

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD

REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 11, 1999

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, January 11, 1999 at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President Harriet Drummond presided.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE

Board Members Present: Harriet Drummond, Peggy Robinson-Wilson, Dave Werdal, Kathi Gillespie, Bettye Davis, Rita Holthouse and Debbie Ossiander.

Others Present: Bob Christal, Carol Comeau, Janet Stokesbary, Mark Pasier, Pat McDowell, Gail Opalinski, Arge Jeffery, Fred Stofflet, Robyn Rehmann, Norm Holthouse, Teresa Johnson, Russ Ament, Ed Conyers, Steve Kalmes, Ed Blahous, Lee Wilson, Larry Wiget, Bill Mikawa, Hans Bernard, Mary Tanghe, the press and other interested people.

The School Board opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Harriet Drummond announced the scheduled up-coming meetings.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

D. AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

1. ASD Memorandum #182 – Cathy Therrien, ABC's Of Homeless: A Guide For Parents

Cathy Therrien, mother of two Willowcrest Elementary School students, has more than survived homelessness; she has taken on the role of spokesperson for other homeless parents within and outside of the Anchorage School District.

Cathy and her children became homeless late in the summer of 1997. In the following year, she spoke at District schools, PTA meetings, Title I Central Parent Advisory Council, and was

interviewed in print, on radio and TV. After having had to search out resources for herself and her children while homeless, Cathy has created "The ABC's of Homelessness: A Guide for Parents," a just-published wallet-size guide. This past November, Cathy was keynote speaker at the annual conference of the National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

The School Board recognized Cathy Therrien for her contribution to homeless families in Anchorage and for her courage and generosity in representing homeless families locally and nationally.

E. PRESENTATION

1. Challenger Learning Center Of Alaska

Bill Popp, Challenger Learning Center of Alaska, gave a brief presentation outlining the Challenger Learning Center of Alaska which will be located next to Kenai High School in Kenai, Alaska. This facility will offer students across Alaska a hands-on simulation of the space missions. This center will be part of a national network of 50 learning centers operating in the United States, Canada and England that has been established in memory of the Challenger Shuttle Astronauts. The center will use simulated space missions to give students across Alaska a meaningful experience with math, science and technology. By giving students the opportunity to be successful with these disciplines, these students will open their minds to the endless possibilities that are available to them in pursuing careers in science and technology.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

MaryAm House, Romig Middle School parent, stated how much she appreciates the fact that Sophia Masewicz is the Principal of Romig Middle School. Ms. House explained that Ms. Masewicz listened to her concerns, intervened on her behalf, and watched her son excel to become an "A" student in all his classes. Ms. House further stated that her son will continue to experience the benefits in the years to come of the supportive educational environment of his time in Romig Middle School. Ms. House thanked Ms. Masewicz for making a difference in the lives of students at Romig Middle School.

Robert Hayes commented on the Russian Jack fire and urged the Board to make sure all the fire alarms in all the schools are safe and in good running condition.

Theresa Obermeyer commented on the new Justice appointed to the Alaska Supreme Court. Dr. Obermeyer also commented on the District's employee medical program.

Charles McKee commented on technology, the use of it and the censorship of it.

G. CONSENT AGENDA

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

1. Approval Of Minutes:

- a. Special Meeting – December 14, 1998

2. ASD Memorandum #160 – Multimedia Design Course Approval

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve Multimedia Design as an elective art course for high school students in grades 9-12.

3. ASD Memorandum #161 – High School Science Frameworks – Biology I, Chemistry I, Geology I, Physics I

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the attached "High School Science Frameworks - Biology I, Chemistry I, Geology I, Physics I." It is further recommended that the changes and additions in the "Science As A Process" section near the beginning of the attachment be approved as amended for inclusion in the "Science Frameworks - Grades 7-9" document.

4. ASD Memorandum #167 – Contract Adjustment: Walden Pond Charter School Enrollment Increase For FY 1999-2000

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve an adjustment to the contract for the Walden Pond Charter School for FY 1999-2000 to allow for an enrollment of 210 students in grades 7-12 in non-district housing.

5. ASD Memorandum #168 – Waiver Request: School Board Policy 533.7 – Drug-Free Workplace For The Village Charter School

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board consider the request of the Academic Policy Committee of the Village Charter School to waive School Board Policy 533.7, Drug Free Workplace, as shown on Attachment A.

6. ASD Memorandum #169 – Acceptance Of Continuation Grant Award: Alaska Highway Safety Planning Grant

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to accept a continuation grant award from the Department of Public Safety, Alaska Highway Safety Planning Agency, in the amount of \$78,559.

7. ASD Memorandum #170 – Acceptance Of Continuation Grant Award: Safe And Drug-Free Schools Peer Safety Training Center Continuation Grant

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to accept a continuation grant from the Alaska Highway Safety Planning Agency for peer education, in the amount of \$65,268.

