

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 17, 2007

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, December 17, 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: Tim Steele, John Steiner, Crystal Kennedy, Jeff Friedman, Mary Marks, Macon Roberts and Chris Tuck

Others Present: Carol Comeau, Rhonda Gardner, Leslie Vandergaw, Mike Henry, Enid Silverstein, Jerry Sjolander, Jeff Wood, Eric Tollefsen, Michele Egan, Janet Stokesbary, George Vakalis, Jose DelReal, Ray Amsden, Rob Boyer, Marie Laule, Chad Stiteler, Johanna Lee, the press, and other interested people.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Steele noted that Memorandum #134, Recognition of National CASEL Award Winner, Victoria Blakeney, and Memorandum #131, Approval of Amendment No. 1 to the Mental Health Trust Lease, and Memorandum #129, Evaluation of the 2006-2007 Six-Year Instructional Plan, have been postponed and will be presented at the January 14, 2008 meeting.

The agenda was approved as amended by unanimous consent.

C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Chris Tuck announced that the Child In Transition program has their Gift Giving Tree in the Atrium on the ASD Education Center. He encouraged the public to support the efforts to provide holiday gifts to the children involved in the Child In Transition program and explained that the greatest need is for youth from the ages of twelve to eighteen.

Mr. Friedman reported the he had the opportunity to represent the board in accepting an Activities-Themed Menorah from the Lubavitch Jewish Center which was presented in recognition of the district's policy change regarding the scheduling of activities on religious days of significance.

They were extremely grateful that the administration with support from the board had taken the steps necessary to support the rich cultural diversity represented throughout the district. Mr. Friedman indicated his belief that it speaks well for us as a community that we accept and recognize the diversity of our community members.

Ms. Comeau announced that the ASD administrative offices will be closed from December 24th through January 2nd.

D. AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

The Ravenwood Chamber Choir, under the direction of Richard Lum, performed several holiday selections for the entertainment of the Board and other members of public.

ASD Memorandum # 143 - Recognition of Betty and Dan Cuddy for the Establishment of the David Warren Cuddy Scholarship Trust

Mr. Jeff Friedman read that Betty and Dan Cuddy have given so much to this community and they haven't stopped giving. Their latest contribution directly benefits graduates of the Anchorage School District through the creation of a \$102,000 trust named for David Warren Cuddy, Dan's late brother.

Each year, a graduating senior who has demonstrated outstanding student leadership and academic achievement will be the recipient of the scholarship, which can be used for tuition and other college expenses. Candidates will have exhibited their leadership skills through their role in student government, as a yearbook editor, athlete or in some other school-wide capacity.

The ASD Superintendent will have sole discretion in choosing the scholarship winner. The first scholarship will be awarded during the 2008 graduation ceremonies.

The Anchorage School Board thanked Betty and Dan Cuddy for their outstanding contribution to the Anchorage School District through the establishment of the David Warren Cuddy Scholarship Trust.

Ms. Comeau noted that we are very fortunate to have leaders like Dan and Betty Cuddy who give so much to support this community and this state.

Mr. Cuddy shared memories of his brother for whom this scholarship has been developed. David Warren Cuddy had been president of his class, president of the student body, editor of the school annual, and an outstanding athlete. In addition, he was a member of the honor society every year. Mr. Cuddy hoped that the district would use his brother as a guide for choosing the recipient of the scholarship every year.

E. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

1. Student Advisory Board

Mr. Jose DelReal reported that the Student Advisory Board had their own High School Forum modeled after the High School Forums being held throughout the district. He noted that there were a lot of good ideas generated through the forum.

Mr. DelReal noted that the high schools are in the middle of finals week so most students are experiencing an increased level of stress.

Mr. Steele noted that the Board is looking forward to hearing details on some of the ideas generated by the students. He indicated that the students who have attended the forums across the district have provided some outstanding insight.

2. Military Delegate

Lt. Col. Luu was unable to attend the meeting.

3. MECAC

Mr. Dan Loring reported that the MECAC met on Saturday, December 15, 2007. The meeting resulted in several motions for recommendations that will be forwarded to the board for consideration.

The MECAC also had the annual election of officers at the December 15 meeting. Ms. Damita Owen was reelected as chair. Ms. Valerie Fletcher-Mitchell and Ms. Fa'aana Tosi were elected co-chairs. The MECAC has approved new meeting dates. The first meeting of the new year will be on Thursday, January 10, 2008 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The group will continue to have monthly meetings but will

meet only once month rather than twice as month as they have been. The monthly meetings will rotate between an informational meeting one month and a formal business meeting the next.

One item of discussion at the recent MECAC meeting was the need to create dialogue with the board rather than just preparing reports for presentation to the board. The MECAC identified a need to meet in conjunction with the board in order to facilitate ongoing discussion with board members to work on issues.

Mr. Loring explained that the MECAC had held a forum on the issues of graduation rates and dropout rates. He noted that MECAC members have been attended a variety of meeting throughout the community and asking for input on how the district can improve graduation rates. In addition they are seeking information on how to better identify the group of students who are not reaching their academic potential. The MECAC membership strongly recommended the creation of position for a parent advocate/navigator. Individuals filling these parent advocate/navigator positions would be assigned to different attendance areas and would work to help the parents and guardians of our students to better navigate the system and to better understand what their options are within the district.

The MECAC has also discussed the issue of school start times and how that relates to the dropout rate. Mr. Loring acknowledged that changing start times would be extremely expensive and somewhat controversial. The MECAC recommended that the district create flexible schedules for high school students. They further suggested partnering with the municipality to address the issue of transportation.

