

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 27, 2009

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, April 27, 2009, at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President, John Steiner, presided.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE, John Steiner Presiding

Board Members Present: John Steiner, Jeff Friedman, Pat Higgins, Crystal Kennedy, Jeannie Mackie, Kathleen Plunkett, and Tim Steele

Others Present: Carol Comeau, Rhonda Gardner, Ed Graff, Leslie Vandergaw, Mike Henry, Jerry Sjolander, Eric Tollefsen, Heather Sawyer, Janet Stokesbary, George Vakalis, Lt. Col. Almand, Dr. Elsworth James, Chad Stiteler, Ray Amsden, Mike Price, Leslie Preston, Pam Chenier, Mark Mew, Larry Petersen, Connie Bensler, Mary Wegner, Darla Jones, Brian Griggs, Jim Lepley, Johanna Lee, the press, and other interested people.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Steiner noted that the agenda had been revised and that there was an addendum to the Personnel Report.

The revised agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

C. AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

ASD Memorandum # 269 - Recognition of 2009 Student Library Winners

Mr. Friedman read that, occasionally, a literary adventure must be interrupted. As the reader reenters everyday reality, a promise is made to return when he or she places a bookmark in the pages. Each year, Anchorage School District librarians organize a bookmark design contest for all ASD students, inviting them to use their creativity to symbolize the wonderful world of reading and libraries.

The following students won their divisions of the 2009 Bookmark Design Contest with the help of their school librarians, who are also listed: for the **Lindsey Western**, a first grader at Huffman Elementary, **Judy Kern**,

Librarian, won the Primary Division; **Megan Durka**, a sixth grader from Kasuun Elementary, **Amy Dalton and Linda Masterson**, Librarians, won the Intermediate Division; **Haley Jones**, an eighth grader from Hanshew Middle School, **Wendy Leseman**, Librarian, won the Middle School Division; and **Erin Torgerson**, a tenth grader from West High School, **Jim Curran**, Librarian, won the High School Division.

Their bookmarks will be used by students and staff and are distributed to the community through our School Business Partnerships program and the public library. This is a positive way for our students and schools to be recognized in the community, and a magnificent reminder of the importance of our libraries.

The Anchorage School Board officially congratulated these winners and thanked them for sharing their artistic talents to spread the good word about good books.

ASD Memorandum # 286 - Recognition of Spirit of Youth Winners

Ms. Kathleen Plunkett read that The Spirit of Youth program is dedicated to creating, promoting and recognizing youth involvement in communities across Alaska.

The 2009 Spirit of Youth awards featured close to 50 ASD students and groups who were nominated, and we are proud to announce that eight of them were selected and given an award at the annual banquet last month.

The Individual Spirit of Youth 2009 Winners from ASD were **Daniel Fink** of East High School, **Alexis Cobb** of Dimond High School, **Victoria Bledsoe** of Chugiak High School, **Jaqueline Yang**, of Chugiak High School, **David Williams**, a junior at Family Partnership Charter School and an APU Early Honors student, and **Bryan Arnold** of Steller High School and King Career Center. The Spirit of Youth Group 2009 Winners from ASD were the **Mirror Lake Middle School Media Group** including students Michelle Boone, Casey Mills, Ryan Harrison and Kayla Williamson and the **Alaska Youth and Parent Foundation POWER Outreach** workers including students Buom Bichiok, Jennifer Bird, Jarrad Kharpsl, Rhianna Page and Duke Rhodes.

The Anchorage School Board officially commended the 2009 Spirit of Youth Award winners for their creativity, compassion and dedication to community service.

ASD Memorandum # 299 - Recognition of 2009 Alaska Middle School Principal of the Year, Michael Perkins

Ms. Tim Steele read that Mears Middle School Principal Michael Perkins was named the 2009 Alaska Middle School Principal of the Year by the Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals this March.

Perkins was selected based on his demonstration of leadership excellence in the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment and personalization. As this year's winner, Perkins will now be Alaska's representative in the running for the national Middle School Principal of the Year honors.

Perkins began working in ASD in 1994. He became an assistant principal five years later and took over as head principal at Mears in 2004. He credits an inviting climate, new student transition programs, and a school-wide focus on instruction and decision-making as keys to success at his school.

"Michael is dedicated to providing quality professional development for his staff," said Leslie Vandergaw, ASD's Executive Director of Middle School Education. "He encourages staff participation in study topics ranging from technology integration to block-scheduling. Michael also believes in creating staff and student leadership capacity. He encourages teacher-led curricular discussions and student participation in school-wide decision-making processes."

Perkins is the current president of the Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals and the Alaska Council of School Administrators.

The Anchorage School Board officially recognized Principal Michael Perkins for his leadership and dedication to bettering curriculum, instruction and assessment in ASD schools.

Special Presentation on the Conference of Young Alaskans 2009

The second Conference of Young Alaskans was held in January 2009. Fifty-three delegates from all over Alaska, ages 16 to 25, attended the conference. The delegates were asked to reflect on the last fifty years of statehood and then look forward to the next fifty years. Vision statements, goals and action items were developed to reflect what the delegates would like Alaska to be in the future. Several delegates including David Nicolai, Josh Vandergriff, Amy Voss and Andrea

Sanders, presented an overview of the final conference report. They believed that the voice of young Alaskans is a powerful tool to shape the future of our state.

Several topics were discussed at the conference including Economy, Government and Global Relations; Education and Leadership; Energy; Natural Resources and the Environment; and Healthy Communities. The final report is a reflection of a broad range of individuals with a variety of different opinions.