8. ASD Memorandum #171 – Appeal Of Hazardous Transportation Committee Decision

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board consider the appeal of the request by Rabbit Creek PTA for school bus service in the Hamilton Park Subdivision, which was denied by the Hazardous Transportation Committee.

9. ASD Memorandum #162 – Personnel Report

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

The following items were removed from the Consent Agenda: ASD Memoranda #160, #161, #167, #168 and #171.

ACTION:

Moved by Debbie Ossiander
seconded by Kathi Gillespie

to approve the Minutes of the
Special Meeting of December 14,
1998; Memorandum #169;
Memorandum #170 and
Memorandum #162.

VOTE:

Ayes: Ossiander, Werdal,
Robinson-Wilson, Drummond,
Gillespie, Holthouse, Davis

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED.

ASD Memorandum #160 – Multimedia Design Course Approval

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve Multimedia Design as an elective art course for high school students in grades 9-12.

ACTION:

Moved by Debbie Ossiander
seconded by Kathi Gillespie

to approve Memorandum #160.

Theresa Obermeyer praised Myrna Clark, Art Supervisor, on her many talents and her hard work and dedication on behalf of the students of the Anchorage School District.

VOTE:

Ayes: Ossiander, Werdal,
Robinson-Wilson, Drummond,
Gillespie, Holthouse, Davis

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED.

ASD Memorandum #161 – High School Science Frameworks – Biology I, Chemistry I, Geology I, Physics I

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the attached "High School Science Frameworks - Biology I, Chemistry I, Geology I, Physics I." It is further recommended that the changes and additions in the "Science As A Process" section near the beginning of the attachment be approved as amended for inclusion in the "Science Frameworks - Grades 7-9" document.

ACTION:

Moved by Peggy Robinson-Wilson to approve Memorandum #161.
seconded by Kathi Gillespie

Valerie Haney, Science Curriculum Committee member, commented that the design theory was omitted from the Diversity of Life portion of the frameworks and that it is important to provide information to students that they need to become critical thinkers. Ms. Haney suggested that the theory of design be included in the teaching of biology.

Timothy Jackson, Service High School parent, commented that the frameworks do not leave room for design theory and by not allowing alternative explanations or inquiries is inconsistent and contradictory to the basis of the frameworks and it stifles critical thinking in students.

Chris Gooley, Steller graduate, commented that he has questioned the possibility that we are created by a higher intelligence and encouraged the Board to reassess this section of the frameworks and look to at the theory of evolution by intelligence design.

Theresa Obermeyer commented that it is worrisome that more people do not come forward to work on curriculum committees and commended the professionals in the science program noting that she both appreciates and admires them.

Lori Gillam, chemistry teacher and member of the Science Curriculum Committee, commented that serving on the committee was both frustrating and incredibly rewarding. This frameworks creates a vision of what students need to know and that it is also important to listen to what everyone has to say. Ms. Gillam further commented that the goal is to help students become globally competitive in this area and urged the Board to approve the Administration's recommendation.

Janet Powell thanked all the committees who worked hard to put these frameworks together. Ms. Powell did express concern that the frameworks do not include the intelligence of being theory and suggested that rather than including it as a mandate it could be included as an option for teachers to use in the classroom if they choose to.

Ken Rosentrater commented that creationism should not be excluded from the classroom and encouraged the Board to apply this standard in the frameworks.

Debbie Ossiander suggested that an emphasis be made that science is a unifying force in the world with a common language.

Donna York noted that is probably a different way of saying much the same thing in the document.

Debbie Ossiander expressed concern with #6 on page 6 (Data can be organized in tables, graphs, and flow charts to identify the relationships among the data.) and noted that she would encourage a strong expectation that students can grasp analyzed data.

Gail Raymond explained that this was discussed during teacher training and now students are asked to collect data and analyze it themselves. Students also need to understand the appropriate way to collect data.

Debbie Ossiander noted that it is her desire to clearly state in the document that science does not dictate technology; that technology is only a tool.

Kathi Gillespie commented that a lot of colleges assume the in-coming students will use technology to express data and inquired if there is some way to strengthen the bond in computer labs to help express some of the information in the science labs.

Debbie Ossiander noted that some recognition is needed showing there is a certain terminology with the discipline being used and to have the terminology to access the discipline. Ms. Ossiander would like to see specific terms students should recognize and become familiar with and also experiments students should be aware of. Ms. Ossiander would also like recognition included with the classic experiments that are being done.

Debbie Ossiander inquired as to the guidance given to biology teachers in addressing the Diversity of Life area and how they share the expectations of the School District when covering this topic.

Gail Raymond responded that the National Academy of Science book is used as a guide when discussing the theory of evolution. Ms. Raymond noted that a copy of this book will be placed in the School Board office.