Mr. Loring indicated that the MECAC also felt that another way to increase graduation rates throughout the district would be to significantly lower the counselor to student ratio. It was their understanding that the current ratio is between 350-500 students per counselor which, in their opinion, does not allow enough time for the counselors to provide adequate services for students. Counselors need time to do more than help students set schedules and choose colleges. They need time to do actual counseling, to build relationships with students, and to provide encouragement for students. The MECAC suggested that the ratio be decreased by 25% in the first year and an additional 50% in the second year.

The MECAC also made a recommendation regarding customer services. They felt that customer service needs to be addressed in a more measurable way. They suggested having a quarterly survey evaluating front line employees which should include a method to identify and appropriately respond to both good and poor customer service. Mr. Loring acknowledged that the unions would have to be involved in this discussion and that implementation would require professional development. While the MECAC realized that customer service is addressed in the district's Six-Year Plan, they did not believe that the plan goes far enough to adequately address the issue.

There has also been a motion made by the MECAC to request that the district fund a study that would make recommendations on reducing the district's carbon footprint. Mr. Loring noted that there was lively discussion regarding this motion but the motion did not pass and would not be coming forward as a recommendation to the board.

The last issue discussed by the MECAC was the need to grow our own teachers. They would like to see a new program that would guarantee a position with the district once individuals receive their state certificate.

Mr. Steele noted his appreciation for all of the suggestions made by the MECAC. Ms. Gardner indicated that the MECAC meeting had been an excellent meeting with great ideas being discussed. She noted that the minutes of that meeting will be presented for approval at their next business meeting. The motions that were approved and passed at that meeting will then be forwarded to the board.

Mr. Friedman particularly appreciated the need to build a better relationship between the school board and the MECAC. He indicated his desire to move forward in that regard.

Mr. DelReal noted that many of the concerns mentioned by the MECAC are shared by students in the district and have been discussed during the Student Advisory Board meetings. He felt that it would be beneficial for the two organizations to meet together to share their ideas.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Dr. Theresa Obermeyer spoke on the draft bill authorizing the admission of reciprocal applicants to the Alaska Bar Association and on the issue of the Alaska Permanent Fund Board Confirmation Committee.

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 - October 8, 2007
- b. Special Meeting - December 3, 2007
- c. Special Meeting - December 7, 2007

2. ASD Memorandum # 128 - Superintendent Evaluation and Contract Changes

It is recommended that the School Board approve the attached contract with Superintendent Carol Comeau for a three-year period beginning January 1, 2008 and ending on December 31, 2010 with an annual salary of \$156,500.

3. ASD Memorandum # 135 - 2008 General Obligation Bond Recommendations

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve a Bond proposal package totaling \$43,710,000, comprised of Proposition 1 -Elementary School Addition/Renewal/Design Projects in the amount of \$34,300,000; and Proposition 2 - Districtwide Building System Renewal Projects in the amount of \$9,410,000.

4. ASD Memorandum # 142 - Winterberry Charter School Renewal Application

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the renewal of the charter for Winterberry Charter School for an additional 10 years, chartering the school through the 2017-2018 school year.

5. ASD Memorandum # 147 - Approval of Funding for Capital Projects Using Interest Earnings and Project Balances

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the use of Capital Projects Fund interest

earnings and redirection of bond funds in a total amount of \$1,985,000 for projects identified in this memorandum.

6. ASD Memorandum # 131 - Approval of Amendment No 1. to the Mental Health Trust Lease

This item is postponed to the January 14, 2008 Regular Board Meeting.

7. ASD Memorandum # 132 - Personnel Report

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

ACTION:

Moved by: Jeff Friedman
Seconded by: John Steiner

To approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 8, 2007, the Minutes of the Special Meeting of December 3, 2007, the Special Meeting of December 7, 2007, and Memoranda #128, #147, and #132.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum #135 - 2008 General Obligation Bond Recommendations

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve a Bond proposal package totaling \$43,710,000, comprised of Proposition 1 - Elementary School Addition/Renewal/Design Projects in the amount of \$34,300,000; and Proposition 2 - Districtwide Building System Renewal Projects in the amount of \$9,410,000. Proposition 1, Elementary School Addition/Renewal/Design Projects is comprised of Chester Valley Elementary School Addition and Renewal for \$16,500,000; Sand Lake Elementary School Addition and Renewal for \$17,500,000; and Girdwood K-8 School Design for \$300,000 for a total for Proposition 1 of \$34,300,000. Proposition 2, Districtwide Building System Renewal Projects is comprised of Districtwide Code/Hazmat/ADA/Sprinkler Projects for \$465,000; Districtwide Roof Replacement and Repairs for \$950,000; Districtwide Building Renewal Projects for \$1,240,000; Districtwide

Electrical Projects for \$1,475,000; Districtwide Mechanical Projects for \$1,950,000; Districtwide Traffic Safety for \$600,000; Districtwide Track Renewal for \$2,250,000; and Emergency Communications Systems - Middle Schools for \$480,000 for a total for Proposition 2 of \$9,410,000.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner

Seconded by: Macon Roberts

To approve a Bond proposal package totaling \$43,710,000, comprised of Proposition 1 - Elementary School Addition/Renewal/Design Projects in the amount of \$34,300,000; and Proposition 2 - Districtwide Building System Renewal Projects in the amount of \$9,410,000. Proposition 1, Elementary School Addition/Renewal/Design Projects is comprised of Chester Valley Elementary School Addition and Renewal for \$16,500,000; Sand Lake Elementary School Addition and Renewal for \$17,500,000; and Girdwood K-8 School Design for \$300,000 for a Proposition 1 total of \$34,300,000. Proposition 2, Districtwide Building System Renewal Projects is comprised of Districtwide Code/Hazmat/ADA/Sprinkler Projects for \$465,000; Districtwide Roof Replacement and Repairs for \$950,000; Districtwide Building Renewal Projects for \$1,240,000; Districtwide Electrical Projects for \$1,475,000; Districtwide Mechanical Projects for \$1,950,000; Districtwide Traffic Safety for \$600,000; Districtwide Track Renewal for \$2,250,000; and Emergency Communications Systems - Middle Schools for \$480,000 for a Proposition 2 total of \$9,410,000.

