

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING OF OCTOBER 8, 2007

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, October 8, 2007, at 6:34 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: Tim Steele, John Steiner, Crystal Kennedy, Jeff Friedman, Mary Marks and Chris Tuck

Board Members Excused: Macon Roberts

Others Present: Carol Comeau, Rhonda Gardner, Leslie Vandergaw, Mike Henry, Enid Silverstein, Jerry Sjolander, Jeff Wood, Eric Tollefsen, Michele Egan, Janet Stokesbary, George Vakalis, Lt. Col. Sonny Luu, Jose DelReal, Ray Amsden, Marie Laule, Chad Stiteler, Ophelia Dargon-Steed, Laurel Vorachek, Pam Chenier, Judy Michael, the press, and other interested people.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Kennedy announced that the Policy Subcommittee meeting originally scheduled for tomorrow, October 9, 2007 has been cancelled and will be rescheduled.

Ms. Comeau announced that the district will begin a series of high school forums, one in each high school attendance area, over the next two months starting next Monday evening at Bartlett High School. The purpose of these forums is to involve the community, including district staff and students, in a discussion regarding what twenty-first century high schools should look like, what the curriculum should be, and a whole range of other issues surrounding the needs of our high school students. This series of meetings will build on the high school forum that was held in June.

D. AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

The Bartlett Baritones from Bartlett High School, under the direction of Liesl Davenport-Wheeler, performed for the entertainment of the Board and other members of public.

ASD Memorandum # 60 - Recognition of National Principal of the Year Finalist, Cheryl Guyett

Mr. Friedman read that the National Association of Secondary School Principals knows what makes a good principal. That's why the association named Dimond High School Principal Cheryl Guyett as one of three finalists for its 2008 National Principal of the Year award.

Criteria for the award include the principal's accomplishments in improving his/her school's climate, building teams, spearheading reform, and collaborating with community members. Cheryl's achievements match perfectly with those guidelines.

When she became the principal of Dimond High School in 2004, Cheryl took up the mission of providing structures to enhance collaboration between students, parents and teachers. A Monday late-start schedule created 45 minutes each week for teachers to work in teams on instruction. Staff members engage in vertical teaming with elementary and middle schools, cross-district world language projects, grade-level curriculum alignment, and technology applications.

Guyett and her staff have implemented many concepts to personalize the school and increase student success, such as lunchtime tutoring, homework assistance, extended learning, credit recovery, and reading assistance. The creation of four houses, including a Freshman House, has increased school safety, improved student and staff satisfaction, raised student achievement, and instilled a sense of community often lost in large schools.

The Anchorage School Board recognized Cheryl's abilities and achievements and extended their gratitude for her continued efforts.

E. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

1. Student Advisory Board

Mr. Jose DelReal reported that the Student Advisory Board met earlier today. Elections were held during the meeting. Mr. DelReal was elected president and Mr. Matt Cook, student at Chugiak High School, was elected vice-president.

Ms. Comeau offered her congratulations and indicated her belief that Jose and Matt will make a great team and do a terrific job of serving both the School Board and the students in the district.

2. Military Delegate

Lt. Col. Luu reported that Dr. Jean Silvernail, chief of the Military Child Education program - Pacific Command, had visited the local military installations a few weeks ago. During her visit she toured several local schools. He indicated that feedback from that visit is very positive. He commended the staff and administration for their assistance during the visit.

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

The representative from the M.E.C.A.C. was unable to attend the meeting.

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. Special Meeting - September 24, 2007

2. ASD Memorandum # 61 - Resolution for School Bus Safety Week

The administration recommends approval of a resolution recognizing Oct. 22-26, 2007 as School Bus Safety Week in the Anchorage School District. The resolution symbolizes the strong support the Anchorage School Board places on all phases of school bus safety.

3. ASD Memorandum # 62 - Resolution Designating October 23-31, 2007 as Red Ribbon Week for Anchorage School District

The administration recommends that the Anchorage School Board adopt the attached resolution designating October 21-27, 2007 as Red Ribbon Week in the Anchorage School District.

