

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD

SPECIAL MEETING OF FEBRUARY 23, 2000

The Anchorage School Board met in Special Session on Wednesday, February 23, 2000 at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President Peggy Robinson presided.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE

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

Others Present: Bob Christal, Patricia McRae, Gail Opalinski, Pat McDowell, Fred Stofflet, Robyn Rehmann, Norm Holthouse, Russ Ament, Ed Conyers, Bill Mikawa, Ellen Montague, Stan Syta, Roger Fiedler, Larry Wiget, Ray Amsden, Sidney Trevethan, Mary Tanghe, the press and other interested people.

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

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Peggy Robinson announced the scheduled up-coming meetings.

Bob Christal noted that in recognition of National School Board Recognition Month, Board members received an ASD coffee mug filled with flowers and a recognition plaque. On behalf of the Anchorage School District, Mr. Christal thanked the Board for all of their efforts and service for the 50,000 students in the District.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

D. AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

ASD Memorandum #210 – Bilingual Program Award Winners

Anchorage School District's multilingual student population reflects the rich diversity of our community. The District's bilingual education program is designed to assist these students in the attainment of language and academic proficiency while maintaining enthusiasm and respect for their primary languages.

The success of this program has not been overlooked. Recently, the Alaska Association for Bilingual Education honored the Anchorage School District with two outstanding awards.

William Tyson Elementary School was selected as the Outstanding Bilingual Education Program of the Year. Selection was based on strong academic instruction, primary language support and extensive parental training and involvement. Credit for this award is shared by principal John Kito, the Tyson staff, students and parents.

Margot Pomar, bilingual tutor at Central Middle School of Science, was awarded the distinction of Outstanding Bilingual Educator of the Year. She is known for remarkable fluency, cultural sensitivity and awareness in the Spanish language, as well as an ability to impart enthusiasm for learning to her students.

Dedicated teachers and effective bilingual programs translate into success for Anchorage School District students. The School Board recognized these award-winning educators for their commitment to bilingual education.

ASD Memorandum #213 – Students Prepare For Robotics Competition

In late March a team of students from East and Chugiak High Schools will travel to San Jose for an exciting competition. They'll leave Alaska with enthusiasm, motivation, and most importantly - Frostbyte.

Frostbyte is a student-designed and constructed robot that will take part in the FIRST Robotics Competition. This national battle of the robots was created to energize students about science and technology. Frostbyte will be put through the paces against other remote-controlled robots brought to life by over 380 high school teams nationwide which take part in this competition.

Student teams are given six weeks to complete their robot, as well as a 30-second animation video to introduce their creation. This year marks the first time a team from Alaska has participated in this event. The Anchorage School District contingent, around 30 strong, is known as the "49th Infantry Icebreakers." They have been working on the robot each day after school and on weekends, in their makeshift laboratory in the Northway Mall.

The School Board recognized these inventive students, as well as their dedicated teachers, Mike Fenster from East High School, and Don Brown from Chugiak High School.

E. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

Student Advisory

(No report.) Bob Christal announced that Hans Bernard received the Spirit of Youth Award noting that Mr. Bernard is a truly outstanding youth in the Anchorage community. Mr. Bernard will be traveling to Juneau this week to participate in the AASB Leadership Conference and Legislative Fly-In.

Military Delegate

(No Report.)

M.E.C.C.

Sidney Trevethan, M.E.C.C. Vice-Chair, noted that another public input meeting will be held at Mt. View Elementary on March 16th at 7 p.m.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Vickie McCubbin introduced four First Grade students from Abbott Loop Elementary who read *I Can Read With My Eyes Shut*, by Dr. Seuss, in recognition of Read Across America Day (March 2nd).

Robert Hayes commented on school safety and the issue of his whistle blowing of school safety and fire alarm problems. Mr. Hayes noted that there are some problems that need to be looked into and he is hopeful that things have changed and improved over the last two years.

