

**MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING OF APRIL 21, 2003**

The Anchorage School Board met in Special Session Monday, April 21, 2003, at 6:35 p.m. in the Board Room, at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President Jake Metcalfe presided.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE

Board Members Present: Jake Metcalfe, Tim Steele, Rita Holthouse, Debbie Ossiander, Mary Marks, Harriet Drummond and John Steiner.

Others Present: Crystal Kennedy, Macon Roberts, Jeff Freidman, Carol Comeau, Janet Stokesbary, Jan Christensen, Mike Henry, George Vakalis, Gail Opalinski, Patricia McRae, Larry Wiget, Jeff Wood, Debbie Bogart, Eric Tollefeson, Jerry Sjolander, Mary Kay Sambo, Stan Syta, Ray Amsden, Pam Chenier Corey Rennell, Robin Siegfried, the press, and other interested people.

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

B. MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mary Marks introduced her parents, Mayor Mike Case, First Lady Pauline Case, and acknowledged former Commissioner Shirley Holloway and Peggy Robinson.

D. AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS

1. ASD Memorandum #218 - Student Library Bookmark Winners

In the Spring of 2002, Anchorage School librarians organized a publicity campaign for the district using the American Library Association's *@your library*<sup>TM</sup> national campaign. The campaign was created in conjunction with the adoption of the Library/Informational Literacy Standards by the Anchorage School Board in May 2002. The purpose of the campaign was to promote events held at local schools and to remind the public about the vital and unique role of the school library.

District librarians planned and implemented a public relations

campaign during the 2002-2003 school year and decided upon "A place for You @your library™" theme. In the fall of 2002, a bookmark design contest was held for all students in grades K-12. The contest invited students to use their imagination and any ideas that relate to reading, literacy, the love of the library and the selected theme.

The winning designs for the bookmarks were reproduced and distributed to district schools during National Library Week, April 14-20. Congratulations to the following students for being named this year's library bookmark winners:

Sarah Nicholson -- Eagle River Elementary School, Corina M. Garrison -- Lake Hood Elementary School, Ellie Millen -- Romig Middle School, Crystal Hughes -- Chugiak High School.

Jan Christensen read the memorandum and Jake Metcalfe presented the awards to the recipients.

2. ASD Memorandum #260 - Student Art Competition Winners

Wyndham Publications, Inc. of Kirkland Washington, is in the process of producing a new edition of their publication entitled, "*Alaska: North to the Future, Vol II.*"

In the Fall of 2002, Wyndham approached Anchorage School District staff and asked whether students might be interested in participating in an art cover competition for its new publication. District staff was delighted with the opportunity and invited all interested secondary students to submit artwork, with the top prize being \$500. Overall, more than 125 students submitted artwork.

Congratulations to the following students for being one of the "Top 5" entrants: Amanda Patton -- Bartlett High School, Ryan Gautier -- Bartlett High School, Hannah Taylor -- Chugiak High School, Paola Terry -- East High School, and congratulations to Megan Hatch of Service High School for being the winner of Wyndham's student art cover contest.

Mike Henry read the memorandum while Jake Metcalfe presented the awards to the recipients.

Jake Metcalfe recognized the presence of former School Board Members, Sharon Richards and Theresa Obermeyer.

E. SUMMARY OF 2002-2003 YEAR, Jake Metcalfe, President

School Board President, Jake Metcalfe, summarized the 2002-2003 school year. Mr. Metcalfe stated that this has been a busy year. There were 32 Regular or Special School Board meetings. The additional seven Work Sessions involved the Curriculum Audit, Profiles of Performance, the Highland Tech Charter School, Bilingual, Indian Education and Migrant Education, the Eagle Academy Charter School, and School Board Goals. There were various committee meetings. The Policy Committee was very busy working on the revision of the 400's section and the Legislative Committee did a great job of putting together a list of legislative priorities. The Legislative Committee spent a good deal of time getting to know our legislators. This has been very valuable in our efforts to retain full funding for education. Board has faced a number of issues, including the Denali Elementary and Wendler Middle School relocation and transportation. The Denali relocation to JFK Elementary has worked out well and Mr. Metcalfe thanked the military for being so hospitable. The Phi Delta Kappa Curriculum Audit report was very helpful and the Board has accepted it as a blueprint for how to make Anchorage one of the best places in Alaska for students to get a good education. The Profiles of Performance came out after that, and we were able to get a snapshot of how we are doing at the different schools. We have been able to use the Profiles along with the Curriculum Audit to plan for how we are going to meet adequate yearly progress. Those reports lead into the School Board goals for 2002-2003. The Board set a goal that all students would show growth and that we would help students get ready for the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam. The Board faced other serious issues such as the Muldoon Area Middle School Site; approval of concept designs for Chugach Optional and Polaris, and new high school boundaries for South Anchorage. Mr. Metcalfe added that the Board is very proud of developing a new facility for the Crossroads program. The students now have a nice site. The Continuation School started at the end of January of this year. It has been a goal of the Board for a while, which gives expelled students an opportunity to stay in school. The "Police Officers in the Schools" program will make the schools safer and will help lead into the direction of less expulsions. The Board also approved the Emergency Preparedness Plan. We were successful in passing two of the three school bond proposals and were successful in getting dialogue started in the community for the need of a new administration facility. Mr. Metcalfe commented that this was all possible by the hard work by Board members and staff.