4. ASD Memorandum # 63 - Resolution in Support of Keeping the Lights on After School - October 18, 2007

The administration recommends the approval of the attached resolution designating October 18, 2007 as Lights On After School! in the Anchorage School District.

5. ASD Memorandum # 83 - ASD Board Policy Revision: 332.3(d) Time Period for Lotteries (Second Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on Second Reading the revision of School Board Policy 332.3(d) Time Period for Lotteries as shown in Attachment A.

6. ASD Memorandum # 92 - ASD Board Policy Changes Due to Anchorage Equal Rights Commission Recommendations (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt on First Reading the proposed changes to School Board Policies 114 Nondiscrimination; 114.1 Display of Prejudice Toward Others; 332.3 Lottery Procedures - Open Enrollment; 344.12 District Provisions; 490.14 Prohibited Material; 527 Equal Employment Opportunity; 532.241 EEO Policy Statement; 604 EEO Policy Statement; 725.31 Non-Discrimination; and 725.31 Non-Discrimination, as shown on Attachment A.

7. ASD Memorandum # 64 - Acceptance of Continuation Grant Award: Reading is FUNDamental, Inc.

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a continuation grant from Reading is Fundamental, Inc., in the amount of \$36,432.

8. ASD Memorandum # 85 - Approval for East High School and Eagle River High School One Percent for Art

This memorandum is to inform the Anchorage School Board that artwork selections have been made for the following buildings in accordance with AMC 7.40, Funds for Works of Art in Public Facilities

and have been reviewed by the Anchorage School District Safety / MOA Risk Manager and the MOA Fire Marshal.

9. ASD Memorandum # 87 - Sale of Surplus Property

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to dispose of the listed surplus property by sealed bid sale or public auction in accordance with Board Policy 732.1. Prior to the sale, these assets will be offered to the Municipality of Anchorage for extended public use.

10. ASD Memorandum # 57 - Personnel Report

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

Mr. Steele requested that ASD Memorandum #85, Approval for East High School and Eagle River High - One Percent for Art, and ASD Memorandum # 62, Resolution Designating October 23-31, 2007 as Red Ribbon Week for Anchorage School District, be pulled for discussion.

Mr. Steiner requested that ASD Memorandum #92, ASD Board Policy Changes Due to Anchorage Equal Rights Commission Recommendations (First Reading), be pulled for discussion.

Ms. Kennedy requested that the Minutes for the Special Meeting of September 24th be pulled for discussion.

Ms. Comeau requested that ASD Memorandum #74, Enrollment Status Update for September 28, 2007, and ASD Memorandum # 65, 2007-2008 Certificated Recruitment Report be pulled from the Superintendent's Report for presentations.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner
Seconded by: Mary Marks

To approve Memoranda #61, #63, #83, #64, #87, and #57.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

Excused: Roberts

MOTION PASSED

ACTION:

Moved by: Crystal Kennedy To approve the minutes of the
Seconded by: John Steiner Anchorage School Board Special
Meeting of September 24, 2007.

Ms. Kennedy noted that Ms. Marks was not listed as present under Item D, the Superintendent's Report. As Ms. Marks was present during that report Ms. Kennedy requested that the minutes be amended to add Ms. Marks' name to the list of members in attendance during the Superintendent's Report. The proposed amendment passed by unanimous consent.

VOTE on MOTION as AMENDED:

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

Nays: None

Excused: Roberts

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 62 - Resolution Designating October 23-31, 2007 as Red Ribbon Week for Anchorage School District

The administration recommends that the Anchorage School Board adopt the attached resolution designating October 21-27, 2007 as Red Ribbon Week in the Anchorage School District.

ACTION:

Moved by: Jeff Friedman To adopt the attached resolution
Seconded by: Mary Marks designating October 21-27, 2007 as
Red Ribbon Week in the Anchorage
School District.

