

**MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING OF MARCH 3, 2008**

The Anchorage School Board met in Special Session on Monday, March 3, 2008 at 4:45 p.m. in the Board Room of the Anchorage School District Education Center. President Tim Steele presided.

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

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

Others Present: Carol Comeau, Rhonda Gardner, Leslie Vandergaw, Mike Henry, Patricia McRae, Dr. Enid Silverstein, George Vakalis, Ray Amsden, Rob Balivet, Mary Cary, Mike Price, Tam Agosti-Gisler, Blythe Marston, Steve Kalmes, Rick Rios, Johanna Lee, the press and other member of the public.

B. SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

C. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Fanning/Howey Presentation on West High School & Romig Middle School Pre-Planning Vision Report

Mr. Amsden introduced Mr. Dan Mader, Chief Executive Officer of Fanning/Howey Associates, Inc., and Mr. Chuck Tyler, Senior Designer with Fanning/Howey.

Mr. Amsden noted that noted that this project was, at least initially, driven by the community and that there has been fairly extensive public involvement throughout the process thus far. There has been a very sincere interest in that campus as a center of community. That is not a new concept. For many years schools have been looked at through the lens of how they relate to the community and how the district can provide not only for specific educational needs but also how we can be partners in the community. Now that the pre-planning report is complete the next decision to be made is where the district goes from here and how much we embrace the ideas and concepts that are identified in this report. Once that decision has been made we will be looking at the education specifications for that campus leading ultimately to a master plan which will then set the direction for future construction and development of the project.

Mr. Mader briefly explained the purpose and process. He noted that this effort began as an expression of the public's desire for West/Romig to become a center of community. The role of Howey/Fanning has been facilitate a process where they engage the community itself and try to define how West/Romig can be a center of community and what that concept means. While exploring these types of efforts in other parts of the country they have found that the concept of partnerships is universal. One of the early pieces of this process was identifying who those partners would be. Throughout the process effort there have been numerous meetings with stakeholders, both privately and interactively with the community.

Mr. Mader explained that the bulk of this report explains how this vision can be implemented on the West/Romig campus. The vision of creating schools as centers of community is to use partnerships to enhance educational opportunities for all and to maximize the use of facilities for the public good. Mr. Mader shared a video which explains the impact that integrating a school as the center of community can have on the people of the community. The video highlighted John A. Johnson Elementary School in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Mr. Mader provided a brief overview of the report. The vision is for the campus to serve as an active educational and cultural hub for the West/Romig community. It is based on partnerships that benefit the students, the community and the partners. It involves sharing the facilities to provide educational, cultural and recreational opportunities for the community. It is important to provide a physical and an organizational structure to guarantee student safety and long-term sustainability of the program. There has also been discussion of developing a unifying theme for curricular coordination and building on some of the assets specifically inherent in the West/Romig community. There are five essential components to success. These are the necessity for partnerships, tying the programs themselves to the curriculum, providing for staff development, assuring student safety and establishing clear expectations with fully documented procedures.

Mr. Mader reviewed several challenges that will likely be faced as this project is considered. The biggest hurdle will likely be that it is different. There are numerous parties involved and the more people involved in a project often complicates matters. Another issue is that the parties will change over time. There needs to be understanding and cooperation on all sides and there will need to be flexibility. In addition, any time funds are co-mingled another level of complexity is added to the project.

Mr. Mader shared some of their observations. He noted that there are a terrific number of new business partners who have expressed interest in

this campus. There appears to be a very strong spirit of cooperation between the Anchorage School District and the Municipality of Anchorage, particularly at West/Romig. There is a strong community desire for life-long learning opportunities. There is also strong community support for the performing and fine arts. One very important point is that the idea has a champion. There are members of the community that are willing to carry the banner on this effort.

There are several positive outcomes that are already evident from this effort. The lines of communication are open with a very broad segment of the community. There are some new programs already in development as a result of some of the early conversations particularly some partnering opportunities with the public library and MEDIAC. There seems to be a greater sense of partnership now. People are talking about partnerships between the community, the district and the municipality. Momentum has been generated toward initiating a master plan for the campus.

Mr. Mader indicated that the next steps include a community presentation which will take place later this evening. The report will also be posted on the ASD website. There will be a public comment period which will be extended to April 21 which should give people sufficient time to review the report. After that time period the information will be available for review in order to decide how much and to what extent the district would like to adopt any of these provisions. Those decisions would then inform the educational specifications.

Ms. Comeau noted that the report has been up on the district website since last Friday. Mr. Steele opened the floor to questions from the board.

Mr. Friedman indicated that he really liked the idea and it reflects what the board has been trying to do in a number of places and in a number of ways. He does, however, have some concerns. One of those concerns is the physical location of West/Romig and the difficult traffic patterns there. As traffic is increased it will not get any easier. He wondered if this was the best location to do a pilot project of this sort. Mr. Maynard noted that the height of the traffic problem seems to be at the beginning and end of the school day. He acknowledged that there are challenges to be addressed that clearly go beyond just the community center vision development. Mr. Tyler noted that there are potential opportunities for a different site orientation and traffic pattern in the context of the master planning and renewal.

