

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 1, 2008  
AMENDED

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, December 1, 2008, at 6:32 p.m. in the Board Room, at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President, Jeff Friedman, presided.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE, Jeff Friedman Presiding

Board Members Present: Jeff Friedman, Crystal Kennedy, Pat Higgins, Macon Roberts, John Steiner, Tim Steele, and Chris Tuck.

Board Members Excused: Macon Roberts

Others Present: Carol Comeau, Rhonda Gardner, Ed Graff, Leslie Vandergaw, Mike Henry, Enid Silverstein, Jerry Sjolander, Jane Berglund, Eric Tollefsen, Heather Sawyer, Janet Stokesbary, George Vakalis, Jose DelReal, Ray Amsden, Marie Laule, Chad Stiteler, Jim Lepley, Johanna Lee, the press, and other interested people.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

C. AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

The Goldenview Middle School Choir, under the direction of Sam Stuempler, performed several numbers for the entertainment of the board and others prior to the start of the meeting.

D. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Friedman reminded the board that a Special Meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, December 4, for the purpose of discussing the superintendent's evaluation. He requested that board members forward their written comments and ratings to him as soon as possible in order for him to collate the data prior to that meeting.

E. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

1. Student Advisory Board

Mr. Jose DelReal was not able to attend the meeting.

2. Military Delegate

Ms. Comeau reported that Lt. Col. Luu's last meeting will be December 15, 2008. The district will thank him for his service at that time.

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

Dr. James reported on MECAC activities over the last few weeks. The committee has been concentrating on looking at their mission and their goals. He was pleased to report that they have come up with workable policy solutions. They have adopted new policies and changes to other policies that they feel will better serve the community. These policy changes will now be used to review their guidelines.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Kelly Bender spoke to the board regarding policies related to student expulsions. She believed that the district's discipline procedures are too severe without a proper and real appeals process. She explained her belief that the district is taking guidance away from the students who need it the most. She shared the process that she has gone through with her niece and noted that appeals are not dealt with on a case-by-case basis and, therefore, students are not given the opportunity to receive a punishment that is equal to their infraction. Ms. Bender explained that many of these children are the most vulnerable and those needing the most structure. When the district expels these children they are being stripped of all structure and all guidance. She believed that the message that is being sent to the youth caught up in this process is that they are not worth the time or the resources.

Ms. Comeau thanked Ms. Bender for bringing her concerns to the attention of the board. She noted that district underwent an extensive review of the drug and alcohol policy about six or seven years ago. After much consideration the conclusion had been reached that the strict standards in place needed to be maintained. It is important, however, that the board continually look at this issue. These situations invoke choices about where resources are applied. At some point there are consequences for students who make mistakes or violate the law. There has to be careful consideration about how many of the district's resources are diverted to the students who continually challenge the rules and take away from the 98 percent of the 48,000 plus students who are there to learn.

Ms. Comeau indicated that her understanding was that there was a COHO program located in the Chugiak/Eagle River area. Mr. Henry explained the difficulty that has been experienced in establishing the COHO program and determining which students should be allowed to attend that program which could be located in the very school from which they are being expelled and which students should have to attend the Continuation Program in Anchorage. Ms. Bender noted that COHO is a Saturday only program and does not have the same parameters that the Continuation Program has. She reiterated that the students who are assigned to COHO would have even more free time and receive even less supervision, structure and direction.

Ms. Tanya Adams spoke to the board on the issue of passing students to the next grade level when they are not adequately prepared. She shared the experiences that she is having with her eighth grader. Having spoken to the counselor at that school it is her understanding that it is the district's policy to not hold students back in middle school, even if they are not passing their classes. Ms. Adams noted that in her experience as a military parent she has had four family friends who have transferred out of Alaska only to find that their elementary aged children are not prepared for their assigned grade level and had to be moved back a grade. She wondered when the change was made to not hold children accountable for their grades.

Ms. Comeau clarified that there is no School Board policy indicating that students can not be retained. She indicated that the Middle School Division Director would contact the school in question to discuss this issue. She emphasized that the district wants to hold our students accountable. However not every student that does not do their work

should be retained, there are other ways to intervene early and get the students back on track.

Mr. Joshua Holland, a student at Heritage Christian School, spoke to the board on the issue of textbooks to teaching the theory of evolution as fact.