Mr. Josh Vandergriff reviewed several items that conference delegates believed would improve education in the state. The first item was increasing collaboration between school districts and the community. They also encouraged increasing the opportunity for pre-school and improving college-readiness. Ms. Amy Voss testified to the importance of supporting language immersion programs. She explained that offering all students the opportunity to learn a second language will provide them with the capacity to function and compete in an increasingly global community. Ms. Andrea Sanders shared that the delegates at the conference came to the realization that they need to stop using the term "future leaders" and begin identifying themselves as leaders. In order for that to happen, other leaders, such as board members and school administrators, need to embrace the younger generation and welcome them into the decision making processes.

Mr. Steele voiced his appreciation for the report and encouraged the conference delegates to continue to be involved in their communities and to keep the pressure on people in leadership positions to not only be open to the ideas and issues important to our youth but also encouraging of youth participation in the process.

Ms. Comeau voiced her appreciation to the delegates for their passion and for sharing this overview of the conference.

RTI Presentation

Ms. Comeau explained that this presentation was to familiarize board members with how the district is really working toward intervening in a very systematic way for young people who are struggling in school and not achieving the desired success. Ms. Comeau introduced Ms. Jennifer Knutson, a School Psychologist with ASD and also an RTI consultant with the district. Ms. Knutson noted that she serves on the state RTI leadership

team where they are currently working on guidance and resources for district's intending to implement an RTI model.

Ms. Knutson explained that the Anchorage School District refers to RTI as Response to Instruction but that it is also referred to as Response to Intervention in the research literature. The district choose to use the Response to Instruction nomenclature to reflect the idea that we are increasing the intensity of instruction to meet the needs of all students within an RTI delivery model. The current work with the district on RTI is an outgrowth of the district's integrated system of standards-based curriculum, instruction and assessment. RTI is the practice of providing high quality instruction to all students, providing interventions matched to student needs, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about instruction, and applying child response data to important educational decisions. The goal of RTI is to help all students make progress toward and achieve state goals and grade-level expectations and, ultimately, to graduate from high school. Ms. Knutson briefly explained how the RTI service model helps to implement these practices more intentional and effectively to improve outcomes for all students. She also reviewed the components that must be implemented with fidelity and in a rigorous manner in order for RTI to work well. ASD has adopted a three-tiered approach to differentiate instruction for all students. Ms. Knutson explained the three-tiered model which incorporates increasing intensity of instruction matched to student needs. She noted that, while she specifically discussed the framework in reference to academics, this framework also applies to behavior and social skills.

Ms. Knutson reported that components of RTI have been implemented to varying degrees in the Anchorage School District over the last five years. One example is the adoption of a scientifically research-based core reading program with the support of reading coaches and teacher experts at the elementary level. RTI service delivery models can also be found in Reading First schools. Ms. Knutson indicated that, while there are good instructional practices occurring in all of the schools, there is a need to define and implement the RTI service delivery model more systematically in order to assure continuity of implementation districtwide. In an effort to meet this need an RTI leadership team was created in the summer of 2008. The goal of that team during the 2008-2009 school year was to discuss what the district's RTI service delivery model is and how current program and practices fit into the model. Ms. Knutson reviewed activities and efforts made over the course of the year supporting those goals. It takes time to fully implement an RTI service delivery model.

Mr. Steele asked about the schedule for implementation. Mr. Graff explained that the RTI leadership team is currently working with elementary schools to complete an inventory. The goal for next year is to have all of the elementary schools participate in that inventory. Once all of that information is gathered the district will identify where the needs are and begin to build capacity at the elementary level. It was also mentioned that it is critical to have an assessment or progress monitoring tool. There is an RFI out for that tool at the present time. The professional development piece must also be kept in mind. A huge part of RTI is making sure that everyone understands the practices that are effective and how to implement those practices. Mr. Graff noted that districts that have been successful with RTI have taken many years, sometimes decades, for it to be fully implemented K-12. The district is slowly building capacity at the elementary level, making sure that what is implemented is a natural progression. Ms. Gardner explained that the long-term implementation of RTI is part of the six-year plan. She also noted that principals are eager to move on this and want the tools, the materials, and the support. It is hoped that the stimulus money could help advance this effort at the pace that schools are ready to accept it.

Mr. Steiner indicated that this model seems particularly well-adapted to a standards-based reporting and assessment model. Ms. Knutson explained that the standards-based reporting really fits into the first tier of this model where a determination is being made as to whether students are achieving grade level expectations. The whole idea of using assessment data to inform instruction and decision-making is a cornerstone of RTI.

D. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Steiner congratulated Ms. Kathleen Plunkett, Ms. Jeannie Mackie on their recent elections and Ms. Crystal Kennedy and Mr. Jeff Friedman on their recent re-elections to the board. He also announced that Ms. Plunkett has been selected as the new Board Treasurer; Ms. Mackie has been selected as the new Board Clerk; and Mr. Steele has been selected as the new Board Vice-President. Mr. Steiner also thanked Mr. Friedman, outgoing president, for his support during the transition.

E. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

1. Student Advisory Board

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

2. Military Delegate

Col. Shutt thanked the board for allowing him to participate in the School Business Partnership's STAR Awards. Col. Shutt noted that the Interstate Military Compact was passed on April 15 and thanked the board and the administration for their support.

Col. Shutt reported that he had been working with the Office of the Secretary of Defense on the joint base compact. He indicated that he would like to have the opportunity to update the board and the administration on that venture at a future meeting

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

Mr. James Beverly recapped the last MECAC meeting. He reported that they had a presentation on the proposed math curriculum that will be recommended for adoption at an upcoming board meeting.