Ms. Michelle Mandel, a member of the Chester Valley PTA and a member of the CRAC, spoke about to the need for renovation at Chester Valley Elementary. She voiced her appreciation for the efforts over the last few years to try to provide a band-aid to address the facility needs at the school. Chester Valley is a 45-year-old facility that has never been renovated. Ms. Mandel reviewed a number of concerns at the facility including the aging electrical wiring, a dated heating and ventilation system and several other items. Ms. Mandel noted that board members were well aware of the needs at Chester Valley and asked for their support of the bond recommendation as has been presented. She believed that the bonds have been packaged very well and are deserving of support. Ms. Mandel asked for board and community support of School Bonds Yes!

Mr. Bob Winn, the parent of two Chester Valley Elementary students, spoke in support of the manner in which the bond proposal has been structured. He believed that the district has done an excellent job in providing a recommendation that offers an opportunity for successful passage by the voters.

Bennetta Orchett, a former student at Chester Valley Elementary and the parent of a current Chester Valley student, spoke in support of the bond package. She explained that the wonderful teachers and staff at Chester Valley do an incredible job with the children at the school. Ms. Orchett would like the children of Chester Valley to feel safe and know that the district cares about them and wants the best for them. The learning environment needs to be positive and safe so that they can feel equal to their peers in their pursuit of a great education. She believed that a strong educational journey must start with a strong foundation. For students at Chester Valley a renovated facility will strengthen that foundation.

Ms. Marie Smith, the parent of a student at Chester Valley Elementary, indicated that she started working in support of renovations at Chester Valley about seven years ago. Ms. Smith noted that Chester Valley has met Annual Yearly Progress for the last five years. She thanked the district for responding to the needs at Chester Valley noting that the items that can be fixed have been fixed. The school is now faced with issues that cannot be fixed or repaired without major renovation. She explained, for instance, that the loading dock is located so close to the classroom heating duct system that the exhaust from the trucks enters through the system and into the classrooms. She noted that even her children have noticed and commented on the difference between the physical conditions at

Chester Valley and other schools around the district. She urged the board to support the bond recommendations.

Mr. Daniel King, a former Chester Valley student who is now a freshman at UAA, recalled his memories of the school. He indicated that the school was outdated even when he attended and when he visits the school now the need for renovation is even more obvious. He noted the importance of having a facility that teachers, parents and students can be comfortable in and proud of and the positive impact renovating the school will have on student success.

Ms. Jan Davis, the Chester Valley PTA president, indicated that she has zone exempted both of her children into Chester Valley. She noted that she had grown up in the Chester Valley neighborhood and that the school motto had been "The school with the big heart". The school would like their motto now to be "Please help us build our future". Ms. Davis noted that one of the goals of the PTA has been to increase parental involvement. Ms. Davis voiced her appreciation to the administration, the teachers and the staff at Chester Valley for their efforts to support the students at the school. She also thanked the board for their support in putting the Chester Valley renovations in the bond package this year. Ms. Davis asked the administration to consider providing signage on DeBarr to identify where the school is located as so many people do not know. She believed that having a sign in place would help people identify where the school is and be more familiar with the location when they see it on the bond. She assured the board that the Chester Valley community would be doing whatever necessary to secure support from both the Assembly and the voters.

Ms. Comeau indicated that Mr. Vakalis will follow-up tomorrow regarding the request on the sign. She noted that she did not realize that there was not a sign and felt that having one was a very good suggestion for many reasons, not only because of the bond.

Mr. Steele asked Ms. Davis to share with the Chester Valley PTA how much the board appreciated their support of the bonds last year.

Ms. Joelle Swalling, the Sand Lake Elementary PTSA president, thanked the CRAC for their serious consideration of Sand Lake for the April bond package. She also thanked the board and the administration for continuing to place a priority on safe, high quality facilities for our children. Ms. Swalling reviewed several concerns at the schools including parking and traffic issues, the electrical and plumbing systems, water

quality, water leaks in the library, mold in the carpeting and in the walls, and lack of classroom space. She urged the board to support the bond recommendations as presented.

Mr. Andrew Weiss, a parent at Sand Lake Elementary, thanked the board for considering Sand Lake and Chester Valley on the bond measure this year. He noted that even his daughter has questioned why her school doesn't look as nice as other schools or have the same facilities as other schools. He assured the board that his family is determined to help support the bonds in any way they can.

Mr. Macon Roberts questioned the concerned raised regarding the water quality at Sand Lake Elementary. Ms. Swalling indicated that lead has been found in some of the drinking fountains at the school. Ms. Comeau indicted that the DEC monitors the water quality throughout the district and she did not believe that there have been any results that have risen to an unsafe level. She noted that the administration wants to make sure that students are not drinking from an unsafe water source and assured the speaker and the board that she will follow up on this concern as soon as possible.