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 – January 18, 2000
- b. Special Meeting – January 24, 2000
- c. Special Meeting – January 31, 2000 (4:00 p.m.)
- d. Special Meeting – January 31, 2000 (4:30 p.m.)
- e. Special Meeting – January 31, 2000 (6:30 p.m.)
- f. Special Meeting – February 3, 2000
- g. Special Meeting – February 7, 2000

2. ASD Memorandum #196 – Revision To School Board Policy Section 841.13: Political Candidacy And Public Offices (Employees Running For School Board) (Second Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on Second Reading the revisions to School Board Policy 841.13, Political Candidacy and Public Offices, as shown on Attachment A.

3. ASD Memorandum #199 – Revision To School Board Policy Section 731.5: Pest Management (Second Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on Second Reading the Revision/Addition To School Board Policy Section 731.5 - Pest Management, Attachment A. It is further recommended that the School Board approve the proposed Anchorage School District Pest Control Plan, Attachment B.

4. ASD Memorandum #200 – Prior Approval Of Discretionary Grant: Foreign Language Assistance Program

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to apply for a grant from the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual and Minority Languages Affairs.

5. ASD Memorandum #201 – Prior Approval Of Discretionary Grant: Prevention Coordinators In Middle Schools

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to apply for a grant for middle level violence prevention and Developmental Asset-building, under a competition through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

6. ASD Memorandum #203 – Acceptance Of Continuation Grant: Civitas International Exchange Program

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a continuation grant award from The Center for Civic Education in the amount of \$24,785, to designate Anchorage as a primary site for the Civitas International Civic Education Exchange Program for the year 2000.

7. ASD Memorandum #211 – Acceptance Of Grant Award: Compu-Teach Partnership Grant Program

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a partnership grant award for educational software from Compu-Teach, in the amount of \$5,895.

8. ASD Memorandum #202 – Concept Approval: Mandarin Chinese Immersion Alternative Program

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board provide concept approval for the establishment of a Mandarin Chinese Immersion Program at the elementary level.

9. ASD Memorandum #212 – Construction Management Recommendation For New South Anchorage Area High School

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to utilize the traditional Design/Bid/Build option following a two-step process for construction on the New South Anchorage Area High School.

10. ASD Memorandum #205 – Personnel Report

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

11. ASD Memorandum #216 – Budget Transfer: Aquarian Charter School

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve a Budget Transfer up to \$19,185 for salary and benefits for the Aquarian Charter School to allow them to establish a full-time permanent position of a school custodian.

12. ASD Memorandum #110 – Anchorage School District Capital Improvement Program Legislative Requests (Revised)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the Anchorage School District's Capital Improvement Program Legislative Request. The information will be made available to Legislators and other interested groups for funding consideration.

The following items were removed from the Consent Agenda: ASD Memoranda #202 and #110.

ACTION:

Moved by Debbie Ossiander
seconded by Kathi Gillespie

to approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 18, 2000; the Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 24, 2000; the Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 31, 2000 (4:00 p.m.); the Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 31, 2000 (4:30 p.m.); the Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 31, 2000 (6:30 p.m.); the Minutes of the Special Meeting of February 3, 2000; the Minutes of the Special Meeting of February 7, 2000; Memorandum #196; Memorandum #199; Memorandum #200; Memorandum #201; Memorandum #203; Memorandum #211; Memorandum #212; Memorandum #205; and Memorandum #216.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED.

ASD Memorandum #202 – Concept Approval: Mandarin Chinese Immersion Alternative Program

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board provide concept approval for the establishment of a Mandarin Chinese Immersion Program at the elementary level.

ACTION:

Moved by Debbie Ossiander
seconded by Kathi Gillespie

to approve Memorandum #202.

Fred Stofflet explained that this proposal is similar to the proposal this group brought forward in October relative to a potential charter school. This group decided to go back and look at creating an alternative program within a regular school as opposed to a charter school. The elementary principals are aware that this program is being considered to ascertain if there is an interest in this program. There has been no identification or commitment of a host school at this time. As a school-within-a-school, the sponsoring group would have to work very closely with the principal and the PTA at whichever school would be considered and a survey would need to be completed to ascertain the interest of the community and the staff.

