

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #86 (2000-0001)

October 9, 2000

TO: SCHOOL BOARD
FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
SUBJECT: HAZARDOUS TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board considers the appeal of the decision of the Hazardous Transportation Committee (HTC) denial for transportation to and from Trailside Elementary that was requested by the residents of Birch Run and Zodiac Manor Subdivisions.

PERTINENT FACTS:

Section 14.09.010(c) of the Compiled School Laws of the State of Alaska provides that the School Board of a District shall designate as hazardous, those routes that cannot be safely traveled by children who are not served on regular school bus routes. Students who live more than 1.5 miles from school are provided regular school bus transportation. It further states that the School Board shall provide transportation for pupils on routes designated as hazardous, with the cost to be equally shared by the School District and the Alaska State Department of Education.

A Hazardous Transportation Committee (HTC), in existence since 1966, was organized for the purpose of making recommendations to the Anchorage School Board regarding designation of hazardous routes and other recommendations concerning hazardous transportation. The Committee consists of the following individuals:

ASD Director of Transportation - Chairperson
ASD Elementary Supervisor (1)
ASD Demographic and GIS Manager
ASD Risk Manager
ASD Transportation Planner
Anchorage Council PTA Representatives (1-Anchorage, 1-Eagle River)
Municipal Traffic Engineer
Municipal Police Department Traffic Division

**Municipal Public Works Department – Street Maintenance Section
State of Alaska, Dept. of Transportation Road Maintenance
State of Alaska, Dept. of Transportation Regional Traffic Engineer**

Last spring, the HTC had several requests for hazardous transportation of students attending Trailside Elementary that live in Zodiac Manor. The issue was added to the agenda of the February HTC meeting. During the meeting Kathy Tharaldsen, Engineering Technician, MOA Traffic Engineering stated there was an emergency vehicle and walkway easement between Sahalee Subdivision and Zodiac Manor. Steve Kalmes, ASD Transportation Director, indicated that there were dedicated walkway easements between Sahalee Subdivision and Trailside Elementary that were not yet constructed. In addition, a walkway was planned to connect the Trailside school site with the existing walkway along Abbott Road near the AWWU water tank currently under construction.

Tom Bibeau made a motion that the HTC table the request for school bus service until the construction of the walkways was complete. Kathy Tharaldsen seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

Construction of the walkway on the east side of the AWWU water tank and the two walkways connecting Sahalee Subdivision with Trailside Elementary were completed in late August. Steve Kalmes, Kathy Tharaldsen, and Ron Martindale, Traffic Operations Engineer, Alaska DOTPF inspected the walkways and walked several routes between Trailside Elementary and Zodiac Manor on August 21, 2000.

The request for school bus service was put on the HTC agenda for the September 14, 2000 HTC meeting. Parents who had contacted the Transportation Department were notified of the meeting. However, Transportation Department staff failed to notify the parents who had made the first request last February. Several parents from the Zodiac Manor and Birch Run subdivisions attended the September meeting to testify as to the need for school bus service to Trailside Elementary for students living in these subdivisions. Some of the parents in attendance learned of the meeting in an article published in the Anchorage Daily News. Julie Cheverton, spokesperson for the Zodiac Manor group, asked that the HTC revise their guidelines because she did not feel that the guidelines truly met the safety issues of their subdivision. Their concerns included the distance, almost 1.5 miles from school, lack of lighting, narrow streets (especially in winter), lack of traffic signs, as well as moose and bear in the vicinity. Dianne Prince expressed the same concerns. Pam Butcher, a parent from the Birch Run subdivision, also stated that the bike path that runs parallel with Abbott Road is often too icy in the spring for students to walk to school.

Several of the parents in attendance expressed concern stating they believed that the Committee should have more latitude in making decisions in regards to the HTC Guidelines.

Kathy Tharaldsen explained that parents might investigate the possibility of requesting the Road Improvement District to install lighting in the area. Parents were not satisfied with this option because of the timeframe of up to a year to get the lights installed. Kay Pedersen explained that this neighborhood's situation was not unique and she suggested that parents get together to form carpools and walking groups. Dwight Smith also emphasized that in many neighborhoods, within the mile and one half of a school, parents needed to take responsibility for getting their children to school or finding alternatives. Jerry Reed made a motion to provide bus service for the Zodiac Manor subdivision. Tom Bibeau seconded the motion. The motion failed, 0-9.

The following is attached: A letter from Mathew Cronin to Steve Kalmes, Director of Transportation Department, requesting bus service (Attachment A), a letter from Dianne and Devery Prince to the Hazardous Transportation Committee requesting transportation to Trailside Elementary (Attachment B), a letter from Dennis Hinnah to Steve Kalmes, Director of Transportation Department (Attachment C), a letter from Steve Kalmes, Director of Transportation Department, to parents informing them of a meeting held at Trailside Elementary on September 27, 2000 (Attachment D), and a letter stating that the appeal of the HTC decision was on the agenda of the October 9, 2000, School Board meeting (Attachment E).

CC/GV/SK/vw

Attachments

Prepared by: Steve Kalmes, Director, Transportation Services

Approved by: George Vakalis, Assistant Superintendent, Support Services