The MECAC wanted to make sure that the district was aware that there may be an influx of Sudanese population due to the conflict in Dafur. They hoped that the district would take appropriate action to prepare for those students.

Mr. Beverly indicated that they have also been working on the marketing and branding of MECAC. The goal is to make the public more aware that the committee is available to hear their concerns and to assist them.

Mr. Beverly noted that it was brought to the attention of the MECAC that some minority students are not being made aware of the importance of taking the PSAT for scholarships. The committee has also been made aware of a concern that some minority students are not being putting on the right tract to progress to college level. He noted that the committee will be looking into these concerns and will be bringing recommendations forward to address them if necessary.

In response to the possible influx of Sudanese students, Ms. Comeau noted that the district works very closely with Catholic Social

Services who are the Refuge and Immigrant Resettlement agency for the state of Alaska. They will be making a presentation to the board near the end of May.

Dr. Enid Silverstein noted that there is a short video welcoming Sudanese students into the Anchorage community on the English Language Learners page of the ASD website.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Evonne Beavers, parent of a student at Bartlett High School, voiced her concern that her daughter had not received an adequate education. She noted several issues and struggles that they faced over the years. Ms. Beavers explained that her daughter will be graduating from the district this year without reaching any of the academic goals they had for her. She felt that someone needed to be held accountable for the failure to educate her daughter.

Ms. Jennifer Ballapa spoke about her experience as a parent of a student who recently went through the lottery selection process for one of the district's special program. She reviewed how the process currently works and explained that her company would be able to develop a computerized lottery that would be fair, quick, efficient and secure. Ms. Ballapa reviewed the benefits that would be realized if the lottery were computerized. Ms. Comeau asked Ms. Ballapa to forward information to her in order to set up a meeting with the IT staff to discuss this issue further.

Several parents spoke on their concerns regarding combination classrooms at Birchwood ABC School. Mr. Carl Lundgren, speaking on behalf of the Birchwood Advisory Council, thanked the board for the opportunity to provide some historical background on Birchwood and how past ASD decisions have impacted the school's enrollment. He outlined several reasons why they felt that it is in the best interest of the district to support the ABC charter and its program which requires that each teacher teaches only one grade. It was his hope that the board would decide to allocate funds to support the ABC program. Mr. Lundgren explained that the ABC program is anchored around whole group instruction with one teacher at the front of the classroom teaching the entire class of students at the same time. He reviewed the key elements of the program. Mr. Lundgren explained how the opening of Mirror Lake Middle School in the late 1990s and Eagle Academy Charter School in

2005 has detrimentally impacted Birchwood ABC School. For the past several years Birchwood ABC has had to institute a combination class. While combination classes are not unique to ASD, they are to ABC schools. Mr. Lundgren explained the strain that combination classes put on the teachers, the academic program and the students. He believed that ASD actions brought this situation about and believed that ASD can help solve this by simply supporting the ABC program with its charter which requires full staffing of all grades. Parents are looking for continuity in their children's education and want assurance that there will be a sixth grade as their children progresses through the program.

Ms. Jennifer Frazier, a parent and teacher at Birchwood ABC, reviewed the school's high academic performance. She reviewed the program's elements of structured whole group learning, reading through phonics, emphasis on homework, parental involvement, citizenship, patriotism, and high academic standards which all contribute to the success of the program. She believed that the program loses its effectiveness when a combination classroom is required. It is impossible to teach whole group learning to two grades simultaneously. It is not the same as teaching a combination class at regular elementary school. Ms. Frazier believed that having a sixth grade teacher in place before the academic year begins will help sufficiently raise enrollment. The community interest is there. Parents are just tired of being in limbo every year wondering whether there will be a sixth grade or a combination class. Ms. Frazier noted that with the assistance of the board and the administration Birchwood ABC can again be made a proper K-6 program.

Ms. Valerie Goward noted that she has been involved as a parent with Birchwood ABC for the past 16 years. She explained how very critical parental involvement is to student success. The parents at Birchwood are very concerned with the uncertainty about planning their children's education. Their desire is to have a true ABC program for every year their children are at the school. Decisions were made beyond the control of the Birchwood ABC community which have pulled many students away from the school. Ms. Goward recalled testifying about the impact that these decisions related physical boundaries and grade configurations would have on the enrollment at Birchwood ABC. All of those concerns are now being realized. She believed that this is an opportunity to see how past decisions have negatively impacted Birchwood ABC and correct those decisions by finding a way to bring about a solution. Ms. Goward was confident that the board and the district can take advantage of Birchwood's excellent ABC program and provide a teacher for each grade level classroom as the school charter requires.

Mr. Ric Smith reported that he has taught sixth grade at Birchwood ABC for a number of years and that until Mirror Lake opened in 1998 he always had a partner to work with and plenty of students. Since that time he has taught sixth grade alone and in one instance taught a sixth grade combination class. He shared a number of solutions to the problem voiced by the other speakers.

Mr. Steiner asked Mr. Dan Reed, Birchwood ABC principal if he believed that the number of sixth graders is effected to a great extent by the question about whether there will be a sixth grade teacher or if students simply prefer to go to Mirror Lake Middle School. Mr. Reed explained that both of those items have an impact on enrollment. Mr. Steele felt that this is not a unique issue. All alternative programs have to recruit and all of them require parental transportation. Mr. Reed disagreed with Mr. Steele's assessment in that most alternative school students know that they will be attending that school through the sixth grade but Birchwood ABC loses so many students to Mirror Lake due to the neighborhood boundaries.