Bob Christal commented that the greatest strength of the District over the years is the choice of programs; however, the entire issue of space and staffing is a very big issue and consideration. The Administration will explore with this group its potential but the program will not be arbitrarily forced on any school. It is critical to work very closely with the staff and the PTA at an individual school.

Mary Thompson, originator of the Mandarin immersion idea, stated that they have a very solid list of supporters for this program noting they have worked very long and hard to get to this point. The group is very aware of the challenges and problems ahead. Ms. Thompson commented that the Mandarin program would be a very great addition to Anchorage noting that Mandarin is a wise choice for a language in Alaska due in part to its proximity in the Pacific Rim. This program would also offer an alternative to parents wanting a second language for their child. Ms. Thompson urged the Board to approve the concept approval and to take the next steps to find a home for the new program.

Katherine Sullivan commented that there are 52 active members in the local chapter of *Families With Children From China* who are very much interested in this Chinese alternative program. This type of program would be an important enrichment activity for all children and would certainly add another link to the already successful immersion program in the District. Ms. Sullivan, on behalf of *the Families With Children From China*, encouraged the Board to approve the recommendation for the concept approval of the Mandarin Chinese immersion program.

Steve McNicholas commented that he has traveled extensively and feels that it is very important for the children in Anchorage to have the option of a Mandarin immersion program. Being part of the Pacific Rim, Anchorage is becoming a hub of multiculturalism and this program will only enhance and enrich the lives of our children. Mr.

McNicholas urged the Board to support this recommendation and to go forward with this alternative program.

Rita Holthouse inquired if there are teachers in the Anchorage area who are certified to teach Mandarin Chinese.

Mary Thompson responded that so far two Mandarin speaking teachers have been found; one is certified and the other one is almost certified. Ms. Thompson stated that she did not think it would be a problem in locating teachers for this program.

Kathi Gillespie inquired about the hours of operation of the program (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) and how that will fit in the current teachers' contract.

Judy Hurlburt explained that the program's length of day is needed because of the amount of information kids will need to learn in both languages. This is an area that needs to be worked out with AEA and it is hoped that the program will be able to work with aides, flexible schedules and parents to lengthen the school day.

Debbie Ossiander explained that one of the challenges faced with a school-within-a-school program is that as the classes go up in age, the numbers decline which creates difficulty in staffing if a class size is considerably smaller than other classes. It is also difficult to bring people into the middle grades in immersion classes.

Bob Christal commented that the timeline for this program is on a very fast track and money has not been budgeted. This needs to be worked through very carefully with the community. It is also important that these types of ideas are allowed to grow as opposed to being forced on a particular community (issues need to be worked out in a cooperative manner). Long-term staffing is also a critical issue with immersion programs. It is important to note that at this point the Administration is recommending a concept approval only; everything else still needs to be worked through.

Kathi Gillespie expressed concerns with the District's language immersion programs and the problems of integrating them into a school program.

Patricia McRae stated that she believes that the group that is bringing this program forward believes this is a program for any child in the District. Any child can be successful in an immersion program and every child can be successful in a second language program.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by Debbie Ossiander
seconded by Kathi Gillespie

that the Administration re-examine the elementary immersion program delivery.

Debbie Ossiander explained that she was a member of the parent group at Chugiak Elementary that advocated for a Spanish immersion program in that neighborhood school. Ms. Ossiander further explained that she is an advocate of foreign language but believes that the way the format of an immersion program is delivered as a school-within-a-school program is not the best way to deal with this issue. Ms. Ossiander stated that she would rather see it isolated as a school-within-a-school program by itself. There are also concerns that an immersion program is discriminatory in some areas. In this particular program, Ms. Ossiander noted that she could not support a school-within-a-school program where the kids would be going to school longer and would have smaller classes. The idea is great; however, the current immersion model does not work very well. Ms. Ossiander urged the Board to support this amendment to re-examine the entire elementary immersion program at this time.

Dave Werdal noted that he would like to see the District take a fresh look and make a few tweaks and changes to make the entire immersion program a bit better.

Bettye Davis stated that the amendment is not necessary; tonight's recommendation is for concept approval only. The Administration has already expressed their concerns to make sure the program would work. The amendment should be a motion by itself and not attached to the recommendation.

