date for the ASD Region IV Cross Country Running championship for all athletes, Varsity, Junior Varsity and Open, so as not to conflict with Yom Kippur. The concern is that by scheduling educational and athletic events on major Jewish holidays has unintentionally denied Jewish children the opportunity to participate in important academic and extracurricular events. She referenced the Board policy on non-discrimination which shows that the district has an interest in fostering an inclusive environment, respectful of all religions and cultures. She noted that the conflict in question has put Jewish children and their families in the position of choosing between their religion and those academic and

extracurricular opportunities. She asked the district to make reasonable accommodations so that those children are not required to make such a choice. Such reasonable accommodations have been mandated by the Supreme Court. She also asked that the Board adopt a policy clearly stating that the district, schools and faculty will not schedule any important academic and extracurricular events on the most sacred Jewish holidays that can not be made up by students on another date. She reviewed the process that had been put into place to address calendar conflict as the result of the Activities Task Force during the 2004-2005 school year.

Mr. Brian Kirchner, a South High School student, explained that Yom Kippur is the most important religious observance for those of the Jewish faith. He noted that it was unfair that religious observers must be forced to make a choice between running at the regional meet and abiding by religious obligation. He explained how the current schedule impacts his ability to compete. The proposed two-day meet does not adequately address the issue because it only addresses changing the schedule for varsity runners. He believed that splitting the event into a two day event as it will create divisions in a team sport that thrives on the spirit and support of teammates. He urged the Board to simply change the date of the entire Region IV competition from Saturday, September 22nd to Friday, September 21st.

Ms. Barbara Brown asked whether this issue would ever have come up if September 22nd was Easter. She noted that Yom Kippur is that kind of day for the Jewish community. It is not a regular day in the Jewish calendar. While she acknowledged what was said earlier regarding taking a stand for one's religious beliefs, she believed that such sacrifices are no longer necessary in order to have an inclusive society. She noted that the competition is a team competition and believed that the date for the entire competition should be moved. She requested that the Board move the entire competition away from Saturday, September 22nd. She also asked the Board to take some action to address the entire issue so that the community is not forced to go through this year after year.

Ms. Sophie Weipking-Brown, a West High School cross country runner, recalled that three years ago the cross country Region IV regional meet was scheduled on Yom Kippur. After that the district was given a calendar with the dates of the Jewish High Holy Days. The district assured the Jewish community that the same mistake would not happen again. Last year cross country regions were again scheduled on one of these dates, Rosh Hashanah. This year the meet is again scheduled on

Yom Kippur. Unless the date is changed Jewish athletes will not be able to participate in what for many is the culmination of many months or even an entire year's worth of training. Ms. Weipking-Brown indicated that she has heard nothing but support for a change of date from her fellow cross country runners so that this meet doesn't exclude people because of their religious beliefs. She reviewed the options of moving the meet either to Friday or Sunday.

Ms. Angela Hanley expressed her belief that it would be a huge mistake to split this competition into a two-day event. She noted that this event is just as important for junior varsity and open runners as it is for varsity runners. She explained that moving the meet to Friday will detract from the event because of the number of spectators that will not be able to attend. She suggested that if the district is going to take the stand to acknowledge the religious holiday it needs to be done across the board for all events and activities.

Mr. Steiner asked whether the meet could be held the Saturday prior to September 22nd. The speaker was unable to speak to the question. Mr. Steiner asked for the speakers' thoughts as to scheduling the event on a regular Sunday in the Christian calendar as opposed to the High Holy Day in the Jewish faith. Ms. Hanley, speaking only for herself, indicated that scheduling the meet on Sunday would not be an issue.

Mr. Alan Levy explained that he was representing the Interfaith Council of Anchorage. He noted that the Council had actively participated in finding a solution to calendar conflicts. They believe that the will of the interfaith community had spoken. This is not a new issue. After several years and much debate agreement was reached by all parties in multi-disciplined ad-hoc committee. He asked why the issue was being discussed again. He asked why we are seemingly so insensitive to the Jewish community. It is hard to imagine that anyone would schedule an event on Good Friday, Easter or Christmas. School districts around the country successfully calendar events with diverse populations in mind. He asked why we have been unable to do so. He noted that now is the time to implement the plan and stick to it.