Ms. Comeau noted that there were a number of people from the Red Ribbon Coalition in attendance. She recognized those individuals and thanked them for their work. Mr. John Oates and Ms. Randi Binion-Olson from the Boys and Girls Clubs spoke on behalf of the Red Ribbon Coalition. The Boys and Girls Clubs organization has been providing leadership for this effort for the last three years. The coalition includes the Anchorage Policy Department, the Anchorage School District, the DEA, the State Troopers, the US Attorney's Office, and the National Guard. Mr. Oates noted that Ms. Comeau has been a co-chair of the Coalition since its

inception. Red Ribbon is a concerted effort by all of the participating organizations to heighten the awareness on the part of both parents and youth to the negative impacts of drug and alcohol use. During the week of October 21-27, 2007 there will be lots of programs going on not only in the schools but also in the Boys and Girls Clubs all across the state.

Mr. Steiner voiced his appreciation for the efforts made by the Boys & Girls Clubs to help our youth stay away from drugs and avoid other kinds of misconduct.

Ms. Comeau noted that the kick-off event will be held at Sand Lake Elementary School this year. The event will be held at 10:00 a.m. on October 22, 2007. Board members read the following resolution into the record:

Whereas, the Anchorage School District values the health and safety of all of its students and employees; and

Whereas, substance abuse is particularly damaging to one of our most valuable resources, our children, and is a contributing factor in the three leading causes of death for teenagers -- accidents, homicides and suicides; and

Whereas, it is the goal of the Anchorage School District to educate employees, students and families and establish an atmosphere that supports awareness, education and on-going initiatives to prevent illegal drug use; and

Whereas, the Red Ribbon Campaign promotes family and individual responsibility for living healthy, drug-free lifestyles, without illegal drugs or the illegal use of legal drugs.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Anchorage School Board hereby proclaims October 21-27, 2007 as Red Ribbon Week in the Anchorage School District, and urges all students, employees and families to protect our community from the dangers of alcohol and other drugs.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

Excused: Roberts

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 92 - ASD Board Policy Changed Due to Anchorage Equal Rights Commission Recommendations (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt on First Reading the proposed changes to School Board Policies 114 Nondiscrimination; 114.1 Display of Prejudice Toward Others; 332.3 Lottery Procedures - Open Enrollment; 344.12 District Provisions; 490.14 Prohibited Material; 527 Equal Employment Opportunity; 532.241 EEO Policy Statement; 604 EEO Policy Statement; 725.31 Non-Discrimination; and 725.31 Non-Discrimination, as shown on Attachment A.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner
Seconded by: Jeff Friedman

To adopt on First Reading the proposed changes to School Board Policies 114 Nondiscrimination; 114.1 Display of Prejudice Toward Others; 332.3 Lottery Procedures - Open Enrollment; 344.12 District Provisions; 490.14 Prohibited Material; 527 Equal Employment Opportunity; 532.241 EEO Policy Statement; 604 EEO Policy Statement; 725.31 Non-Discrimination; and 725.31 Non-Discrimination, as shown on Attachment A.

Ms. Comeau introduced EEO Director Margo Bellamy to provide background information regarding the proposed policy changes. Ms. Bellamy explained that the proposed policy language changes resulted from an unplanned policy review while dealing with a case. Ms. Bellamy shared a letter that she had received from the municipality explaining that it is the policy of the Anchorage Equal Rights Commission to notify organizations within the jurisdiction of the Commission of issues that may constitute a violation of the municipal anti-discrimination law. The Commission is specifically authorized to warn of a course of conduct that constitutes or will constitute an unlawful practice under law. Anchorage Municipal Code Section 5 was specifically referenced. The letter went on to state that a recent review of the ASD EEO policy indicated that the policy prohibits employment discrimination based on a number of protected classes listed in federal, state, and local law and includes physical handicap. However, the school district policy does not prohibit discrimination based on mental disability. Physical or mental disability is protected under both the municipal anti-discrimination law and the

federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Commission recommended that the school district review their EEO policy to confirm that it is consistent with federal and local law.