H. 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 - September 22, 2008
- b. Special Meeting - November 10, 2008
- c. Special Meeting - November 12, 2008

2. ASD Memorandum #132 - Adoption of Middle School Language Arts Curriculum

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and adopt the following language arts textbooks and materials for Language Arts 6, Language Arts 7, and Language Arts 8: McDougal Littell, *Literature* (2008) Student anthology formats: print, interactive DVD, and interactive online, and McDougal Littell, *Grammar for Writing* (2008) Student handbook in print.

3. ASD Memorandum # 128 - Eagle Academy Charter School Renewal Application

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the renewal of the charter for Eagle Academy Charter School for an additional 10 years, chartering the school through the 2018-2019 school year.

4. ASD Memorandum # 131 - Recommendation for Hazardous Materials Professional Consulting Services

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the selection of Environmental Health Sciences-Alaska, Inc. as the consultant of record for Hazardous Materials Professional Services and authorize the Superintendent to negotiate and enter into a contract with Environmental Health Sciences-Alaska. The initial term of this contract will be one year, extending from January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009, for a total not-to-exceed amount of

\$150,000; with an option to renew for two (2) additional one-year periods in the amounts not to exceed \$150,000 per year.

5. ASD Memorandum # 133 - Award of Contract: Scanning Services for Payroll Check Stubs

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to approve an increase in Aquarian Charter School's budgeted enrollment from 360 to 365 students for the 2008-2009 school year.

6. ASD Memorandum # 148 - Award of Contract: Bear Valley Elementary School Fire Detection & Alarm Replacement

It is the Administration's recommendation the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to award a contract for the Bear Valley Elementary School Fire Detection and Alarm Replacement Project, to the lowest bidder, Consolidated Contracting & Engineering for the Base Bid amount of \$142,222.

7. ASD Memorandum # 151 - Award of Contract: High Access Devices

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to award a contract to Dell Marketing, LP to provide high access devices in the amount of \$323.25 each in a total amount not to exceed \$399,861.

In addition, it is recommended that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to process a budget transfer to the Expendable Equipment Fund, Educational Technology and AASB/CDL Grant from the New Equipment Fund, Educational Technology and AASB/CDL Grant.

8. ASD Memorandum # 129 - Personnel Report

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

Mr. Steele requested that ASD Memorandum #128, Eagle Academy Charter School Renewal Application, be pulled for discussion.

Mr. Steiner requested that ASD Memorandum #132, Adoption of Middle School Language Arts Curriculum, be pulled for discussion.

Ms. Comeau requested that ASD Memorandum #141, 2008-2009 Ethnicity Report, be pulled from the Superintendent's Report for a presentation.

Mr. Tuck requested that ASD Memorandum #134, First Quarter Parent/Teacher Conference Report 2008-2009, be pulled from the Superintendent's Report for discussion.

Mr. Friedman requested that ASD Memorandum #135, First Quarter Suspension/Weapons/Expulsion Report be pulled from the Superintendent's Report for discussion.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner  
Seconded by: Tim Steele

To approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 22, 2008 and the minutes of the Special Meetings of November 10, 2008 and November 12, 2008 and Memoranda #131, #133, #148, #151 and #129.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

Excused: Roberts

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum #132 - Adoption of Middle School Language Arts Curriculum

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and adopt the following language arts textbooks and materials for Language Arts 6, Language Arts 7, and Language Arts 8: McDougal Littell, *Literature* (2008) Student anthology formats: print, interactive DVD, and interactive online, and McDougal Littell, *Grammar for Writing* (2008) Student handbook in print.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner  
Seconded by: Tim Steele

To adopt the following language arts textbooks and materials for Language Arts 6, Language Arts

7, and Language Arts 8:  
McDougal Littell, *Literature* (2008)  
Student anthology formats: print,  
interactive DVD, and interactive  
online, and McDougal Littell,  
*Grammar for Writing* (2008)  
Student handbook in print.

Ms. Vandergaw presented a brief overview of the process used to select the proposed Middle School Language Arts Curriculum. She noted that this is just phase one of the new adoption. The board had approved \$500,000 toward the acquisition and adoption of middle school language arts materials at the end of the last school year. Funding for the needed trade books and support materials will be addressed in the 2009-2010 budget development process.

Mr. Steiner confirmed with Ms. Vandergaw that the student handbooks, both the anthology and the grammar book, are not consumables. He also wondered about the additional items that will be necessary for the full implementation of this curriculum in regards to the cost of this program compared to the other options that were not selected. He also asked how much additional funding will be necessary to fund the rest of the implementation of this particular program. Ms. Vandergaw noted that the top two contenders in this selection process were fairly similar in cost. She reported a very preliminary estimate of approximately \$350,000 needed to complete the implementation.