Mr. Lou Theiss, a member of the CRAC and of School Bonds Yes!, noted his belief that keeping the bonds at the same level as debt retirement will make them more acceptable to the voting public and help restore trust in school facility bonding during a time of flat or decreasing enrollments with an increasingly aging voter population. He hopes that the debate will raise public awareness on how educational outcome impacts all of our lives. Mr. Theiss explained that in addition to his other roles he is also a Girdwood parent. From that point of view he explained that the Girdwood School renewal has been high on the district's priority list for some time and that the K-8 program has deficits that can only be addressed by redesign. The primary classrooms are sub-standard size. The middle school has little in the way of athletic, science, and learning space requirements. A master planning at K-12 may also be necessary because the Crow Creek Neighborhood master plan includes 1700 units and the resort is planning an additional 1000 units. In addition, the south town site plan is currently under review. He believed that it would be a good idea for the educational plan to move parallel to rest of the community.

Mr. Sam Daniel, a Girdwood parent, noted that he has students at the high school level, the middle school level and the elementary level so he has seen the progression through the years. He spoke to the program inequity

that the middle school students at Girdwood experience. There are a number of facilities and programs that are available at other district middle schools that are not available at Girdwood School. By having Girdwood included in the bond he is hopeful that soon that scenario will be alleviated. The school does not have a computer lab. Physical education classes are often bumped out of the gym as it is a multi-purpose room that also serves as an auditorium and the lunch room. He felt that it is a very appropriate time to address some of these issues and to see if the middle school program at Girdwood can be stepped-up. The teaching staff at Girdwood is wonderful but they are very limited by their facility. He expressed his appreciation for having Girdwood on the bond.

Mr. Steiner noted that the district has many needs on the CIP that are not addressed in this bond package. He noted that Mr. Theiss had spoken in support of sizing the bonds consistent with the bonds being retired this year. While that strategy may improve the ability to get the bonds passed Mr. Steiner was concerned that continuing to size the bond packages according to previous bond retirements will result in the district getting further behind every year on projects that continue to be deferred.

Mr. Theiss reiterated that public awareness is paramount in educating voters as to the important role that education plays on the future and the economy. He also felt that the upcoming shift from a six-year CIP to a ten-year CIP will also allow some of the high school phases to be re-introduced in the next few years. He believed that this might be the time to re-assess the flexibility needed in the high schools. The key is to educate the public on what education means for all of us.

Mr. Steiner indicated that he had seen some communication indicating that Girdwood should be considered for a K-12 school along the lines of Polaris. He asked what the discussion has been in Girdwood concerning that type of direction. Mr. Daniel indicated his belief that Girdwood is really interested in focusing on the K-8 facility. He believed that the best solution for Girdwood students is to attend South High School. The students get a much more varied and well-rounded education at that facility. He believed that the district's limited resources are better spent addressing the needs at the K-8 program.

Ms. Betsy Connell, a Girdwood parent and the Special Education teacher at Girdwood School, spoke on the physical space issues at the school. She compared the district's own recommendation for square footage at a variety of grade levels with the actual square footage in the classrooms at Girdwood School, none of which came close to the recommended size.

One of her main concerns is that classrooms at the school could not accommodate wheelchairs. Ms. Connell noted there are a number of shared spaces in the school and reviewed the variety of programs that have to juggle schedules to use the same limited space. There is no space available for itinerant staff nor is there any room for a computer lab. Ms. Connell strongly supported the bond package to include funds for designing an expansion for Girdwood School.

Ms. Kathy Recken, Girdwood School principal, noted that everything she had intended to say this evening had already been eloquently shared by other members of the community. She voiced her appreciation for the new parking lot at the school, the new emergency generator, the new sprinkler system, and the new playground. She especially thanked the board and the administration for placing Girdwood School on the bond and urged their continued support.

Mr. Chris Tuck noted the Girdwood School serves not only the students in that community but also the community itself.

Ms. Stephanie Flynn, a Girdwood parent, thanked the board for putting Girdwood on the bond proposition. She read a letter to the board from Tucker Jonas, a middle school student at Girdwood School. Tucker shared several reasons why he believed that the board should support having Girdwood School on the bond. He specifically noted the need for increasing the size of the gym at Girdwood School.

Ms. Kitte' Miller introduced herself as a volunteer on the Capital Requests Advisory Committee which evaluates and prioritizes renewals, renovations, and construction of schools. The CRAC makes recommendations to the superintendent each year on the bond projects they believe are worthy of voter approval in the April election. With 93 facilities and over \$600 million worth of identified projects on the six-year CIP this can be a difficult task. Trying to be good stewards of public resources it is sometimes tempting to ask voters for more school bond dollars than property tax payers feel that they can bear. Many of the districts aging schools need major upgrades to meet current and future needs of students despite stable enrollment numbers. The recommendation presented this evening reflects the shared belief of the committee and the superintendent that voters would be willing to approve this bond package. The state legislature has been very consistent over the years in meeting their portion of reimbursement on these projects. With that in mind, the local component of the bond package would come to about \$16.5 million. Ms. Miller indicated that this is a

modest request compared to some years when new schools, replacement schools, or major renovations were needed. The projects at Sand Lake and Chester Valley have gone unfunded twice from failed bonds in 2004 and 2006. The needs at these schools are felt to be critical.