With that recommendation the district's EEO office reviewed district policy and made suggestions to the superintendent. They suggested that the term "handicapped" and "conditions" and either replace them with or add the term "mental disability" where appropriate.

Ms. Comeau asked whether the recommended changes were reviewed by the district's attorney. Ms. Bellamy noted the changes reflect simply a technical language piece and did not look at it as a significant policy change which would require legal review.

Mr. Steiner explained that the term "discrimination" is not in and of itself a negative term and that there are legitimate instances in which discriminating between two choices is necessary. His concern was that while in most situations there would not be a legitimate business reason for taking a mental disability into consideration, there may be situations where there is a legitimate reason to consider mental disabilities, particularly when discussing the safety of children. He requested that the district's attorney review the policy and the proposed changes. He indicated that the district would not want to be prohibited by its own policy from making determinations necessary to protect children. At the same time, the district absolutely should not discriminate against individuals when their disability would not impact the safety of students. Mr. Steiner indicated that he has no problem in moving in the direction suggested by the Equal Rights Commission and will be supporting the recommendation on First Reading but requested a legal opinion prior to Second Reading.

Mr. Steiner clarified that the two questions he would raise to the attorney are 1) Is there a problem with making the proposed language changes without specifying that the concern is with "illegal" discrimination; and 2) Would adding the word "illegal" to the policy help clarify the policy such that the mental disability reference could be used without the possibility of putting students at risk? Ms. Comeau noted that she would request a legal opinion on this matter from the district's attorney.

Ms. Bellamy noted that district policy does not only speak to illegal forms of discrimination. There are a number of things that happen in the workplace that, while they certainly are not unlawful, do go against district policy. She indicated that she would really like to keep that

flexibility in district policy and avoid having it focus just on the illegal arena. Mr. Steiner indicated his belief that anything that would be considered offensive and would be inappropriate is, in all likelihood, illegal. Therefore, if the policy is limited to illegal discrimination it would still cover all of those issues while excluding the situations where there are legitimate business reasons for a particular action. He does not believe that adding the term "illegal" would water-down the policy but indicated that concern would also be something for the attorney to review.

Mr. Friedman explained that the district offers special education services to students with mental disabilities that are not offered to other students so the district does discriminate based on mental disability but does not do so illegally.

VOTE:

Ayes: Steiner, Friedman,
Tuck, Steele, Marks

Nays: Kennedy

Excused: Roberts

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum # 85 - Approval for East High School and Eagle River High School One Percent for Art

This memorandum is to inform the Anchorage School Board that artwork selections have been made for the following buildings in accordance with AMC 7.40, Funds for Works of Art in Public Facilities and have been reviewed by the Anchorage School District Safety / MOA Risk Manager and the MOA Fire Marshal.

Mr. Steiner noted that the Board is not in a position to approve this action indicating that this memorandum is for informational purposes.

Ms. Jocelyn Young, Curator of Public Art, explained that the works of art in question for Eagle River High School will be the last of the artwork that will be purchased for that school.

Ms. Young understood that there had been some concern voiced regarding the commissioned piece for East High School, in particular the ongoing technology associated with the piece. She explained that the piece is a technological project where students will be involved in the actual creation of the artwork as it is exhibited on screens in front of the school, at the student entrance, and at the visitor entrance. She indicated

her belief that the school had actually sent an RFP asking for proposals for artists to submit ideas that both involve students and assist people on the outside of the school to get a feeling for what is going on inside of the school using technology. The Art Committee was pretty specific about what they wanted but in a very general way. There were a series of very interesting proposals that were submitted. This is the proposal that the Art Committee selected hands-down. Ms. Young reported that she had taken the proposal to a back-to-school meeting at East High School in early August to get feedback and noted that the incoming freshmen students who looked at it were very excited about it and thought it sounded fun.