Mr. Friedman noted that the size of the site is also quite small to add additional partners into that same location. Mr. Friedman pointed out that the district had a fairly active community schools program which is

no longer active. Given that the community indicated a desire to take classes, he asked whether there had been any review of why that community schools program had not been successful and what needs to be done to make a similar program more successful. Mr. Mader indicated that this report does not look back on past programs.

Mr. Steiner voiced his concern with the interblending of programs and funding sources. Mr. Mader noted that if the expectation is that all of the programs and funding comes from the district the vision of a center of community will not succeed. He noted that libraries are the most difficult and least successful of the partnerships that are out there. Recreational facilities, such as pools and fitness areas, tend to be some of the more common and successful partnerships. The group that tends to manage those most often is the YMCA. It may be built with a combination of funds but operationally the YMCA tends to come in and manage those facilities and programs with fee arrangements based on the management agreements. Ultimately, it does not make any sense from an economic standpoint for all of the funds to come from the school district. In successful partnership the funds are co-mingled.

Mr. Steiner noted that the question regarding parity across the district has been raised in the past when the district has started a process of updating schools and fixing outdated infrastructure. He asked whether the speakers were aware of other communities have dealt with this issue. Mr. Mader noted that all of the examples he can think of are single high school districts. Mr. Friedman noted that every time he has been in Chugiak High School in the evening it has been functioning as a community center. He believed that if this concept worked it would eventually spread throughout the district although perhaps not on such a grand scale. Mr. Steele added that the district has a number of alternative programs and that there is not parity anywhere. Mr. Steiner noted that he did not mean to imply that the district has to have parity. He was simply looking for examples of other communities that have worked through the issue. Mr. Tyler noted that there is a difference between facility parity and programmatic parity.

Ms. Kennedy asked for an explanation on the difference between the current school business partnerships and the proposed Educational Enterprise Partners. Mr. Mader explained that there is a differentiation between a general educational enterprise partner and an active partner. A general partner would be like the school business partnerships currently in place. An active partner is one who has a component of their business actually on the campus. That shows a level of commitment both financially and emotionally that goes beyond the general partnerships. After further discussion, Ms. Kennedy noted that, at some point, the

district will need to look closely at how public facilities are used for profit making ventures.

Mr. Steiner wondered whether to what extent businesses will help bring about private financing to upgrade the infrastructure of the whole campus. Mr. Mader noted that several funding issues are reviewed in the report, including naming rights. There are a number of ways in engage the business community financially including up-front cash investments and long-term lease components.

Mr. Steiner asked whether there was any community response to the possibility of making drastic changes that would change the face or the character of the school and campus. Mr. Mader noted that when a process like this was initiated by the community it is extremely important to keep the community engaged throughout the process. He noted that a question had been asked during community discussions regarding what might be troublesome about having businesses on the campus. There was very little concern raised with this issue.

Mr. Tuck wondered whether there had been any conversations with the church near the West/Romig campus. Mr. Amsden indicated that he is not aware of what the development plans are for the church itself. They have talked about having an interest in surplus some of their property. He believed that they are in a wait and see mode to determine if the district would be interested in entering into a conversation about that. He also believed that the church's desire is for the property to go to the district if it something that we can use.

Mr. Friedman noted his belief that the development of the vision for this before we start planning the design of the school is really an instructional effort rather than a facilities project.

Ms. Comeau encouraged everyone to take the time to go through this report and provide written comments. She particularly asked her instructional team and the facilities team to provide written comments on the report.

Mr. Steiner asked whether a time line has been developed for this project. Mr. Amsden noted that the funding aspect will drive how quickly the district will be able to react to this. There is an effort to capture some funds from the state legislature to advance the project under the category of master planning. It would take a significant effort and would take a significant amount of time to generate a master plan. There are too many unanswered questions at this point to develop a hard line schedule. Ms. Comeau indicated that the final report including all public comments

should be available around the first of May. By that time we should know about any legislative funding. There is still a lot of internal discussion needed before any recommendation can be made. She also indicated that having another work session with the board on the issue would be very helpful. Ms. Comeau pointed out that there are several intriguing ideas identified in the report that do not require a change in the structure.

Mr. Steiner questioned whether this is an opportunity to go beyond requesting public funds to invite private partnership to help fund the next phases of development. He believed that there would be a great advantage to engaging the private sector early in the process. He indicated that he would like to see what kind of experiences other places have had in doing that kind of thing.

Mr. Mader stated that the primary goal in all of this is to educate students. The district needs to decide what pieces of this they want to pursue educationally. The rest of the process will fall out from that.

D. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

E. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m. on March 3, 2008.

Tim Steele, President

Crystal Kennedy, Clerk

Johanna Lee, Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approved