Ms. Miller spoke to the audience and the listening public to encourage engagement and caring about the youth of the community and our public schools. The enrollment of the school district is the 88th highest in the nation. The district is very fortunate to have a very vibrant and healthy education system. The district is also fortunate to have leadership who actively seek to make public education responsive to the needs of the maturing and evolving community. Ms. Miller encouraged people to be curious, learn, participate, study the web site, visit schools, talk with neighbors and colleagues, volunteer in the district, and register to vote. She challenged people to be a positive force for change. It is important to think not only in terms of the current needs but also of the legacy that we leave our children.

Mr. Steele thanked Ms. Miller for her help on both the CRAC and on School Bonds Yes!

Mr. Steiner asked for a clarification in order to make sure that both the board and the public understand whether the projects that the CRAC proposed to include in the bond package are what they believe is all that the district needs to do at this time or if the committee scaled back what they think needs to be done at this time because it is believed that the package is all that the public has an appetite to pass.

Ms. Miller believed that the committee had scaled back their recommendations in light of what they felt the public would support. She noted that the CRAC is involved with the six-year CIP planning as well and that a number of projects have fallen off of the CIP. There are a lot of identified needs. The projects in this bond package are the most critical ones. She believed that this package was put together in such a way as to optimize the potential for passage in a time when people are feeling economic uncertainty. This is not a sustainable method for keeping up the facilities even though the enrollment has stabilized. She did not believe that the committee feels that this is a forward looking kind of bond. It is just keeping up at the bare minimum level. Ms. Miller indicated that she is not confident that the public would support more than what is being sought.

Mr. Friedman noted that, at this rate, the district will only be able to renovate each school once every 100 years. That schedule is just not going to work for long. He does not, however, believe that this is the year to present a bigger package. The district will have to find a better way at some point.

The Board went into recess at 7:55 p.m. President Tim Steele called the meeting back into session at 8:05 p.m.

Ms. Comeau thanked the Capital Request Advisory Committee members for their time and efforts working with the district. She noted that the CRAC will be reviewing all of the CIP issues with the idea that they will bring forth a 10-year CIP. The district believes that effort is very important in response to the Assembly's desire that we stretch out the numbers across a longer period of time. Ms. Comeau acknowledged the need to grapple with this as a community to determine how some of the critically needed projects can be expedited. It is also important that the district bonds continue to pass and not get back into a cycle of failing bonds which just puts the district further and further behind. She suggested that the district, in conjunction with the CRAC, should engage the community in a conversation to determine how to address the more than \$600 million of back needs. The conversation need to take place out in the community but not right in the middle of an election campaign. She suggested using the same approach that was so successful with the High School Forums.

Ms. Michelle Egan explained that, as we do every year, the district has conducted a survey to determine what type of package the voters would tolerate in the upcoming election. She reviewed the survey results noting that 53.3 percent of voters were supportive of the elementary school addition/renewal bond and 66 percent were supportive of the districtwide building system renewal bond. When the proposals were combined into one large bond there is a dip in the support to 52 percent. Ms. Egan noted that the survey highlights the importance of the information regarding debt reimbursement from the State of Alaska. When voters are given information about state reimbursement support for the package goes up to 62.2 percent. Ms. Egan briefly reviewed other items in the survey included what type of information would make the bonds more appealing to voters.

In reference to the water issue at Sand Lake Elementary raised by one of the speakers earlier this evening, Mr. Vakalis recalled that the Board had authorized the hiring of a third-party consultant to analyze water quality

at all of the district's older schools. He explained that the water at Sand Lake Elementary School was found to have an elevated level of lead. In light of that finding filters were installed at Sand Lake. Those filters are changed every thirty days. There is no danger of lead poisoning or any type of lead contamination at this time.

Mr. Ray Amsden reiterated that the 2008 General Obligation Bond Recommendations very closely mirrors the CRAC recommendations with only a few minor adaptations. The primary change is in the list of projects that the district will be able to capture in the bonds. All of the deferred projects originally presented to the CRAC will be funded through alternative sources due to the passage of Memorandum #147, Approval of Funding for Capital Projects Using Interest Earning and Project Balances, on the Consent Agenda earlier this evening. The other change involves the Traffic Safety Project at Mears Middle School. The original plan presented to the CRAC was to fund the entire project in this bond package. Further assessment indicates that only the design effort can be accomplished within this window of funding time. He reviewed the process of "just-in-time-funding" that the district has been following which indicates that requests for funding will only be made for money that is needed and can be used within the funding time frame. Changing the funding request for Mears Middle School freed up money to capture some additional projects primarily consisting of the desperately needed track projects at select middle schools.

Mr. Steiner noted that the amounts for both Chester Valley and Sand Lake Elementary schools are higher than what was listed in the CIP and asked Mr. Amsden to explain the differences. Mr. Amsden explained that the CIP document is nearly a year old. As the projects evolve over time there is an ongoing scoping process that further refines the projects thus leading to better, more accurate cost estimates. Inflationary costs also come into play over time. The adoption of new codes also impacts the cost of projects. He noted that a change in code relating to the structural seismic performance of a facility had significantly impacted the project at Sand Lake Elementary to the degree that both the scope and the cost of the project changed rather radically.

Mr. Steiner noted that the middle school track renewal was not in the CIP. He wondered what tradeoff was made in order to do the track renewal. Mr. Amsden categorized the track issue as an emerging issue. At the time that the CIP was generated the Maintenance Department was trying to deal with the never-ending and ever-increasing issues associated with the tracks. Concerns about the safety of the tracks have emerged which have

caused these projects to rise to a level that requires that they be addressed on a more rapid scale than those that work their way up through the CIP. Ms. Comeau added that there have been real constraints placed on the usage of the track and field facilities at these schools due to the safety issues.