Ms. Regina Boisclair explained that she represented the Ecumenical Commission of the Archdiocese of Anchorage. She urged the Board to follow the decision that they had made earlier to respect the extraordinarily important holidays of all of the religious traditions. She noted that this is also part of the mandate of the Interfaith Council.

Mr. Steiner posed the same question regarding the choice between scheduling activities on a High Holy Day of one faith and a regular Sabbath on the other. Ms. Boisclair indicated that there are creative ways around the Sunday issue particularly in connection with the distinction between an ordinary Sunday and a High Holy Day.

Ms. Comeau explained that this recommendation was an attempt to respond to the exclusion of the varsity runners in the state tournament. She noted that she has come to believe that it was a mistake to split the meet between two days. She reviewed the minutes of the task force that has been referenced several times. She explained that the reason why the process as outlined in the recommendations from the task force was not followed was because she was not aware until early May that this was an issue. She had very specifically directed her staff to deal with this issue last September and she thought that had been accomplished. She noted that she had not in any way tried to drag this out or not meet with the coaches. Her main concern is to deal with the diversity in our school district. She noted that she and the Board takes pride that we are an inclusive school district. She explained that we need to not ban district events on Sundays. It is our own policy which needs to be looked at. She does not support taking everybody out of school on Friday for a number of reasons. She voiced her personal belief that we should block the dates for all school activities on High Holy Days of every faith. She explained that the issue needs to either be dealt with tonight or referred to the Policy Subcommittee. If it is referred it will need to be brought back to the next meeting for action. She believed that an amendment could be made to direct the administration to plan the event on Sunday, September 23rd and block that Saturday for all events. That action will not be popular.

Ms. Comeau explained that she and Mr. Arndt had gone to the ASAA Board meeting and formally appealed their decision and they refused to move the state meet back a week. They did say that we could modify our schedule and it was up to the district to come up with a solution. She has been persuaded that splitting the meet is not a good idea. She believed that the best solution to salvage this for this next fall is to block out all of that Saturday for all events and to schedule this event on Sunday. This whole issue comes down to having the will in this district to say, once and for all, that these are important dates to black out. It needs to be put in a memorandum and it need to be formally adopted by the Board so everybody knows the rules and we don't have to go through this again.

Mr. Joseph Alward, cross country running coach at West, reiterated how difficult it would be to split the meet. He also explained the reasons why moving the meet back one weekend would not work this year.

Rabbi Fred Wenger, Rabbi of the Congregation Bath Shalom in Anchorage, noted that Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year. He explained that they specifically ask their students, whether or not they attend synagogue, to fast for twenty-five hours.

Mr. Friedman noted that he had checked the ASAA website earlier and it indicates that the organization absolutely prohibits any extracurricular activity from any Sunday in the year. While he believed that could be dealt with he was hesitant to have an amendment specifying the meet move to the following Sunday. He noted that he did have a proposal that the region meet not be held on that Saturday and leave it open to rescheduling rather than having the Board direct how it be rescheduled.

Mr. Arndt explained that if the district were to pursue scheduling the meet on Sunday we would have to request a waiver from ASAA. Ms. Comeau indicated that she would rather the Board act to not allow the meet on the Saturday and leave it to the administration to find out the best date to reschedule and bring that back as a separate recommendation.

Ms. Marks noted that she would like to see this issue go back to the Policy Subcommittee to come up with a solution.

Ms. Kennedy voiced concern with turning this back to the Policy Subcommittee at this point because it wouldn't be very timely. It is appropriate to ask the Policy Subcommittee to formulate the overall policy addressing the calendar but she believed choosing a date so that this particular issue could be settled is more appropriately addressed by the Board as a whole as quickly as possible.

Mr. Steele noted that he was on the Board in 2004 when we dealt with this the first time and voiced his frustration that we continue to have the same types of issues surfacing again and again. We are a diverse community and need to be sensitive and have a policy that works for everyone.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Moved by: Jeff Freidman
Seconded by: Mary Marks

That the School Board directs that the Cross Country Region IV Cross Country Regional Meet be rescheduled so as not to occur on

Saturday, September 22, 2007 and that the Policy Subcommittee consider whether Board Policy should be changed to prohibit any extracurricular activity on major religious holidays.