Ms. Kennedy wondered if the school believed that they could double the number of sixth graders, from nine this year to 18 next year, if there was an assurance that there would be a dedicated sixth grade teacher. Mr. Reed explained that it was not just the sixth grade that is impacted by this uncertainty. Families who might otherwise enroll their younger students have to weigh future uncertainty into their decisions as well. Mr. Reed noted that efforts are already being made to advertise and recruit students for next year. He reported that Ms. Comeau had indicated that Birchwood ABC could have a special lottery in late May which should also help.

Mr. Lundgren asked the board to look at the enrollment numbers long-term. He explained that the school is really seeking help to build a track record. They believed that having the assurance that there will be one teacher for each classroom will build enrollment over time. Eagle River is growing and there is overcrowding in a number of grade schools in the area. The Birchwood ABC community asked the board to demonstrate their commitment to this very successful program.

G. CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda is attached. **All attachments referred to in memoranda Recommendations are on file in the Superintendent's office.**

1. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Special Meeting - April 13, 2009
 - b. Special Meeting - April 18, 2009

2. ASD Memorandum #304 - Naming of the Computer Lab at Chugiak High School for Edward Loescher

It is the Superintendent's recommendation that the School Board approve the request of the Chugiak High School staff to name the school computer lab in the school library, "The Ed Loescher Computer Lab" in honor of his long-time service and leadership for the students, staff, and families at Chugiak High School.

3. ASD Memorandum #284 - Resolution in Support of National Teacher Day, May 5, 2009

The Administration recommends the School Board adopt the attached resolution in support of National Teacher Day, May 5, 2009.

4. ASD Memorandum #297 - Resolution in Support of National School Nurses Day, May 6, 2009

The Administration recommends the Anchorage School Board adopt the attached resolution supporting National School Nurse Day as May 6, 2009.

5. ASD Memorandum #301 - District Health Insurance Plan for 2009-2010

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to convert the District's medical insurance coverage from a fully-insured minimum premium medical plan to a self-insured plan. It is also the recommendation of the Administration to sign a contract with our current medical insurance provider, Aetna, for third party administration services for medical, dental and COBRA, and with Symetra Life Insurance Company to provide all stop loss coverage needed under the plan. The vision plan through VSP will also be renewed under a two-year rate guarantee through June 30, 2011.

It is further recommended that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to establish an internal service fund to maintain the financial records of the medical self-insurance program and to transfer remaining funds accumulated in the General Fund

from the current medical plan as of June 30, 2009 to the Medical Self-Insurance Fund.

6. ASD Memorandum #302 - Acceptance of Sub Recipient Grant Award Through APU Educational Innovations Grant to Alaska Native Cultural Charter School.

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a sub-recipient grant of \$16,500 from Alaska Pacific University (APU) for the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School (ANCCS).

7. ASD Memorandum #296 - Award of Contract: Klatt Elementary School Boiler Replacement

It is the Administration's recommendation the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to award a contract for the Klatt Elementary School Boiler Replacement Project, to the lowest bidder, Consolidated Contracting and Engineering for Base Bid B in the amount of \$197,777, and Assignment B for \$12,877 for a total award price of \$210,654.

8. ASD Memorandum #292 - School Board Policy Revision: Section 536.3 Anchorage School District 403 (b) Defined Contribution Plan (Second Reading)

It is the Policy Committee's recommendation that the School Board approve on Second Reading revisions to Anchorage School Board Policy 536.3, Anchorage School District 403(b) Defined Contribution Plan. (Attachment A).

9. ASD Memorandum #293 - School Board Policy Addition: Section 780 Records Management (Second Reading)

It is the Policy Committee's recommendation that the School Board approve on Second Reading the proposed addition to Anchorage School Board Policy, Section 780 on Records Management. (Attachment A)

10. ASD Memorandum #294 - School Board Policy Revision: Section 345 the School's Responsibility to Homeless Children (Second Reading)

It is the Policy Committee's recommendation that the School Board approve on Second Reading revisions to ASD School Board Policy 345, The School's Responsibility to Homeless Children. (Attachment A)

11. ASD Memorandum #295 - School Board Policy Revision: Section 332.2 Lottery Procedures - Open enrollment (Second Reading)

It is the Policy Committee's recommendation that the School Board approve on Second Reading a revision to Anchorage School Board Policy 332.2, Lottery Procedures - Open Enrollment. (Attachment A).

12. ASD Memorandum # 282 - Personnel Report

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

Mr. Friedman requested that ASD Memorandum #304, Naming of the Computer Lab at Chugiak High School for Edward Loesch, be pulled for discussion.

Mr. Steiner noted that people have signed up to testify on ASD Memorandum #332, Rental Fees for Aquarian Charter School, which is on the Superintendent's Report.

Ms. Comeau asked that ASD Memorandum #268, Student Nutrition Presentation, and ASD Memorandum #300, Federal Stimulus Funds Update, be pulled from the Superintendent's Report for discussion.

ACTION:

Moved by: Jeff Friedman
Seconded by: Tim Steele

To approve the Minutes of the Special Meetings of April 13, 2009, and April 18, 2009 and Memoranda #284, #297, #301, #302, #296, #292, #293, #294, #295, and #282 with addendum.