Mr. Metcalfe stated that it is hard to believe a year has gone by. Issues come up and you find you are not able to get through all the goals you set. Mr. Metcalfe added that he was extremely lucky to be trained and mentored by three outstanding Board members who are here tonight for their last meeting and has enjoyed working with them immensely. They put their heart and soul into making this a better place for our students to get a good education. Mr. Metcalfe thanked them for what they have done for him and the District.

Corey Rennell thanked The Board and Superintendent Carol Comeau for having him here for the past two years. Mr. Rennell stated that it is sad to see the three Board members leave. They epitomize what it means to have good public service and what school boards should be like. Mr. Rennell thanked the Board for sending him on the legislative fly-ins to Juneau as well as the first National School Board Conference and the 2020 Conference. Mr. Rennell also appreciated being a part of the School Start Times Task Force and the Controversial Issues Review Committee. Mr. Rennell enjoyed helping to work through the Lifetime Personal Fitness Issue, and the Alaska Studies requirement and the amount of unity he felt it brought to the community and the kind of vision it had to unite urban and rural Alaska. Mr. Rennell noticed that the Board focused on advocating for educating the students in the entire state - not just Anchorage. Mr. Rennell stated that because of this position he had opportunities to observe legislation and public policy in action and he wished every student could have this possibility. Mr. Rennell added that Lorett Nabong will be the new student advisory board representative.

Corey Rennell mentioned a word or phrase to describe each Board member: Harriet Drummond - for doing what's right; Rita Holthouse - integrity; John Steiner - perspicacious ; Jake Metcalfe, compassionate; Carol Comeau - inspirational; Tim Steele - fatherly; Mary Marks - sincerity; and Debbie Ossiander - mentor. Mr. Rennell stated that he appreciated the time and the service and compassion they have showed him and it has been an honor to serve with them.

Carol Comeau presented gold pan to Corey and recited the inscription, which is a quote from Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe in 1803.

“Some men are born for the public nature by fitting them for the service of the human race on a broad scale has stamped them with the evidence of her destination and their duty.” - Thomas Jefferson

Ms. Comeau thanked Mr. Rennell, wished him luck and stated that everyone has enjoyed working with him.

Debbie Ossiander, noted that four of the people who originally placed her on the School Board are in the audience and she wouldn't have ever dreamed that she could do this without their faith. Ms. Ossiander thanked them for that and for being here this evening. Ms. Ossiander stated her belief that there is nothing more important to a community than its school system. Ms. Ossiander spent a high percentage of her time this past 18 years and energy into the Anchorage School District. In 1985-86, Ms. Ossiander began as an activist parent tutoring reading in the halls of Chugiak Elementary, doing PTA Book Fairs and Halloween Carnivals. As the years passed Ms. Ossiander started attending District meetings on issues of overcrowding, inadequate funding, and water quality; Ms. Ossiander watched closely during the painful years at the end of the Coats superintendency, the chaotic time during the O'Rourke superintendency and 1992 was a difficult year for many. Community members were transferring some of their generalized hostility to the School District and towards the end of that year a Board Member resigned. Ms. Ossiander chose, along with 40 other people that evening, to apply for that position. Ms. Ossiander stated that she was humbled to be chosen to take that seat. Ms. Ossiander ran the next spring for the remainder of Cabot Christianson's term and has successfully run three more times for the Anchorage School Board. Ms. Ossiander is currently in her 11th year as a School Board Member and has served with 25 School Board Members. Ms. Ossiander stated that she has had the good fortune to not only work with excellent people in the District, but to hire two excellent superintendents - Bob Christal and Carol Comeau. Ms. Ossiander stated she has had the fortune to see millions of school bonds approved by voters in this community; we have had massive successful construction of school facilities; we've worked to improve the curriculum; we've lobbied for schools; and we've opened District decision making to the community. There have been some very difficult and emotionally draining times, but overall it has been very worthwhile and rewarding. This remains an excellent school district. Compared to other large school districts across the United States we do far better in student achievement, parental satisfaction, and resource allocation. We have a far better lower percentage of our students opting out for private schools than many large cities across the country. There are big challenges coming. Ms. Ossiander challenged the new Board, as they move forward to meet high expectations, that they don't lose what's happening right now - a strong music program, options and choices for families, our ability to challenge all students as they come in to the School District, including our

most capable students. Ms. Ossiander added, let's not lose that, as we focus our resources to meet the new mandates. Ms. Ossiander will continue to participate at the state level for a while and will certainly be watching. Ms. Ossiander added to the new Board - "do good work guys."