Fred Stofflet explained that if this recommendation is approved, the committee will be asked to formalize a committee and to move forward. This is only a concept approval for recommendation this evening (the specifics of the program would come at a later point).

Rita Holthouse stated that the people who are promoting this program are not going to want to repeat the same problems as other programs have experienced and noted that she would like this a stand-alone motion.

Bob Christal explained that this is the initial step of a multi-step process in the establishment of the program. The initiators cannot move to the second step of the process until this begins.

The maker of the amendment, along with the second, withdrew the amendment.

Kathi Gillespie suggested that the format of the Legislative Requests document be changed so that it is easier to read and to understand by the legislators receiving it in Juneau (the columns can be confusing in trying to understand what is happening). Ms. Gillespie suggested that the items that are a year old not be included in the report to the legislators and it would also be helpful for each school to have their specific phases so noted for the specific year the phase will be addressed. Ms. Gillespie further noted that it would also help if a comment was added as to how this information was compiled so that the legislators have a better understanding of the public process used in the preparation of this document.

VOTE:

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

Nays: NONE

MOTION PASSED.

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

ASD Memorandum #206 – Facility Project Report And Change Order Report For The Month Of January 2000

The monthly Facility Project Report Update and Change Order Report for the month of January 2000 is attached. There are no exceptions to report this month.

Debbie Ossiander inquired if Creekside Park can be finished with the remaining funds.

Ray Amsden responded that at this point, there should be enough funds to finish Creekside Park.

Bob Christal noted that a report will be coming to the Board on the status of both the Creekside Park and the Baxter projects.

ASD Memorandum #208 – End-Of-Month Membership Summary For January 2000

The end-of-month membership report for January 31, 2000 is attached. The total active enrollment at the end of January was 49,058, a decrease of 260 students from the January 29, 1999 total of 49,318. Table 1 compares the membership on January 31, 2000 with the totals from January 29, 1999.

Peggy Robinson requested that the capacity for the New Muldoon Elementary School be changed to reflect the capacity at the present time and then change it again to reflect the capacity of the building in September. This information would be helpful so that the capacity is known for the current size of the building.

ASD Memorandum #209 – Second Quarter Suspension/Weapons/
Expulsion Report – 1999-2000

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

Overall suspensions decreased at the elementary level when comparing incidents from the second quarter of the 1998-99 school year. Elementary schools also showed a decrease in fighting but an increase in disobedience, other weapons, and harassment. Suspensions in middle schools have also decreased from last year in the areas of fighting, harassment, drugs/alcohol/tobacco, and disobedience, but had a slight increase in other weapons. Suspensions at the high school level have also decreased in fighting, weapons, smoking, and disobedience, but showed an increase in harassment and drugs/alcohol.

Debbie Ossiander inquired about the increase in the high school drug/alcohol incidences and asked if there were any thoughts as to what is causing this increase.

Pat McDowell responded that the deans and principals are also noticing an increase in this area as well. It could be that school officials are just being more vigilant or there may be more students under the influence while on school property. Ms. McDowell noted that staff works very closely with APD in keeping abreast of what is out on the street.

Rita Holthouse requested information as to the school/program the two students (mentioned on page 6 who were found to have causality) have been referred to.

Debbie Ossiander requested further information and clarification on the number of threats and assaults to staff for the second quarter.

Kathi Gillespie noted that one of the bills in the legislature has to do with school safety and suggested that this would be a good memo to give to Fred Dyson.

I. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

J. COMMUNICATIONS & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

Rita Holthouse requested a brief summary on the status of the transfer of the military schools to the District.

Peggy Robinson announced that the Regular School Board Meeting scheduled for March 27th has been rescheduled to March 20th because the week of March 27th is spring break week. The subject for the Work Session previously scheduled for March 20th (School Calendar and Starting Times Report) will be discussed under the Superintendent's Report at the March 20th meeting.

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

L. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Meeting of February 23, 2000 was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:45 p.m.

Peggy Robinson, President

Rita Holthouse, Clerk

Date Minutes Approved