The motion to approve the listed items on the Consent Agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

The following resolutions, which were passed on Consent Agenda, were read into the record:

ASD Memorandum # 284 - Resolution in Support of National Teachers Day, May 5, 2009

WHEREAS, Anchorage School District teachers have made the municipality's public schools great places to learn; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage School District's 3,500 teachers work to open the minds of more than 48,000 students to ideas, knowledge and dreams; and contribute every day to the district's mission to educate all students for success in life; and

WHEREAS, teachers keep American democracy alive by laying the foundation for good citizenship; and

WHEREAS, teachers fill many roles, as listeners, explorers, role models, motivators and mentors; and

WHEREAS, teachers continue to influence us long after our school days are only memories;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage School Board designates May 5, 2009, as National Teacher Day and urges all citizens of Anchorage to show their appreciation of our teachers for their contribution to lifelong learning in the Anchorage School District.

ASD Memorandum #297 - Resolution in Support of Nurses Day, May 6, 2009

WHEREAS, school nursing has been contributing to the lives of students, their families and the community for many years in the Anchorage School District; and

WHEREAS, the physical, mental and emotional well-being of children directly impacts student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage School District's school nurses, health treatment nurses, and substitute nurses provide health assessment, testing and services to more than 48,000 students; and

WHEREAS, school nurses continually promote healthy lifestyles and provide health and safety education for students and staff; and

WHEREAS, National School Nurses Day highlights the role and scope of activities school nurses provide to their communities; and

WHEREAS, the health, safety and well-being of students is of primary importance to the Anchorage School District;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage School Board designates May 6, 2009, as National School Nurses Day and urges all people of Anchorage to show their appreciation of our school nurses for their contribution to the health and wellbeing of the District's students.

ASD Memorandum # 304 - Naming of the Computer Lab at Chugiak High School for Edward Loescher

It is the Superintendent's recommendation that the School Board approve the request of the Chugiak High School staff to name the school computer lab in the school library, "The Ed Loescher Computer Lab" in honor of his long-time service and leadership for the students, staff, and families at Chugiak High School.

ACTION:

Moved by: Jeff Friedman
Seconded by: Crystal Kennedy

To approve the request of the Chugiak High School staff to name the school computer lab in the school library, "The Ed Loescher Computer Lab" in honor of his long-time service and leadership for the students, staff, and families at Chugiak High School.

Ms. Comeau noted that this is a heartfelt request from the staff and the community at Chugiak. This is a difficult time for the Loescher family but it is a real honor for the administration to recommend this to the board. Ms. Comeau urged support for this recommendation. She explained that the administration will be working with the family and with the school to get an appropriate plaque and picture for the school.

Mr. Steiner noted that the school staff had initiated this request. Mr. Loescher was a very valued staff member who will be greatly missed.

Mr. Loescher's son, Chris, explained that his father never wanted recognition for his actions he simply valued hard work and being able to help people. Mr. Chris Loescher believed that it was appropriate to honor his father in this way. Chugiak High School, the students and staff, were very important to him. He offered his appreciation to Chugiak High School administration and staff for this wonderful recognition.

Mr. Steele read the letter that was sent from the Chugiak High School staff to Superintendent Comeau making this request.

VOTE:

Ayes: Friedman, Higgins,
Kennedy, Mackie,
Plunkett, Steele, Steiner

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

The meeting went into recess at 8:25 p.m. and was called back to order at 8:37 p.m.

H. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

I. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. ASD Memorandum #268 - Student Nutrition Presentation

Dr. Brent Rock, Director Student Nutrition, presented a video overview of the Anchorage School District Student Nutrition program, highlighting student participation, healthy choice menu items, fiscal responsibility, and the impact of sound nutrition on overall student performance.

Dr. Rock reviewed the current pricing structure for student meals. He noted that the district now has more free and reduced meals than paid meals. He reviewed the number of students who are eligible to participate in the breakfast and lunch programs and the how eligibility for the free and reduced meal program is determined. There are currently 46,072 ASD students who are able to participate in school meal programs. Of that number, 36.3 percent are eligible for free and reduced price meals. There are an increasing number of students participating in the both the breakfast and lunch programs.

Dr. Rock noted that research has shown that students who eat school meals provided through the national school lunch program and the school breakfast program are more likely to be at a healthy weight. In addition, students who eat school breakfasts have greater gains in standardized test scores and show improvements in math, reading, and vocabulary scores. School meals contribute to the success of our students every day.

Ms. Mackie asked whether the district has ever explored the option of purchasing milk from our local dairy. Dr. Rock reported that the Matanuska Dairy used to win the contract but that they had been outbid and lost the contract a few years ago. The dairy ran into financial difficulties and has subsequently gone out of business.

Mr. Steele asked about the amount of General Fund monies the district had used to supplement the Food Service Fund. Ms. Comeau clarified that \$1.125 million had been used in last year's budget. She explained that as costs are analyzed adjustments may need to be made.

2. ASD Memorandum #300 - Federal Stimulus Funds Update

Discussion on this item was postponed to the May 4, 2009 School Board meeting. Mr. Steiner indicated that he had written some thoughts regarding how to best approach the discussion. He encouraged the board to think about things that can be put into place immediately versus doing something deep; whether to do something transitory versus lasting; whether it is supplemental to what the district is currently doing or if it is transformational; whether to train staff in existing methods or to reimage programs; whether to invest in existing staff or to pilot new positions; and whether to target instructional things or infrastructural things. He also noted the importance of staff and public involvement as decisions are being made on how to utilize the funds.

3. ASD Memorandum #281 - Project Status Report

This is a report of activities and project status changes in Major Capital Projects during the period of March 26, 2009 through April 15, 2009.

4. ASD Memorandum #332 - Rental Fees for Aquarian Charter School

This is a report detailing the establishment of proposed building rental fees for Aquarian Charter School. The proposed fees were established in order to bring consistency to current practice and conditions related to the rental of buildings by Anchorage School District charter schools.