Mr. Steiner noted that there were several construction projects on the ongoing high school renewal process that were in the CIP but are not proposed to go forward on the bond proposition. He voiced his concern that plans already in place for many of these projects may be impacted by changes in code to the point that they might require redesign. Mr. Amsden noted that anytime you do a design and don't accomplish the project there is a risk that code changes will impact the project. That risk increases over time. Mr. Amsden believed that the impact on the projects Mr. Steiner referred to are minimal at this time. There will be a code assessment when projects are resurrected which will address any necessary changes. Ms. Comeau restated the importance of getting out into the community in the next year to talk about how to finish the high school projects.

Mr. Steiner noted that the district has a Capital Improvement Plan that includes an average of well over \$100 million proposed needs for every year over the six year period. If the district continues to seek only half of that amount each year the backlog will grow beyond our ability to keep up. Mr. Steiner indicated that with over 93 facilities it is important for the public to understand how many facilities the district has and how much it actually costs to keep them up. Mr. Vakalis indicated that he would work on getting the true cost of the total replacement value of the district-owned facilities.

Mr. Steiner noted that according to the bond survey more people found the information regarding debt reimbursement from the State of Alaska and the condition of the schools on the bond more convincing than the information regarding bond debt retirement. He explained that the district is going to have to do more than just match the retiring bonds if we expect to keep our facilities up. Ms. Comeau agreed, however she reminded everyone that the Assembly blasted the district two years in a row for bringing forward bond recommendations of over \$100 million and would not accept school bond proposals in that amount. When these bond proposals were presented to the Assembly last week they were well received. We have to look at the political reality of where the district stands. The district has huge needs but the community has to be better informed about those needs so that they can actively solicit the support of

their local elected officials. The district needs the support and advocacy of those local elected officials.

Mr. Friedman noted that he was concerned last year when the district only proposed bonds in the amount that had been retired because that pattern, year after year, could not be sustained. At the same time his sense is that this is the right action this year. He believed that it is important to show the community that the district is listening and is doing the best it can with what they are willing to support. Once this package is approved we can start on the larger education issue of what the total needs of the district are, what the community would like their schools to look like, and how much they are willing to invest in our economy because it is the schools and the education system that drives our economy.

Mr. Tuck indicated his belief that Governor Palen's plan for municipal revenue sharing will have a positive impact on this issue. He noted that the cost of the projects on the six-year CIP represents only 1 percent of the value of district facilities as reported in this memorandum. He did not believe that to be asking too much however he agreed that public perception must be taken into consideration and added that public education on the needs of the district is vital for community support.

Mr. Vakalis clarified that the \$1.6 billion referenced in the memorandum is the replacement value of the fixed assets as determined by the district's insurance carrier. That figure does not include foundations, the infrastructure such as utilities going to the facilities, or any site work such as football fields, bleacher, or lighting. The value as stated also does not include the acquisition costs of the sites themselves. That is why there is a difference between the true value of the entire asset and the reported value of the buildings themselves. Mr. Vakalis noted that he is working to ascertain the true value of each of the district's facilities.

Ms. Kennedy noted that there was a \$100,000 roof replacement project at Sand Lake Elementary on the Funding for Capital Projects Using Interest Earnings memorandum passed this evening on the Consent Agenda. She asked for further explanation regarding the difference between that project and the Sand Lake Renewal on the bonds. Mr. Amsden explained that the roof at Sand Lake has to be addressed now and can not wait for the renewal project. He assured the board that they will spend only what is absolutely necessary to get the facility through until the renewal project.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum #142 - Winterberry Charter School Renewal Application

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the renewal of the charter for Winterberry Charter School for an additional 10 years, chartering the school through the 2017-2018 school year.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner

Seconded by: Macon Roberts

To approve the renewal of the charter for Winterberry Charter School for an additional 10 years, chartering the school through the 2017-2018 school year.

Ms. Comeau introduced Ms. Shanna Mall, principal at Winterberry Charter School. She indicated that the administration believes that Winterberry has proven their viability through very challenges situations, they have a strong core of supporters and a good enrollment. This recommendation should serve to help stabilize their program so that everyone knows that this school is a viable part of the Anchorage School District.

Mr. Steiner noted that he had been looking at test scores from the Profile of Performance and voiced his concern regarding Winterberry test results. He acknowledged that the program at Winterberry is not focused solely on test scores and that there are many items of higher importance to the parents who choose to send their students to this school. At the same time he remained concerned that test scores, particularly at the fifth and sixth grade levels, are not insubstantially below the district averages. Mr. Steiner wondered what efforts were being made to improve those scores. He also wondered whether the process of looping the teaching staff through the grades might impact test scores in situations where the

teachers were not as familiar with the upper grade levels. Ms. Mall noted that the teachers have not been transitioning through the grades with their classes long enough to have any data to support or refute that possibility. She indicated that, even though Winterberry is not all about tests, the test scores are concerning to the school's administration and the APC. They continue to search out options and materials for their teachers to help them identify how to better align and deliver the Waldorf curriculum in a way that meets the standards. She reviewed a number of things being done to impact student achievement and test scores. She shared new standards that the school is putting into place that are aligned with the Waldorf curriculum and indicated that, once they were in place, the school would be looking at creating a new report card for their students.