Hans Bernard commented that a copy of this document was reviewed by the Student Advisory Board and many of the comments from the group echoed the document as a whole; i.e., the use of science as a process method; hands-on experience; learning through doing instead of being shown; students figuring things out on their own; and experiments that would apply to other courses.

Debbie Ossiander commented that the section Guiding Principles and Recommendations talks about the doing and the experimenting and the engaging. Ms. Ossiander would like some reassurance that older students who are capable of abstract thought will not be held back and noted that there is a lot of theory that can be grasped by reading textbooks. Ms. Ossiander would like to see a sentence referring to this in the document.

Debbie Ossiander noted that in #3 under Guiding Principles (Comprehensive) that she hated to read about the emphasizing of depth rather than breadth and noted that there are a lot of facts that need to be memorized in life and in science and in math to get further ahead. Ms. Ossiander expressed concern that when topics are decreased, complexity is also decreased. Ms. Ossiander further noted that it takes someone who is extremely good to teach to all spectrums when there are only just a few classes and inquired how this problem is going to be handled.

Donna York explained that it is very difficult to teach a topic in depth if the intention is to finish the book. If too many topics are covered, students really have a lot to accomplish and there's not a lot of breadth in taking a certain topic and spending a good deal of time on it. By looking at the topics covered under these areas, the list was narrowed down to subjects students are able to understand.

Gail Raymond noted that it does take training and maybe not everyone knows intuitively how to teach to all spectrums when there are only a few classes. However, we work continually with teachers to make sure that

everyone is challenged and gains as much as possible as to what's happening in the classroom and not be held back.

Fred Stofflet commented the District tries to meet not only the diversity of the classrooms in the high school science classes but the needs of all students (including challenging the advanced students) throughout all grade levels.

Donna York noted that the courses that are being taught have been taught for many years and the committee tried to write them in a way that would update them in the standards; nothing has been dramatically changed.

ACTION:

Moved by Debbie Ossiander
seconded by Kathi Gillespie

that the Science Frameworks be Tabled until the document reflects the discussion just held at tonight's meeting. There is no objection to proceeding with a material review.

Debbie Ossiander commented that when reading the document and listening to this dialog between the Board members and science staff, that the words in the document do not match the dialog and she would like the highlights of this dialog incorporated into the document.

Peggy Robinson-Wilson clarified that what comes back to the Board will be a reflection of what has been discussed this evening and that when this document does come back to the Board it will be for Board discussion only.

VOTE:

Ayes: Ossiander, Robinson-Wilson
Drummond, Gillespie

Nays: Werdal, Holthouse, Davis

MOTION PASSED.

ASD Memorandum #167 – Contract Adjustment: Walden Pond Charter School Enrollment Increase For FY 1999-2000

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve an adjustment to the contract for the Walden Pond Charter School for FY 1999-2000 to allow for an enrollment of 210 students in grades 7-12 in non-district housing.

ACTION:

Moved by Debbie Ossiander to approve Memorandum #167.
seconded by Bettye Davis

The speaker who signed up to address this memorandum was not present.

Craig Naylor, Walden Pond Headmaster, urged the Board to approve the Administration's recommendation to allow for an enrollment increase for Walden Pond Charter School for FY 1999-2000.

VOTE:

Ayes: Ossiander, Werdal,
Robinson-Wilson, Drummond,
Gillespie, Holthouse, Davis

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED.

ASD Memorandum #168 – Waiver Request: School Board Policy 533.7 –
Drug-Free Workplace For The Village Charter School

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board consider the request of the Academic Policy Committee of the Village Charter School to waive School Board Policy 533.7, Drug Free Workplace, as shown on Attachment A.

ACTION:

Moved by Debbie Ossiander to replace the word “consider”
seconded by Kathi Gillespie with the word approve in the
Recommendation of the
memorandum and to approve
Memorandum #168.

Kenneth Brewster, Village Charter School, commented that even though the Viking Hall does have a liquor dispensing license he is not adverse to having his children attend the Village Charter School if it is relocated to the Viking Hall. Mr. Brewster encouraged the Board to approve the waiver request of School Board Policy 533.7.

Bjarne Hansen, Village Charter School, brought pictures of the Viking Hall for Board members to review noting that a full waiver was not what they set out to get. Mr. Hansen explained that measures are in place that students will not have access to any alcoholic beverages while attending school there if the Village Charter School relocates to the Viking Hall. Mr. Hansen stated that the Village Charter's lease has been extended at the Greek Orthodox Church and that hopefully the Village Charter School will remain there for the rest of the school year. However, relocating to the Viking Hall would allow them to expand their program.

Peggy Robinson-Wilson noted that when Mr. Hansen mentioned that this memorandum went beyond what they were requesting that perhaps the motion is too broad and a compromise could be made with an amendment.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by Peggy Robinson-Wilson
seconded by Debbie Ossiander

to add at the end of the
Recommendation: as it applies
to the Viking Hall as long as it
has a club license.