Ms. Comeau explained that this report was generated as a result of a discussion during the budget presentations in January and February where the board directed the administration to come back with a recommendation addressing possible rental fees for Aquarian Charter

School in order to be more equitable with other district charter schools. It is important to understand that this report is the administration's suggested approach based on a great deal of research. This is obviously not good news to Aquarian Charter School because they have put a lot of time, energy, volunteer effort and money into fixing up this school facility. Ms. Comeau was clear that this is not an action item at this time. This is strictly an information memo which will hopefully generate some discussion that will assist the administration in forming a recommendation for action.

Ms. Adele Alderman, chair of the Aquarian APC, shared some of the concerns that the APC has with the proposed rental fee assessments. She noted that the assessment of rental fees will severely impact the ability of the principal and the staff to carry out the charter as it is written. The APC would be forced to look at several amendments to the charter which would alter the education that the students receive. Ms. Alderman questioned the equity with which the fees had been determined. She noted that the building had at one point been determined to be uninhabitable by the district for district programs and services. Aquarian has had hundreds of parent volunteer hours put into improving the facility. Ms. Alderman felt that a rental fee assessment at this level will be devastating to the students at Aquarian.

Mr. Matthew Fagnani, past-chair of the Aquarian APC, briefly reviewed the history of the rental issue related to their facility. He recalled that Aquarian has asked ASD almost yearly about going to the legislature to seek additional funding which could be added to the charter school formula for charter schools to pay rent on their facilities. The goal was to solve the problem for all charter schools. He felt that ASD has been reluctant to take up these issues and assumed that the reason for that was the concern that supporting additional charter school funding could result in a decrease in other district funding. Mr. Fagnani also voiced concern regarding the expedited nature of this meeting. This analysis was released to the Aquarian APC only last Friday. The analysis indicated a number that was higher than any number previously discussed. Mr. Fagnani also believed that in order to truly address equity all programs should be included in this review. He used the example of the Boys and Girls Club facility and the low cost of rent for that program. Mr. Fagnani felt that a committee should be established through the superintendent's office that could look for a solution for all charter schools.

Ms. Susan Forbes, Aquarian Charter School principal, indicated that Aquarian desperately needs time to consider the impact that these rental fees would have on their program. She requested that school board members visit the school before making any decisions.

Ms. Comeau noted that the administration did testify in support of the legislation this year on charter schools. In fact the issue was one of the board's legislative priorities this year. She also noted that the Woodland Park facility used by the Boys and Girls Club is not owned or managed by the Anchorage School District. It was turned over to the city many years ago.

Ms. Comeau reminded the speakers that school facilities that have Immersion Programs and other special programs within them came about when there was space available in the buildings. The new alternative programs are only in schools that already exist. In terms of the timing of this discussion, Ms. Comeau noted that there have been a number of conversations involving the Aquarian community regarding this issue. One of the reasons that this issue is being discussed at this time is to hear from Aquarian before a final recommendation is brought forward.

Mr. Vakalis reminded board members that an amount had been put in the budget for rent for Aquarian during the budget review in January and February. He recalled that the figure that had been used as a placeholder at that time was around \$12,000 per month. Mr. Vakalis reviewed the considerations that were used to try to determine a fee amount that would allow for future growth and would allow Aquarian to phase in an amount that was more equitable to what the other charter schools are paying. These considerations included the improvements made to the facility over the years by Aquarian; the fair market value of similar space; the equity of this rental fee as compared to other charter schools; the fact that this would be a new budgetary requirement for Aquarian and they will need time to adjust to the expense; and the fact that when comparing charter school leases each is different in terms of what services and fees are included in the charges.

Mr. Vakalis briefly reviewed the lease agreements of the various charter schools and what is included in those leases. There is a great variance in the square footage of the charter schools and what their individual leases cover. He also reviewed the total facility cost per square foot per month for each of the charter schools and how that

figure was calculated. In addition, he explained the range of rental rates for existing facilities.

Mr. Vakalis noted that efforts were made to give credit for the monies that have been spent on the facility over the years by Aquarian. This amounted to approximately \$189,058 since 2003 based on available information provided by Aquarian as well as the district. Mr. Vakalis further reported that the district spent \$220,027 on maintenance items within that facility during the same time period. The figure from the school does not include volunteer time. However, all charter schools depend on parent volunteers and it would be very difficult to compare the volunteer hours in each of the schools.

Mr. Vakalis reviewed the process that was used to determine the suggested lease cost of \$0.50 per square foot. That amount, along with Aquarian's other facility costs, results in a total facility cost of \$1.14 per square foot per month. Even that amount does not come close to the current lease cost at the other charter schools.

The next question that was addressed was factoring in an increase over time. Mr. Vakalis reviewed the variety of methods that can be used to factor in lease increases over time. Many of the current charter school leases use the CPI to determine annual lease increases. Mr. Vakalis explained how that calculation works. He noted that he had used a CPI factor of 3 percent to determine the annual lease increases for the purposes of this proposal. He noted that the base amount of \$0.50 per square foot in year one would be used to determine year two and three. The base amount would then reset to \$0.80 per square foot in year four which would bring the cost more closely in line with the other charter schools.

Mr. Steiner asked whether the lease amounts noted for existing Class A, B, and C buildings took into consideration the requirements for meeting a school standard. Mr. Vakalis explained the E1 occupancy standards and that there are very few spaces available in the community that meet that code.

Mr. Friedman wondered whether the district, as rent receiving landlords, would be taking over all responsibility for any building repairs or maintenance. Mr. Vakalis indicated that the district would be taking over those responsibilities and that those items had been factored into the cost. Ms. Kennedy wondered about the cost of snow removal. Mr. Vakalis noted that most leases provide snow removal

services. The district is currently providing snow removal for Aquarian.