Mr. Steele reminded the public that One Percent for Art is a municipal ordinance and that the School Board does not approve the selections. The Board reviews the artwork strictly from a maintenance and safety point view. He asked Ms. Young to review the selection committee. Ms. Young explained that committee membership usually includes at least one representative from the school. In this instance the committee included three representatives from the school, Mr. Michael Graham, principal, Ms. Vonnie Gaither, Career Resource advisor and an artist in the community, and former student Alex Knapp. The selection committee also included representatives from the Arts Advisory Commission, the Urban Design Commission, and several members-at-large from the community. Every school district and municipality project has a separate selection committee.

Mr. Friedman voiced his concern with the ongoing cost of the project which will include the electricity to run it and component replacement, particularly in light of the expense of the six 42" LCD screens and the computer system needed to run the project. His concern is with installing art that has significant ongoing costs when there is no mechanism for securing funds to cover those costs. Mr. Friedman acknowledged that Ms. Young had shared prior to the meeting that some funds had been reserved for this particular project and that there has been some discussion with assembly members regarding amending the ordinance to make ongoing funds available out of the One Percent for Art program but he did not want to let this discussion pass without raising the concern again. His initial thought had been to urge the Board to object to this art but, after looking at the proposal, the real costs, and the fact that there is money set aside for maintenance, he decided that he would not object to the decision. He does, however, believe that this is a serious concern as we move into the future that will need to be addressed by ordinance.

Mr. Steiner indicated his belief that one of the great things about this particular project is that involves the students at the school in an ongoing manner. While that kind of involvement is very exciting it adds a layer of cost beyond the electricity and replacement of the screens. He wondered whether the life-cycle costs for the project had been calculated that will keep this operating for a specific period of time. He requested an explanation of what provisions had been made and how the numbers were derived. Ms. Young indicated that, because the program is mandated by the municipality and the artwork is owned by the municipality, the artwork is maintained by the municipality when she is able to find maintenance funds. She noted that additional structures have been set up to help with that process. There has been discussion on this particular project from the very beginning regarding not only the involvement of the students but also the involvement of the IT Department at East High School. The Committee looked at this as a training issue with the artists agreeing to train the teachers and the students in ongoing maintenance. In addition, the local artist has signed on to be on call for issues that could not be handled either within the school or by utilizing technology resources in the community. These issues were discussed at length with the school and they have indicating that this is a commitment that they wanted to make in order to have a project that involved students with technology. Ms. Young believed that both of the artists are very interested in having an ongoing relationship with the school.

Mr. Steiner appreciated knowing that this is a municipal obligation rather than a district obligation. Mr. Steiner asked whether Ms. Young had explored the implications of the Visual Artists Rights Act. He noted that there could be limitations on being able to move a piece if the piece was created specifically for a particular location. Ms. Young indicated that the issue had been addressed in the contract with artists. The contract is very clear about the municipality retaining control over making changes to assure that pieces function to work better for the needs of the municipality.

Ms. Comeau applauded Ms. Young for actively involving students in the process and focusing on the fact that these are school projects and not museum projects.

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. ASD Memorandum # 58- Project Status Report

This is a report of activities and project status changes in Major Capital Projects during the period of September 18, 2007 through September 27, 2007.

2. ASD Memorandum # 74 - Enrollment Status Update for September 28, 2007

Enrollment as of September 28, 2007, the official membership date for the District, was a total of 48,457 students. This enrollment is 611 (1.2%) students less than the 49,068 reported for the same time last year.

Ms. Comeau indicated that it is important for the public and for district employees to notice that there are 611 fewer students enrolled on September 30, 2007 than there were on September 30, 2006. This figure reflects 391 fewer students than projected, which is less than a 1% deviation from those projections. We had recognized last year that the district enrollment was continuing on a downward trend and had accommodated that in the enrollment projections. Overall, the projections were very accurate.

Ms. Comeau noted that statewide enrollment is down. The Matsu Borough School District is still growing but not at the level that it has been. In addition, she indicated that she had heard that private school enrollment is also down.

Mr. Friedman acknowledged that any decline in enrollment impacts the district's budget but indicated that the projections were very accurate.