Peggy Robinson-Wilson explained that this motion is based on the fact that the Viking Hall has a club license and it is not a package store.

Rita Holthouse commented that she is in favor of doing whatever is necessary for the Village Charter School to be able to use the Viking Hall as a facility for their school.

VOTE:

Ayes: Ossiander, Werdal,
Robinson-Wilson, Drummond,
Gillespie, Holthouse, Davis

Nays: None

AMENDMENT PASSED.

Kathi Gillespie inquired if this change will necessitate approving a new contract.

Carol Comeau explained that an amendment can be added (administratively) to the current contract.

VOTE:

Ayes: Ossiander, Werdal,
Robinson-Wilson, Drummond,
Gillespie, Holthouse, Davis

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED AS AMENDED.

ASD Memorandum #171 - Appeal Of Hazardous Transportation Committee Decision

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board consider the appeal of the request by Rabbit Creek PTA for school bus service in the Hamilton Park Subdivision, which was denied by the Hazardous Transportation Committee.

ACTION:

Moved by Debbie Ossiander
seconded by Rita Holthouse

that the Board uphold the Hazardous Transportation Committee's recommendation to deny the request by Rabbit Creek PTA for school bus service in the Hamilton Park Subdivision.

Amy Nielsen, Rabbit Creek PTA President, commented that the Hamilton Park Subdivision lies between the Old and New Seward Highway. Many students who walk to school are using alternative routes because of the unsafe walking conditions and the presence of moose along the walking route. Ms. Nielsen listed a number of reasons why school bus service should be provided for those students residing in the Hamilton Park Subdivision: The walking route corridor is narrow, secluded and long. There is no outlet if moose are on the path. The neighborhood is aging

and the streets are narrow with no sidewalks. Lack of timely snow removal makes it difficult for kids to walk uphill to the designated pathway. Students living in this area have a higher number of tardies and absences than other students at Rabbit Creek. The walkway between Hamilton Park and the foot bridge which crosses the Seward highway has fences on both sides. Students must pass through this narrow corridor with no outlet to reach the school. Children cannot be seen while they are on the walkway and there is no escape route for them if they encounter animals. Some students walk on DeArmoun Road on top of the snow berms to get to school. Many of the streetlights are burned out. Ms. Nielsen encouraged the Board to provide a single bus for winter transportation which would allow safe delivery of Rabbit Creek students who live in the Hamilton Park Subdivision.

Kathi Gillespie asked what the cost would be to provide this service.

Steve Kalmes responded that a winter bus would cost \$25,000 and that approximately 50 percent of that cost would be reimbursed. Mr. Kalmes explained that there are many areas in the District that are equally difficult to walk.

Debbie Ossiander commented that it took her a long time to believe that the Hazardous Transportation Committee extensively studies the requests that come to them and urged support for their recommendation.

Harriet Drummond commented that it's very important to follow the Hazardous Transportation Committee's criteria for establishing hazardous routes and also urged the Board to uphold their recommendation.

Rita Holthouse commented that she would like to see a safer route for the students in the Hamilton Park Subdivision and urged support for a winter bus for those students.

Betty Davis commented that she has a lot of respect for the Hazardous Transportation Committee and noted that some exceptions have been made over the years. Ms. Davis further commented that as a member of the State Board of Education, she will try to get the distance for walking students (1.5 miles) reduced. Ms. Davis also noted that this is a very long corridor that the children must walk unsupervised to school.

VOTE:

Ayes: Ossiander, Werdal,
Robinson-Wilson, Drummond

Nays: Gillespie, Holthouse, Davis
MOTION PASSED.

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. ASD Memorandum #163 – End-Of-Month Membership Summary for November 30, 1998

The end-of-month membership report for November 30, 1998 is attached. The total active enrollment at the end of November was 49,370, an increase of 828 students over the November 26, 1997 total of 48,542.

I. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

J. COMMUNICATIONS & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

Rita Holthouse inquired if the Administration plans to seek a legal opinion on the subject of closing Central Middle School without public notice or a public hearing.

Bob Christal replied that the Administration should have a legal opinion regarding Central Middle School within two weeks.

Dave Werdal requested that regardless of the legal opinion, he would like to have a public hearing on the possibility of closing Central Middle School.

Bob Christal recommended that the Board receive the legal opinion first and then proceed as to how to go forward to the community.

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION – (PERSONNEL/FINANCE/NEGOTIATIONS/LITIGATION)

L. ADJOURNMENT

The Regular Meeting of January 11, 1999 was adjourned by unanimous consent at 10:15 p.m.

Harriet Drummond, President

Dave Werdal, Clerk

Date Minutes Approved