Mr. Friedman asked about Aquarian's current total annual budget. Ms. Forbes indicated that it was approximately \$2.7 million.

Ms. Kennedy wondered if the cost of liability insurance will change based on the lease arrangement. Mr. Vakalis briefly reviewed how liability insurance costs are typically determined. Ms. Comeau explained that charter schools have always incurred the cost of their own liability insurance. That decision was determined by board policy many years ago at the very beginning of establishing charter schools in the district. Ms. Bensler clarified that the liability insurance amounts reflected in the documents before the board are policies that cover their equipment, supplies and people within the facility. They are not policies on their facilities.

Mr. Higgins wondered what operational impact this action might have on Aquarian. Ms. Comeau explained that it is no different than when the district as a whole has to cut the budget. Aquarian will have to assess their goals and their program needs to determine how to best balance their budget based on their revenue assumptions and expenditures. Ms. Comeau noted that adding a lease expense will have an impact on the program at Aquarian but that this action is being suggested to address the equity issue. All of the other charter schools have had to pay their facility leases out of their operating money since their inception. They have had to prioritize and have not necessarily been able to have all of the things in their programs that they would have liked because of their lease costs.

Mr. Steele recalled that this issue has come up every year and that there have been many discussions about the inequity and the need to get the state to do something with regard to charter school facilities. He reviewed the many efforts that have been made to address this through the legislative process. One of the bottlenecks has been that the municipality's bond counsel has said that the district could not bond for charter schools. Mr. Steele reviewed the process that he went through to help him determine what action he would like to see taken. He believed that the suggested lease proposal is a fair calculation.

Ms. Kennedy noted that this issue had been brought to the forefront during the budget review with the recognition that the district would need to put a substantial amount of money into the Aquarian facility in

order to keep it up to code. The decision needed to be made that either this was a facility that was worth salvaging and putting the money into or it wasn't. She reviewed the different options that had been tossed around over the years including getting rid of the building all together. Ms. Kennedy did not see the fairness issue so much as one of charging Aquarian rent simply because other charter schools have to pay rent but rather it was recognizing that the district was putting a lot of money into a facility for the sole advantage of one charter school.

Ms. Kennedy voiced her belief that the district is on the right track in terms of trying to come up with a formula to determine a fair way to access a rent. She also suggested the possibility of charging the school for the maintenance costs related to their facility. Ms. Plunkett believed that charging an amortized amount for rent that Aquarian would be able to budget for is a better idea than charging for maintenance costs. She asked about the costs for the outstanding work that currently needs to be completed at Aquarian. Mr. Vakalis reported that the cost of the necessary sprinkler system is approximately \$1.3 million and the bathroom repairs are just under \$100,000.

Mr. Friedman indicated his belief that the methodology that was used to determine the suggested lease fees was good. He voiced his concern with the amount as it will equate to about a seven percent cut to the Aquarian budget. The number that had been used as a placeholder during budget discussions in January and February equates to about a five percent cut which the school should have at least been looking at and beginning to prepare for. He believed that the suggested figure is too big a jump in one year and was unsure that it fully accounts for the sweat equity factor. He noted that the volunteer efforts at Aquarian account for more than just the typical classroom volunteer time in that significant work has been done to their actual facility. He did believe that this is the direction the district needs to take but felt that it was a little too fast in terms of implementation in the next budget year.

Ms. Kennedy voiced her willingness to discuss the timing issue of implementing this lease. She noted that she would be willing to look at a much smaller implementation this coming year or even delaying implementation to the 2010-2011 school year. Mr. Friedman believed that the fees should be implemented this coming year but that the initial cost should not be as high as has been suggested.

Mr. Steiner noted that he would be interested in knowing the fairness of the suggested lease rates compared to other district schools, not just the other charter schools. He acknowledged that the district bonded for the other district schools but getting some comparison as to the relative cost of the suggested lease would be useful.

Mr. Steiner wondered what the district should do with the funds generated by the suggested lease. One thing that he had considered was that the funds could be added back into the charter school funding mix and distributed out to all of the charter schools. Mr. Friedman noted that, should the decision be made to take that direction, the funds should be redistributed to all charter schools, including Aquarian, on a per-pupil basis.

Mr. Steele was concerned that the district had moved out of that building because it was determined to be unfit. In the meantime a lot of money and sweat equity has been put into the building. Mr. Steele felt that the district needs to either bring the building up to some kind of standard or get rid of the building. It seemed to him like these efforts were a means of trying to find a way to justify the expenditures that need to be put into this facility.

Ms. Kennedy agreed that one of the big questions is whether the district is going to upgrade a building that has already been determined to be inadequate or if it should just be surplus. If the facility is worth keeping and it is necessary to put additional money into bringing it up to code then charging rent could be the funding source for those maintenance costs.

Ms. Kennedy asked if there has been a facility audit on the Aquarian building lately. Ms. Comeau explained that it is a forty-three year old temporary building made up of a number of relocatables. Muldoon was exactly the same type of facility and it was demolished a number of years ago to build the new school at that site. Mr. Vakalis reported that they have looked at different systems over the past few years but they have not done a complete analysis of the building.

Mr. Steiner asked whether the lease cost would cover the amortization of the necessary maintenance work. Mr. Vakalis noted that he did not have that information but that it could be determined.

In response to a question from Mr. Steele it was explained that the option of the non-profit purchasing a building with operating funds

had been looked into. The district had received a legal opinion on that issue indicating that the charter school can not use the operating dollars that the district gives them to pay for a building.