Ms. Comeau noted that the Elementary division had held back teaching positions when it became apparent in early August that the enrollment was not tracking to expectations. The district was then able to release positions at the Middle School level where the enrollment numbers were over projections.

Ms. Comeau referenced the Special Education Membership Summaries and pointed out that the number of learning disability students is declining which she attributes to the district's intensive reading and writing initiatives at all levels. At the same time the number of Level 3 Intensive Needs students is increasing. That is an issue that impacts capacity at a school. Some of the capacity issues noted at particular

schools can be attributed to those types of programs in those schools. The bigger issue is that Anchorage is a medical hub that attracts more and more students who require intensive services. Mr. Sjolander indicated that the current number of Level 3 students to date is up to 704, eighteen more than the report reflects. He anticipates that number to increase to a total of approximately 726 students.

Mr. Steiner requested some information regarding the location of relocatables. He noted that there were several listed as being located at schools that are below capacity. Ms. McRae reported that all three levels meet together in the spring, along with Special Education, to discuss how relocatables are being used and where they are needed. Many times specialists utilize the relocatables. Capacity can be misleading depending on the number of special programs in the school. Mr. Steiner voiced his understanding that program capacity considered those special programs. Ms. Comeau reviewed the many situations which would necessitate displacing regular classrooms into relocatables and other programs that are housed in relocatables. She noted that the location and use of relocatables are spelled out each year in the CIP.

3. ASD Memorandum # 65 - 2007-2008 Certificated Recruitment Report

During the 2006-2007 school year, the Human Resources Certificated Recruitment Team collaboratively developed and implemented a Certificated Teacher Recruitment Plan to address staffing needs for the 2007-2008 school year. I approved the plan in November 2006 and directed the Dr. Robb Boyer, Director of Staffing and Recruitment, to prepare an Accountability Report to be shared with me in October of 2007.

Ms. Comeau explained that this report does a good job of addresses all of the issues that the district deals with in terms of recruitment, retention, staffing, and certification challenges. She indicated that this will probable become an annual report as it does such a good job of targeting issues and identifying trends. She thanked both Dr. Robb Boyer and Ms. Margo Bellamy for their work on the report.

Dr. Boyer indicated that this was the second year that the Board has been provided this report. The report included a look at the national and state trends relative to recruitment, the basic data of the Anchorage School District, and EEO data on the diversity of the

district pool and hired candidates. The report analyzed other aspects of the new hiring process, reviewed each recruitment trip, and provided an assessment of whether the team met the goals set out in last year's plan. Finally, the 2008-2009 Recruitment Plan components are laid out in the report.

Review of information from the national, state and local levels alike, as was pointed out in the ISER report, highlighted that the issue is not so much that there is a teacher shortage but rather that there is an imbalance of what teachers are prepared in and the areas of need. That, coupled with any retention issues, is what creates unfilled positions. The district has to recruit for a variety of reasons. Among those is to fill those unfilled positions, to diversify the hiring pool in order to meet district goals, to provide a larger number of candidates for principals to select from and, finally, because we are in a competitive market.

Dr. Boyer briefly reviewed the data provided in the report. He reported mixed results in terms of meeting the goals set last year. On the positive side, there is a more real pool of candidates and the district has the lowest number of Special Education and Related Service openings than it has had in years. Dr. Boyer also thinks that the district has a very positive presentation presence when they go out to recruit. On the other hand, the district still has openings in Special Education, Math, and Language Arts.

In general, the research and the data indicate that the district needs to sell Alaska first when doing recruiting rather than trying to sell the Anchorage School District. The district has a positive image and is not difficult to sell. The difficulty is getting people to buy into moving to Alaska. The reality is that housing is more expensive here and that Alaska is a long distance from the rest of the United States. Dr. Boyer also pointed out that the number one challenge continues to be that the district does not hire soon enough and the candidates in the pool are lost.

Dr. Boyer reviewed the nine point plan that has been put into place to meet goals for the next year. He noted that, while efforts to have a large pool of teacher applicants will not be abandoned, the focus will shift to using the number of unfilled positions as a more accurate reflection of success.