Mr. Friedman explained that he had tried to leave the motion flexible enough so that the Superintendent could reschedule either with or without the Board stamp of approval, depending on timing. He also tried to keep it flexible so that the Policy Subcommittee not be directed in any particular direction. While he indicated that he has his own views on what the policy should be he believed that the complete community discussion that the Policy Subcommittee can encourage is needed. This sets up that discussion but does not tell them how to resolve the issue.

Mr. Steiner noted that he had difficulty justifying why cross country is being treated differently from other sports and activity. He was also concerned about ruling out major religious holidays and whether it would be constitutional sound to do so. He is more inclined to petition for the waiver from ASAA to hold this particular meet on Sunday.

Mr. Steele hoped that the Superintendent would, in all due diligence, work very rapidly to solve this issue for this particular situation. We also need to be consistent for all activities not just cross country running.

VOTE to Substitute the Motion:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

Mr. Steiner asked whether deferring this to the next Board meeting would cause a problem. Ms. Comeau believed that the Board needs to resolve this issue tonight. People need to know whether the event will be held on September 22nd or not. She noted that she could bring a recommendation to the Board at the next meeting whether to cancel all activities on that particular date as was suggested. By then she will have requested a waiver from ASAA and talked to district attorneys. Mr. Steiner was concerned about making a definitive change without knowing the specific date the meet will be moved to.

Mr. Steele asked whether this action is authorizing the Superintendent to reschedule this one event. Mr. Friedman noted that the Board has never, to his knowledge, set the dates of any other sporting event. There are a lot of complexities and he believed the less the Board interferes in the details the better.

Mr. Steiner stated that his position will be against the substitute motion because he is concerned about setting a precedent where the Board has banned that date for that sport and may experience an avalanche of requests from other sports and activities. He believed this will be problematic until the policy is sorted out. He would encourage the Superintendent to investigate it but does not feel that a position should be taken from the Board's perspective.

VOTE on the Substitute Motion:

Ayes: Kennedy, Roberts,
Friedman, Tuck, Marks,
Steele

Nays: Steiner

MOTION PASSED

The Board went into recess at 8:50 p.m. The Board was called back into session at 9:05 p.m.

ASD Memorandum # 283 - Gifted Plan of Service

It is the Administration's recommendation that School Board approve the Gifted Education State Plan of Service (POS) proposed by the Gifted Education Program and presented in Attachment A of this document. It is further recommended that the Board authorize the Superintendent to submit the Gifted Education Plan of Service to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner

Seconded by: Jeff Friedman

To approve the Gifted Education State Plan of Service (POS) proposed by the Gifted Education Program and presented in Attachment A of this document. It is further moved that the Board authorize the Superintendent to submit the Gifted Education Plan of Service to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

Ms. Comeau explained that it is a requirement that this plan be submitted periodically for the Board's review and approval. She noted that Ms. Vanderploeg has done an excellent job of reaching out to all of the stakeholders. She believed that this is an excellent plan and encouraged the Board's support.

Ms. MerriKae Vanderploeg reported that she started working on the Gifted Plan of Service (POS) last fall. She had several parents, as well as instructors from all educational levels, administrators, and other departments. She believed that the POS is a very extensive plan which looks at all aspects of gifted children at all ability levels and at all grade levels.

Mr. Steiner asked Ms. Vanderploeg to highlight what is new in this plan and whether those items have already implemented or if they are just being proposed. Ms. Vanderploeg explained that the last plan that was submitted to the state really involved trying to expand the program to look at diverse populations and underrepresented groups. Much of the language remains the same in this plan but some has been modified. In the past the highly gifted program was called the Individualized Acceleration (IA) program. The committee decided to change that to Highly Gifted (HG) because everyone has a different interpretation of what individualized looks like. The eligibility requirements for highly gifted remain the same except for a change the GPA criteria at the high school level. The new eligibility requirements indicate a minimum GPA in core subject areas where in the past there was no distinction between core subject areas and electives.

Mr. Steiner asked whether any more substantive changes in provision of services were considered. Ms. Vanderploeg explained that the Six Year Plan was used to lead the discussion as this POS was looked at for revisions. They also looked at the budget to see what could be done. She noted that Mr. Steiner had asked whether changing the pull-out model at the elementary level had ever been discussed. She explained that, while that had been discussed, it would be very difficult both financially and logistically due to space issues. She explained how the process is addressed every year. She noted that nationally about 80% of schools use some sort of pull-out program.