Mr. Steiner noted that there seems to be a significant difference in student test scores based on gender. Ms. Melissa Janigo, a member of the Winterberry APC, explained her belief that the difference is based more on the nature of the issues with the students who have chosen to attend Winterberry rather than the program being more successful for some student based on gender. The school is so new that it is difficult to access whether student performance should be attributed to the program at Winterberry or to the program at the schools the students had attended prior to coming to Winterberry. Ms. Comeau indicated that this issue has been seen in many of the charter schools when they first started. Many of the charter schools have seen a significant number of students who enroll because they have not been successful in other programs. It is difficult to access the success of the program in the first few years. She did note that when a program can get young people engaged and parents involved they are bound to see student performance improve over the long term.

Mr. Steiner asked whether the issue regarding the Certificate of Occupancy for the numbers enrolled at Winterberry had been resolved. Ms. Mall indicated that the school has a CO which covers the number of students currently enrolled. She noted that the concern is for future growth and that changing the current CO would simply involve an administrative process if enrollment exceeds the current limit.

Ms. Marks asked for some information regarding how supply fees are handled. Ms. Mall explained that the supply fee is a suggested fee and that parents who can't afford to pay the fee are not required to do so.

Ms. Marks asked about the addition of middle school grades. Ms. Mall explained that Winterberry currently has a sixth/seventh grade combo class which will move to a seventh/eighth grade combo class next year.

This class has been together since it was a fourth/fifth grade combo class and the families are very supportive of moving into the middle school grades. Ms. Comeau added that the challenge to having a successful middle school program at the charter schools is to have students whose families have embraced the philosophy and the program continuum.

Ms. Marks asked how things are proceeding with students on IEPs. Ms. Janigo noted that Winterberry has a terrific Special Education teacher who has had a great deal of experience with Waldorf methods. The teacher is able to communicate very well with the parents regarding how the program works for their students. Ms. Mall noted that parents of students with special needs have typically done a great deal of research on the teaching methods and for the most part their students are doing well in the program.

Mr. Steiner voiced some concern regarding the ten-year time frame of this recommendation. While he noted that the school has overcome some issues and has done a lot of good work he asked why the school is requesting a ten year contract and why the administration is recommending ten years. He wondered what the impact of approving a shorter, five year contract would be. Ms. Janigo indicated that the renewal application is a very time consuming process and that the school administration and the APC would prefer to spend their energies on the school and the program. A ten year contract would provide a solid foundation from which to move forward. Ms. Comeau noted that the district has grappled with this issue for some time. The original charter school contracts were established for five years because that was all that the state would allow. The board policy changed when the state lifted that limitation. Ms. Comeau indicated that the board has an opportunity to review the performance at each of the charter schools on an annual basis. The board retains the ability to place a school on a probationary plan if achievement starts to slip or other significant issues come to light and even to close the school if it comes to that. The district has closed charter schools in the past. The district has extended ten year renewals to other charter schools. Ms. Comeau noted her belief that a ten year charter provides stability. It also gives the school much more credibility with future landlords should they decide to relocate. She assured the board that she is comfortable, within the parameters that the board policy allows and the annual review process, in providing a ten year charter renewal.

Mr. Tuck asked whether the length of the charter renewal will impact the school's future lease agreements. Ms. Mall explained that the school's

current lease is due to expire in June and they have been working on a three year lease extension with the current landlord.

Mr. Steiner voiced his continued concern regarding Winterberry's test scores. He is particularly concerned with approving a ten year charter renewal without the school having a track record showing improvement in student test scores. Typically the scores of students with similar demographics would be significantly higher than those being reported at Winterberry. Mr. Steiner indicated that he is uncomfortable, as a matter of precedent, to grant a ten year charter renewal without having seen evidence of efforts being made to improve student test scores.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by: John Steiner	To amend the proposal to change
Seconded by: Crystal Kennedy	from a ten year extension to a five year extension.

Mr. Friedman indicated that he looks at academic performance within a charter school a little different than he does in a neighborhood school because it is a school of choice. It is absolutely necessary to look at the numbers and to question the charter schools at their year-end review. Ultimately, however, charter schools have a little more autonomy and if they are fulfilling the needs that the parents say need to be fulfilled then Mr. Friedman would allow more leeway to the exact test scores. He noted that it is especially difficult to focus on test scores in a small school where the largest grade level enrollment is less than thirty students. The test scores of one child in that size setting can significantly skew the results. Mr. Friedman supported a ten year renewal noting that the board retains the ability to pull the contract sooner if issues arise.

Mr. Tuck indicated that this is a difficult decision for him to make in light of the fact that the program at Winterberry is a new model for the Anchorage School District. While he commended the school for the manner in which they have met so many challenges in their first two years he also understands the desire on the part of other board members for the school to have a more substantial track record before approving a ten year renewal. Mr. Tuck asked if the school has a backup plan should the lease extension not come through. Ms. Mall indicated that she is very confident about securing a three year extension on their lease but should that not happen the school would probably find themselves back in a church as they were before moving into their current location. She noted that securing a facility is a huge challenge for all charter schools.

Ms. Mall reiterated the importance of the ten year charter renewal so that the parents know that the school has the backing of the school board. Mr. Arthur Harmon, a member of the Winterberry APC, explained that a ten year renewal would provide Winterberry the ability to negotiate a lease extension with their current landlord from a secure and stable position.

Mr. Roberts indicated his belief that a ten year charter renewal shows more permanency for the school and provides evidence that the board has confidence in the school. He noted that there is a fail-safe method for dealing with the school should it not improve regardless of the length of the charter. Mr. Roberts noted that having a ten year charter renewal will also help the school with recruiting future students.