Ms. Comeau recalled how Aquarian came to be located in their current facility. She explained that Aquarian was spread out among three different locations at the same time that construction was completed on the new Northern Lights Elementary School and the old facility had been surplused. The former superintendent and the Aquarian APC chair cut a deal for Aquarian to use the facility for one year. It was very clear that the arrangement was for one year at that time when the district had determined that the building was not usable and they were not willing to plough lots of money into it. The intention was for the facility to be a temporary location until Aquarian was able to secure another location.

Ms. Comeau noted that it is a compelling issue for the district to decide whether to continue to invest money into the facility and at what point that investment is no longer a good use of taxpayer money. At some point a determination has to be made as to how much longer the district can continue to pour money into this very old building.

Mr. Friedman indicated that this is an issue that has been dragging on and that he would rather hear a commitment from the school that they have plans to move to another facility within a set time frame and then leave the situation as it is until that time when the facility would be surplused. He felt that that might be a better alternative than charging rent.

Ms. Kennedy wondered whether the board could request a facility assessment on the building before any final decision is made. Mr. Vakalis noted that a facility assessment is possible but that it would take time to complete. He explained that it would also be disruptive to complete a thorough facility assessment.

Mr. Steiner asked about the time frame within which the existing suggested upgrades need to be made in order to meet codes to continue to operate. Mr. Vakalis noted that since the bonds did not pass the district is trying to get dispensation to allow the district to renovate the bathrooms without having to upgrade the sprinkler system. The bonds were going to cover the fire sprinkler system and the district's maintenance funds were going to cover the upgrades to the bathrooms. Mr. Vakalis did not know whether the district would

receive that dispensation but noted that it would be a major exception if it is allowed.

Mr. Steele indicated that he would rather see the \$1.3 million needed to upgrade the sprinkler system at the Aquarian facility used for some other project. He also voiced his concern about what might be found during a thorough facility assessment.

Mr. Steiner felt that it was necessary to find a solution for this issue. He believed that the district should not put additional money into the facility unless the charter school covers the cost. For that reason he asked for an amortization schedule for the necessary maintenance work.

In response to a question from Mr. Steiner it was explained that bond counsel had revised their stance on bonding for charter school housing. The administration was able to explain to the new bond counsel that these are public schools, they are covered by the school district and they have to have approval by the school board. This bond counsel has said that the district can, in fact, bond for charter schools. Mr. Vakalis added that while bond counsel said that the district can bond for charter schools they also said that the district could not recoup the cost of those bonds by charging the charter school. Mr. Friedman indicated his belief that that finding does not preclude the district from charging a rent that is somewhat equal to that same amount to give the taxpayers that relief.

Ms. Comeau asked what the reaction of the Aquarian community would be to giving them notice that they will need to relocate within a specific time frame. She did not feel that this discussion had brought the administration any closer to making a recommendation regarding this issue. On one hand the discussion has indicated that it is time to make a decision to put the school on notice that they will not be able to occupy the building after a specific date because it has been determined that it is not a good use of taxpayer money. On the other hand the issue of charging rent and what that amount should be has been discussed.

Mr. Steiner suggested that the Aquarian APC be allowed time to consider this discussion and share their viewpoints with the superintendent. Ms. Comeau requested that administration be allowed to postpone making a recommendation on this issue to allow feedback from Aquarian. Mr. Steiner felt that the biggest urgency, to

the extent that there is urgency, is the effect that the decision will have on Aquarian's budget.

5. ASD Memorandum #285 - Monthly Update Student Information System - Zangle

The project timeline indicates that all major benchmarks are on schedule.

6. ASD Memorandum #283 - Conflict of Interest - Third Quarter Report FY 2008-2009

The attached listing of employee Conflict of Interest Waiver and Disclosure actions is forwarded in accordance with School Board Policy Section 725.44. This information is provided as the third quarter report for the FY 2008-2009 school year.

7. ASD Memorandum #279 - Facility Contract Modification Report and Completed Projects for the Month of March 2009

The monthly Facility Contract Modification Report for the month of March 2009 is attached. There are no exceptions to report this month.

8. ASD Memorandum #277 - Out-of-District Travel - Third Quarter Report FY 2008-2009

The attached Travel Report summarizes the travel taken by District employees and School Board members during the third quarter of FY 2008-2009 for both in-state and out-of-state travel.

9. ASD Memorandum #278 - Operating Budget Transfers March Monthly Report FY 2008-2009

The attached report of budget transfers for the time period of March 2009 that were processed in the Integrated Financial Accounting System (IFAS) includes the following:

Attachment A: Report of Budget Transfers Over \$5,000 – Report for individual transfers of more than \$5,000, which includes summarized justifications.

The schedule of monthly budget transfers processed for the month of March 2009 and related information are available in the Budget Department office for review by the School Board and members of the public.

10. ASD Memorandum #280 – Treasurer’s Report/Financial Recap: March 31, 2009

The attached report consists of three parts: the Graphic Overview, the Treasurer’s Report and the Financial Recap. The Treasurer’s Report and the Financial Recap are presented on a monthly basis. The report includes year-to-date information as of March 31, 2009.

I. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

J. COMMUNICATIONS & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Friedman announced that the Policy Committee is scheduled to meet at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, April 30.

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION – PERSONNEL/FINANCE/NEGOTIATIONS LITIGATION

L. ADJOURNMENT

The Regular Meeting of April 27, 2009 was adjourned by unanimous consent at 11:08 p.m.

John Steiner, President

Jeannie Mackie, Clerk

Johanna Lee, Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approve