Ms. Bellamy explained that the role of the EEO in helping the Board to meet the goal of a diversified work force is to support the recruiting efforts of the district and establish relationships with institutions serving Hispanic, African-American, and Native American/American Indians. She reviewed the ways in which the EEO is working to accomplish these goals.

Ms. Bellamy explained that the EEO keeps in touch with every candidate in the pool within each ethnic group. Some of these individuals are ready to hire, some have not passed their screening, and some of their applications are still in review. She believed that it was helpful to be able to offer "intents" earlier last year but it hurt us to not be able to place the candidates until August.

Mr. Tuck asked whether exit interviews are held with teachers who leave the district to find out why they are leaving. Dr. Boyer indicated that we do not have an exit interview but that an exit survey was conducted approximately 18 months ago and another is planned for the coming year. He noted that it is very difficult to get a resignation letter, much less the exiting survey, at the time that employees leave. The district does mail-out surveys, pulls the results, and provides those results to the superintendent. Ms. Bellamy noted that they had followed up with every one of the employees, both certified and certificated, from the 2005 survey to determine why they left, what was good about working for the district and what was not so good.

Mr. Tuck asked whether a significant difference has been seen in trying to retain employees given the changes in the teacher retirement system. Dr. Boyer explained that, although they expected the change from a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan to impact recruiting, the change has not had an impact yet. He noted that the people being recruited are in their twenties and many have not even started to think about retirement yet. He believed that it is too soon to determine whether the changes have had any impact on retention. The turnover rate has remained fairly consistent through this decade at about ten percent.

Ms. Marks asked whether newly hired teachers are placed in a mentorship program. Dr. Boyer indicated that the district's award winning teacher mentoring program is one of the chief selling features of the district. He believed that there were about 260 matches in that program last year. The program is open to both new hires and current staff who are changing schools or grade levels. Ms. Bellamy agreed

that the mentoring program is a very strong recruiting tool. It shows that the district invests in its teachers.

Mr. Steiner asked whether the district has the capacity to see where Alaska students are attending college and target recruitment to those students even though they are studying outside. Dr. Boyer indicated that the district attempts to do that. The district invests dollars in supporting out-of-state student teacher experiences. Mr. Steiner suggested tapping into information that might be available from the Alaska Student Loan Program to identify where Alaska students are attending college.

Ms. Marks pointed out the decrease in the numbers across all ethnicities in the pool and asked how the district is reaching out to ethnic minorities to address the issue of increasing minority candidates in the hiring pool. Dr. Boyer noted that the actual number of total candidates in the pool has decreased resulting in a relatively stable percentage of ethnically diverse candidates in the pool even though the actual numbers have decreased across the board. He noted that the district has consistent outreach to everyone. Alaska Teacher Placement is the number one placement tool that is used by Alaska Natives, American Indians, and Caucasians wanting to apply in the state of Alaska. The efforts focus on setting up the means to increase personal contact with those individuals. He again noted that the challenge is to keep qualified candidates when hiring decisions are made so late. The district could greatly benefit from doing earlier staffing. He noted that the district has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the AEA relative to encouraging current teachers who are planning to resign or retire to share that information by March 15th and if they do they will receive benefits relative to their benefits. It is hoped that this will provide earlier knowledge of openings which would lead to earlier recruitment for those openings.

Ms. Comeau noted that this issue is one of the biggest frustrations with the way that the legislature waits until the last minute to do education funding. The district has always requested education funding information be available by March 15th in order to know what the budget for the next year will be in order to do staffing. She acknowledged that the district loses viable candidates by having to wait so long but noted that we can't over hire either.

Ms. Bellamy reported that the district had looked at all of the processes last year to specifically identify areas that might not be working as expected. She noted that the EEO office constantly reviews the

numbers of candidates who pass the screening and the intent numbers. Because of the district's diversity goal the EEO office continually monitors potential road blocks that might be present for applicants.