Mr. Steiner reviewed the fifth grade Terra Nova test scores for Winterberry and compared them to the district test scores. He indicated that these numbers, which show Winterberry students performing much below the district averages, are the reason for his continued concern. He noted that the scores can be improved and that he believes that the school has a plan for improvement. He remains concerned however and would like to see evidence of improvement before extended the charter renewal for ten years.

Ms. Pillifant, a member of the Winterberry APC, noted that the greatest adversity facing any charter school is space. A ten year renewal will provide the power to secure space whether the school stays in the current space or has to look for a new space. She explained how much energy has been spent dealing with the issue of space and how beneficial it would be to free up that energy to address important issues that directly impact student achievement such as curriculum and testing.

Mr. Friedman pointed out that the number of students in the test group referenced by Mr. Steiner was very small and that it would take very little to skew test results in a group of that size. Ms. Mall noted that there were only eleven students tested and over half of those were on an IEP. For some of these students just completing the test was a huge accomplishment. She noted that the staff knows the needs of each of these students and are using that information to guide their instruction and really support each student.

Ms. Connie Bensler noted that she was aware that the test scores at that particular grade level were going to be a problem. She has discussed the issue with Ms. Mall. Concerns regarding those test scores have also been

discussed at APC meetings in order to proactively address those issues. Ms. Bensler explained that everything that comes to light at Winterberry that is perceived as an issue or a problem is immediately taken seriously. Under the leadership of Ms. Mall, problems and issues are immediately addressed and action taken.

Ms. Comeau noted that academics have not been strong during the first three years at any of the district's charter schools. The common struggle for all of them was the issue of securing a facility. She believed that the school administration and APC has heard the concerns of the board regarding test scores and that the issues will be appropriately addressed. Ms. Comeau pledged to keep on top of the academic achievement at Winterberry and if they do not show adequate improvement at their annual review she intends to make an appropriate recommendation to the board.

VOTE on AMENDMENT:

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

AMENDMENT FAILED

Mr. Steiner noted that he does not have a problem supporting a ten year renewal since the amendment failed. He voiced his belief that the school is doing a good job and acknowledged the dedication of the staff and parents.

VOTE on ORIGINAL MOTION:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

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 November 30, 2007 through December 7, 2007.

2. ASD Memorandum # 127 - First Quarter Parent/Teacher Conference Report 2007-2008

The School Board and the Administration have long supported and encouraged opportunities for parents and teachers to meet to discuss student progress at various times during the school year. In many cases, students have been encouraged to be active participants in these conferences.

3. ASD Memorandum #129 - Evaluation of the 2006-2007 Six-Year Instructional Plan

The Anchorage School Board adopted the Six-Year Instructional Plan at their meeting on May 10, 2004, and four additional department plans were added in 2005. The board adopted the Integrated Assessment Six-Year Plan in June of 2007. An integral part of keeping the six-year plan viable and accountable is the annual evaluation and corresponding report to the board.

4. ASD Memorandum #130 - 21st Century Community Learning Center 2006-2007 Year-End Report

The 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) 2006-2007 Year-End Report is the report to the school board and the community on the achievement of the afterschool program. The 21st CCLC programs were held in the following elementary schools: Fairview, Government Hill, Mountain View, Muldoon, North Star, Northwood, Ptarmigan, Russian Jack, Taku, Williwaw, Willow Crest, and Wonder Park. A program was held at Clark Middle School as well.

Ms. Comeau introduced Ms. Susan Williams, the new 21st Century Community Learning Center manager.

Mr. Steiner noted that some of the data included in the report are the annual surveys which ask teachers, parents, and students somewhat subjective questions. He indicated that he has had concerns over the years with the legitimacy of using that type of survey for evaluating a program when academic achievement data is not available. This year academic achievement data is available. The data does not, however, compare students in this program to students who are not in the program. Without that information there is no way to determine whether there is value added by this program. Mr. Steiner was particularly interested in that type of information because the program is grant funded and as the grant expires the board will have to make a

decision whether to continue to fund the program. Ms. Williams indicated that she had not asked for comparative assessment data and was unaware of whether it was available. Ms. Comeau indicated that she, Ms. Gardner, and Ms. Williams will discuss this issue with the district's assessment staff to see what information can be made available. This data may be very difficult and very time consuming to collect. She did acknowledge that being able to isolate that this particular program made a positive impact on the academic achievement of participating students would provide valuable information in determining future funding. Ms. Gardner noted her belief that the data could probably be teased out but she was unsure of whether it would reveal exactly what Mr. Steiner wanted it to reveal because there are so many other factors in those same students' experience.

Mr. Steiner indicated that he did not necessarily want to spend a lot of time or energy gathering that data now because the system is not set up for it. He wanted to make the point that reviewing this type of data is important so that, if any one program can be shown to be more beneficial to our students than another program, funding decisions can be made to assure that the most impactful programs continue.

Mr. Steiner referenced the table on page one of attachment A and noted that the students categorized as having no change should not be included with those who had improved or did not need to change. It seemed to him that students who were not in the category of did not need to change must, by definition, need to change. If these students did not change it is really a failure of the program rather than a success. He was concerned that the students who showed no change were being reported as a positive result. Ms. Williams indicated that she would have to discuss the concern about how the evaluation is structured with Northwest Regional Labs as it is their report. She noted that these categories have been combined for several years.

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 December 17, 2007, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 10:00 p.m.

Tim Steele, President

Crystal Kennedy, Clerk

Johanna Lee, Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approved