Ms. Comeau alerted everyone that there is still close to \$4 million to cut in next year's budget. There will be many discussions over the next two months to determine how best to utilize the limited funds available. It may take two years to fully implement this curriculum if the full funding necessary can not be identified in next year's budget. Mr. Steiner noted that this implementation is the type of thing that is an ideal use of the Fund Balance when it is used.

Mr. Steiner asked whether these materials have been assessed in terms of cultural diversity and sensitivity to a variety of student groups. Ms. Vandergaw referenced the scoring rubric that was used to assess the curriculum. There were several places throughout the rubric that addressed those issues. For instance, a very important consideration found under the Miscellaneous portion of the rubric assessed whether the curriculum provides appropriate, accurate and respectful representation of all groups such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, culture, disabilities and

gender. Ms. Gardner noted that historically this publisher has been ahead of everyone else when it comes to diversity in their literature.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

Excused: Roberts

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum #128 - Eagle Academy Charter School Renewal Application

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the renewal of the charter for Eagle Academy Charter School for an additional 10 years, chartering the school through the 2018-2019 school year.

ACTION:

Moved by: Tim Steele  
Seconded by: Chris Tuck

To approve the renewal of the charter for Eagle Academy Charter School for an additional 10 years, chartering the school through the 2018-2019 school year.

Ms. Comeau indicated that the administration is recommending that the board approve this ten year contract for Eagle Academy Charter School. She noted that Eagle Academy has a very strong program and that she is very comfortable making this recommendation.

Ms. Bensler introduced several members of the Academic Policy Committee including Ms. Len Niesen, Ms. Jean Moore, Mr. Jeffrey Shepherd, and Ms. Lisa Houston. She also introduced Ms. Mary Meade, principal, and Ms. Julie Gorham, teacher-in-charge.

Ms. Niesen reviewed the history of Eagle Academy Charter School. She noted that, since opening in 2005, the school has proven successful in terms of the viability in the community, financial responsibility, internal stability, and most importantly, in terms of student success. Eagle Academy students have been very successful academically with scores above districtwide scores as well as statewide scores on both the SBA and TerraNova assessments every year. The school has had consistent enrollment since opening with modest increases each year. The school is

very conservative in terms of their spending, ending each year since inception well within budget.

Ms. Niesen noted that the teaching staff, support staff, principal and APC are all very committed to the program. She explained that all of the teachers are Spalding trained. In addition, one of the teachers is working toward becoming a Spalding Master Teacher. That will ensure the perpetuation of the Spalding implementation and make it much more economical in the future as it will alleviate the need to bring in someone from outside to provide coaching. Ms. Niesen noted that Eagle Academy is in the process of converting to a standards-based assessment and reporting system. She reported that the school has accomplished a lot and she believed that they will continue to improve the program as the years go by. She expressed her gratitude to the board and the administration for their faith in the school.

Mr. Steele indicated his belief that Eagle Academy has one of the best Charter Schools programs he has seen. He did voice some concern regarding the length of this charter renewal, however, if any school deserves a ten-year contract he indicated that this school does. Ms. Comeau explained that the administration does not take this action lightly and that she feels extremely comfortable with the recommendation for this school. There is an annual review of each charter school and any concerns that may come up can and will be addressed during that process. Providing a ten-year charter renewal assures the school of stability. She also noted that the charter renewal will have to be approved by the state following approval by the board.

Ms. Kennedy wondered whether the school has considered a seventh and eighth grade component for the future. Ms. Niessen noted that they have considered that issue and that it is a topic that comes up annually. The school is approaching that move very cautiously, acknowledging the importance parent support would have in making that decision. Ms. Comeau indicated that she has great reluctance in supporting any additional K-8 charter schools unless she has the assurance that parents really understand what will not be offered to the seventh and eighth graders. She noted that the Eagle Academy sixth grade enrollment, which is 17 students, does not indicate the ability to provide a solid seventh and eighth grade program. She noted that the school is welcome to explore the possibility but wanted to caution the school about the obstacles they might face. It is particularly difficult in light of NCLB to have highly qualified teachers to meet the requirements for all of the things those teachers would have to teach.

In response to a question from Ms. Kennedy, Ms. Meade explained the process of leveling students for both language arts and math. She noted that there have only been a couple of students that they have even talked about retaining over the past three years. There has only been one student who has been retained and that was done at the parent's request. There have been a few double promotions although that is also reviewed very carefully. She explained that, as a charter school, they can use their funds for additional tutoring and support for struggling students which greatly assists in bringing them up to where they need to be to master the standards.