Mr. Steiner asked for an explanation of how the gifted program criteria are evaluated. Ms. Vanderploeg explained the criteria and what types of assessments are being used. She noted that the program uses nationally-normed tests.

Mr. Steiner noted that not all kids are gifted in the same way and asked whether the manner in which we identify students captures those children who may not be as academically outstanding but have other gifts that need to be nurtured. Ms. Vanderploeg explained that this district has an academically driven gifted program. She noted that the gifted department has tried to provide opportunities for talented children through such activities as the Super Saturday programs and the Club programs.

Mr. Steiner asked whether students have to re-qualify as they transition from level to level. Ms. Vanderploeg explained the process that students go through to qualify for the gifted program and the checklist of items and activities required as the students transition from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school. She noted that the terminology stating that the student has to re-qualify refers to whether their scores are still consistent. Most of the students continue to qualify. She explained that one of the biggest challenges is grades. There are a lot of students who have no trouble taking the tests but have a big problem maintaining the grades in their classes.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. ASD Memorandum # 327 - Project Status Report

This is a report of activities and project status changes in Major Capital Projects during the period of May 15, 2007 through June 1, 2007.

2. ASD Memorandum # 241 - Six Year Instructional Plan Extension

On May 10, 2004, the School Board adopted a six-year instructional plan. The original plan was organized around the three adopted school board goals and had the overarching intention to not only "close the achievement gap", but also to increase achievement for all Anchorage School District students. The original plan included 29 departments'

individual plans with accompanying abstracts, a glossary and an executive summary.

Since the 2004 adoption, district department heads have conducted annual evaluations of progress that have been sequentially presented to the School Board. Additionally, plans were intensely scrutinized and revisions made to all components in the fall of 2005. The revised six-year plan went before the School Board and was adopted in January 2006. Discussions about how to extend the six-year plan resulted in a strategy to eliminate the first three years and extend current objectives and initiatives to 2011-12. This effort creates a second edition of the plan that is inextricably "linked" to the first via common threads of effort, assessment and collaboration. Abstracts, the glossary and the executive summary have been updated.

In the interim a new chapter on Integrated Assessment has been added for incorporation into the plan.

Ms. Gardner thanked all of the staff who worked incredibly hard on this plan. Dr. Silverstein provided some amazing opportunities for collaboration to make sure that areas were well connected within the document.

Dr. Silverstein indicated that she does not know of anything that has sustained the longevity and interest that this plan has. It has enabled us to communicate and galvanize what we are doing to allow much more than ordinarily might have been able to be focused on achieving the results that we want to achieve. She believed that what gets attended to gets enhanced and strengthened. This plan and the way this process has been set in motion of the evaluations that are done annually, the revisions that are done systematically, and now the way it is being extended has not only institutionalized some great things that were probably already going on but has also allowed these things to come together and enhance each other.

Dr. Silverstein suggested that, in doing the extension, the way to look at the process is like a tapestry. People have looked back at what they had done for the first six years, pulled out the threads that they thought were most powerful and most conducive to maintaining the course, being measurable, demonstrating achievement, and wove in what needs to be added to sustain the course.

Mr. Steiner had asked earlier how this plan is integrated into budgeting. He had been assured that there was an effort to coordinate items with the overall budget. He questioned whether there were any orders of magnitude price-tags to identify what funding is necessary to accomplish these plans as opposed to things that are within the ordinary budget which explain how funds will be used but do not require extra funding. Ms. Gardner explained that one place where that has been done is in the area of curriculum purchases. An outline has been developed to show where we hope the curriculum purchases would be over the next six years. This includes training and materials.

Ms. Comeau explained how the Six-Year Plan helps focus the efforts to building the budget each year. It is a real guide to determine the starting point for decision making.

Mr. Steiner noted that it would be helpful to know if there are areas in the plan that would require some special allocation. Knowing of anything that requires an additional increment of funding would be useful. Then as we advocate for funding we will know what pieces we need more support for. Dr. Silverstein noted that a lot of things have gotten accomplished in other ways besides just pouring more money into them. People have gotten creative or collaborated with colleague to discover new ways of doing things.