Ms. Comeau reviewed several requirements that have been put into place by the State Board of Education that will be major barriers to recruitment. These impediments include the state certification process, the video-tape requirement and, most recently, the proposed required reading course. The district has been attempting to educate the new Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education on the need to make Alaska user-friendly. That does not mean that the state should to lower their standards. It simply means that the state should avoid setting up barriers for qualified candidates.

4. ASD Memorandum # 80 - Monthly Update Student Information System - Zangle

The Zangle Student Information System implementation continues to move forward on schedule. Phase I of the project is the Fit Gap Analysis, during which the District will determine how well the proposed solution meets District requirements. Phase II is installation and implementation of the system, contingent upon the successful completion of the Fit Gap Analysis. The project is currently on schedule for Secondary schools to "cut over" in August, 2008. Elementary Schools are currently slated to transition in August, 2009.

5. ASD Memorandum # 93 - Anchorage School District Improvement Plan for the 2007-2008 School Year

The Department of Education and Early Development issues its annual designations of districts in terms of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each fall. As the Anchorage School District is in Level 4, or Corrective Action Status, the No Child Left Behind Act and Alaska state regulations require the district to submit an improvement plan to the Department of Education and Early Development (Attachment A).

Noting that the district is now at Level 4, Mr. Steele voiced his concern and frustration with what he believes are built-in flaws in No Child Left Behind. He acknowledged that the district, in all likelihood, will move to Level 5 next year given that there is a segment of the student

population that will not make AYP. He wondered whether there was any action that can be taken to try to make it possible.

Ms. Comeau noted that the NCLB requirement regarding students with disabilities is one of the issues that the district has testified against for years. Those concerns have also been shared with Senator Murkowski's office. It is a flaw in the law but it is the law and until the law changes the district must continue to try to conform to it. Ms. Comeau indicated that there are a significant number of students with disabilities who have made adequate yearly progress. She acknowledged that the Anchorage School District is in Level 4, as is every large district in the state of Alaska. While the law indicates that the State could go into a very stringent accountability plan, she does not believe that will happen in Anchorage because of the efforts and progress being made. This District Improvement Plan shows the incredible amount of work that the Instructional Division has put into addressing these issues. It is significant to note that in a district the size of the Anchorage School District the only area keeping us from making AYP is in the category of Students with Disabilities. Ms. Comeau indicated that we need to continue to applaud the efforts of the staff and to continue to strive to meet the benchmarks. It is important to note that the district is looking at every aspect of the Special Education program and the instructional program to make sure that we are identifying the needs of all the students.

Ms. Gardner explained that the district will be at Level 4, Year 2 as there is no Level 5 category. One of the same things that the State has done in developing regulations on what it means to be at Level 4, Year 2 and what kind of action they will take on a district at that stage is to develop a series of filters to identify if the district is, in fact, making improvement. She noted that ASD has a three year trend of improvement in every single sub-group including Students with Disabilities. Ms. Gardner noted that there was a recent change in the federal law that would make the same allowance that was made last year such that students who are English language learners can remain in the category for two years post-exiting. That action would have a different effect on Special Education than it did on LEP because of the nature of the student. The State will no doubt be looking to see if they can adopt that regulation.

Addressing the question of what specifically is being done to reach students with disabilities, Ms. Gardner noted that a new math curriculum was implemented at the middle school level two years ago

which has made tremendous progress with special needs students. This year a new math program pilot is being implemented at the elementary level for Special Education students. Mr. Sjolander noted that one of the major actions taken to address this is to look at the curriculum that is being used in the Special Education programs and to really focus on scientifically researched-based curriculum as the next step in the resource programs.

I. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

J. COMMUNICATIONS & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION - PERSONNEL/FINANCE/NEGOTIATIONS
LITIGATION

L. ADJOURNMENT

The Regular Meeting of October 8, 2007, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:35 p.m.

Tim Steele, President

Crystal Kennedy, Clerk

Johanna Lee, Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approved