Mr. Steiner noted that Eagle Academy does not provide hot lunch for students and wondered whether that has had any impact on any parent's decision to enroll their children in the program. Ms. Moore explained that she provides tours of the school for new families and indicated that it is made very clear that there is no hot lunch available at the school and that most families are fine with that.

Mr. Steiner asked about the reference under Administrative Policies on page 13 of the renewal application regarding a separate Code of Conduct. Ms. Bensler explained that the school founders had originally wanted to have a separate Code of Conduct. That Code of Conduct establishment has not taken place yet. It is a process that will likely take place in the future. It has been made very clear that if the school develops a Code of Conduct it would have to meet the board's approval and could not supersede any policy of the district. Ms. Comeau explained that the school would have to bring forth a recommendation which the administration would review to determine where it was different from board policy. The administration would then have to bring it forward to the board for formal discussion for approval.

Mr. Steele noted that the terms "Academic Policy Committee" and "Academic Policy Board" is used interchangeable in the charter renewal application and suggested that one or the other should be used consistently rather than using both within the document.

VOTE:

Ayes: Friedman, Kennedy,  
Higgins, Steele, Steiner  
Tuck  
Nays: None  
Excused: Roberts

MOTION PASSED

The board went into a brief recess at 8:00 p.m. The meeting was called back into session at 8:10 p.m.

I. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. ASD Memorandum #130 - Project Status Report

This is a report of activities and project status changes in Major Capital Projects during the period of October 30, 2008 through November 20, 2008.

2. ASD Memorandum #134 - First Quarter Parent/Teacher Conference Report 2008-2009

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.

Mr. Tuck commented that he was very impressed with the parental participation at the conferences in several of the schools. There are many schools that have consistently had well over 90 percent parental participation over the past several years. He felt that it would be interesting to see if there is a correlation between a school's Profile of Performance scores and the level of parental participation in the Parent/Teacher Conferences.

Ms. Comeau highlighted the parental participation in the Student-Led Conferences at the middle school level. These have clearly proven to be a wonderful success.

3. ASD Memorandum #135 - First Quarter Suspension/Weapons/Expulsion Report

Information regarding suspensions and expulsions for various offenses, including weapons, is collected from the elementary, middle, and high schools each quarter. The information is shown in the narrative information below and as Attachments A-F.

Suspension/expulsion information is also reported from the charter schools.

Mr. Friedman referenced information on the percentage of students not suspended or expelled during a quarter which is reported on the first page of the memorandum. He noted that when trying to reach the students with extra needs it is important not to forget the ones who are not being extra demanding of the system. These are the students who are following the rules, coming to school and trying to do the right thing. These students desire and deserve excellent education as well.

4. ASD Memorandum #141 - Ethnicity Report

Today 51% of the students in the Anchorage School District are ethnically diverse, compared to 13% in 1976. Of today's ethnic minority population, the multi-ethnic and Asian/Pacific Islander categories (13% each) are the largest, followed by the Hispanic (10%), Alaska Native/American Indian (9%), and African American/Black (6%) groups—see Chart 1 in the attached Ethnicity Report. Last year, the multi-ethnic category was the largest followed by Asian/Pacific Islander.

Ms. Comeau pointed out that every year the total ethnic minority population increases a little more. The minority population is now 51 percent and the white student population is 49 percent. She briefly reviewed the comparisons between this school year and last year. The vast majority of our schools are very diverse which will help all of our students become better prepared to live in the world today.

5. ASD Memorandum #120 - Annual Report of Exempt Purchases

In accordance with School Board Policy Section 725.132, the annual report for purchase orders exempt from formal competitive procedures over \$50,000 for the period July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008 is attached.

J. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

K. COMMUNICATIONS & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Steiner announced that the Legislative Subcommittee will be meeting from 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, December 6, 2008 in the Superintendent's Conference Room. They will be reviewed the annual legislative priorities that will be brought to the board for approval at the December 15 meeting.

L. EXECUTIVE SESSION - PERSONNEL/FINANCE/NEGOTIATIONS  
LITIGATION

M. ADJOURNMENT

The Regular Meeting of December 1, 2008, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:28 p.m.

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Jeff Friedman, President

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Crystal Kennedy, Clerk

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Johanna Lee, Recording Secretary

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Date Minutes Approve