Mr. Friedman noted that his understanding was that there is nothing in the plan that we did not think could be funded. So there should not be anything in the plan to highlight as something for which additional monies would be needed. Ms. Gardner explained that they have a keen understanding that just because something is in the plan doesn't mean that it will get funded but they were very careful to make sure that what was put in the plan was something we believed professionally needed to and should legitimately be funded.

Ms. Marks asked about the notation under Indian Education that standard-based assessments will increase by 2.5% in each grade. She wondered whether we need to raise the bar on these percentages. Ms. Gardner noted that the percentages are in line with Board goals. Ms. Doreen Brown explained that in the past we have had a targeted increase of 10% which was never met. She noted that the Native Advisory Committee had helped to review and create these goals. Ms. Marks asked if we were meeting that percentage. Ms. Brown noted that the data for this year will be reported in the Profile of Performance which will be presented in the fall.

Ms. Marks questioned what the plan of action is to increase the percentage of Native students in the accelerated math sequence. Ms. Brown explained that the plan is to work with students, parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, and community representatives to increase communication and to increase expectations. One key is to work with parents to learn to navigate the school system. Another approach is to look at the program of studies at an earlier age and use standardized test scores in the elementary levels to identify students who are above proficient and encourage them to go into higher level math courses.

Ms. Marks asked how we are able to get a good assessment of how well this information is being communicated with parents when the Indian Education staff travel from school to school. Ms. Brown explained that one of the focuses over the next school year and throughout the plan is to have a lot more community meetings. This is meant to improve communication and learning about the school environment as well as developing a sense of community.

Ms. Comeau applauded all of the staff. She noted that this plan really does allow us to go to a subject area or a group and see where we are headed. It does more than just inform the budget process. It really helps with our school goals and with our planning. It is a good vehicle for our community advisory groups. The plan is a terrific tool and resource.

Mr. Steele commented that this is a living document and is a plan that shows how every area in the district fits with all the other components.

Mr. Steiner remarked on the issue raised by MECAC regarding the aspiration that our staff, including our teachers and our administrators, more closely reflect the diversity that we have within our student population. He noted that the only thing that he could identify in the plan to address that issue was in the Human Resources section related to EEO revising, updating, and publishing the district's diversity plan bi-annually. He could find nothing that indicated a goal or target.

Ms. Comeau reported that there is a diversity recruitment plan that comes before the Board which is where all that data and those goals are. There are statements in the plan addressing the need to continually diversify the work forces. She acknowledged that we need

to continue to do more. She noted that the absolute first step is to diversify the applicant pool. From there the administrators will look not only for highly qualified but also for diversity.

Mr. Johnson applauded the efforts being taken. He made clear that the MECAC did not want to downgrade any individual efforts or steps that are being taken. However, as Dr. Silverstein said, if you want to make something happen on a particular issue you have to keep pointing at it.

Dr. Silverstein reported that the Culturally Responsive Committee has been talking about institutionalizing a Culturally Responsive plan for the district just like ten years ago they institutionalized standards. What has to happen first is that the whole constituency has to come to a common set of beliefs. They have to come to an understanding which doesn't focus on diversity as much as it focuses on commonalities among people. The Culturally Responsive plan this year indicates that there will be more intensive training. That training includes the Undoing Racism program scheduled for this summer. She reviewed how the process of building a Culturally Responsive plan will work.

Mr. Steiner noted that the one of the line items in the High School section of the Six-Year Plan is to continue to retain, recruit and train highly qualified staff with an emphasis on improving staff diversity to better reflect our student body.

Ms. Kennedy noted how much information can be gained just from looking at the abstracts on all the different departments. She was impressed that everything in the plan is so purposeful.

I. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

J. COMMUNICATIONS & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Steele indicated that he would be in contact with Board members to set a time and date to hold a Board Retreat.

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION - PERSONNEL/FINANCE/NEGOTIATIONS
LITIGATION

L. ADJOURNMENT

The Regular Meeting of June 11, 2007, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 10:20 p.m.

Tim Steele, President

Crystal Kennedy, Clerk

Johanna Lee, Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approved