Carol Comeau presented a gold pan to Debbie Ossiander. The inscription reads:

" With much appreciation and thanks for your outstanding leadership and commitment to the students and staff in the Anchorage School District. December 1992 - April 2003."

Ms. Comeau thanked Ms. Ossiander for her long years of public service.

Harriet Drummond began her summary stating that she started her career and as parent at North Star Elementary and was immediately involved in PTA when her son Steven started kindergarten in 1988. It took her until 1991, however, to realize that other schools had needs besides North Star, and that she could help. In November 1991, Ms. Drummond volunteered to photograph conditions at all West Anchorage High School feeder schools. Carol Comeau was then the Director of Elementary Ed and heard about what Ms. Drummond was doing, and she was behind her. Ms. Drummond showed her slides at a town meeting held for our legislators. Ms. Drummond stated that she saw similar situations, crowded schools, enough relocatable classrooms to fill a new elementary school, special programs squeezed into absurd spaces, aging buildings and equipment. Ms. Drummond began her slide show with a chair that would be explained at the end of her presentation. Ms. Drummond then began her slide show of the former conditions at Turnagain, Northwood, Inlet View, Willow Crest, North Star, Northern Lights, Fairview Elementary Schools, Romig Middle School, and West High School. West High School received a beautiful new wrestling and gymnastics gymnasium, as well as a new pool out of the money in the 1990's. Ms. Drummond added that some of those conditions in her slides still exist and West High School is going to need some work. West High School had a major renovation in the 1990's, giving it an award-winning science wing, a new cafeteria, as well as many upgraded classrooms and offices, providing much better conditions for students. Ms. Drummond explained that the chair in her slide show, from West High School's math wing, represents the way that West High School has been handled. A solid start to the building in the early 1950's, much of which serves students and the community really well 'til this day. But a patchwork of fixes over the years has left much work to be done at our oldest high

school. Ms. Drummond added that she is already on the West Facilities Committee and she spends a fair amount of time at the school and the parent store and her son and his friends keep her well informed on the policies and conditions at West High School. This Board will be hearing more from Ms. Drummond and West High School in the near future. About a year after Ms. Drummond took the photos in 1991, the District began putting together the biggest bond issue Anchorage had ever voted on. Ms. Drummond stated that she had contacted school activists and asked them to take cameras into their schools and did what she did for West Anchorage. The group showed their slides to the Assembly over two nights and they approved the bond issue for approximately \$175,000,000 that the voters of Anchorage approved in the spring of 1994. Ms. Drummond was elected to the School Board in 1994. The mid '90s were a difficult time with millions of dollars of cuts made in the budgets. Ms. Drummond stated that her nine years on the School Board have included nine cycles of goal settings, budgets, employee contracts, capital improvement plans, construction issues, assembly meetings, and elections. Ms. Drummond was on the Audit committee the whole nine years. That's where it was learned that ASD needed a whole new business system to handle the challenges of the School District and Y2K issues in the year 2000. We accepted the challenges of charter schools and met the challenges of the Quality Schools Initiative and operated under the capable guidance of Bob Christal until the strange summer of 2000 when the Board was forced to make a change, but had the good fortune of having Carol Comeau ready in the wings to lead the Anchorage School District. Ms. Drummond stated that she has been impressed with the wonderful staff of the Anchorage School District. Ms. Drummond thanked them for their dedication to the students of Anchorage. Ms. Drummond added that she leaves this Board with a great deal of gratitude to the citizens of Anchorage, for electing her and trusting her with their children and with their investment in their schools. It has been an overwhelmingly positive experience, in spite of the occasional negative headline. For her colleagues on the Board who continue to serve, Ms. Drummond offered them each punch cards for ten phone calls or e-mails for advice or history. Carol Comeau gets three punch cards. For the freshman Board members - no limit. Ms. Drummond ended her speech by saying "Thank you Anchorage, it has been a wild ride and I look forward to the next nine years."

Carol Comeau presented Harriet Drummond with a gold pan and read the inscription - "In sincere appreciation of your many years of advocacy and service to the students and staff of the Anchorage School District." May 1994 - April 2003."

Ms. Comeau added her thanks for all Ms. Drummond has done for all of us.

Rita Holthouse stated that although she retired from the Anchorage School District in 1996, in most ways, leaving the Board tonight is her real retirement from 43 years in public education. Those 43 years included her first year in teaching in a small town in tobacco country in northern Florida where some of her students were her age, which was 20. Her career also included helping to organize a teachers' college in west Africa; seven years in the central administration of a school district in Virginia that was struggling with court-ordered integration; counseling high school students in Appalachia; 18 years of school administration in the Anchorage School District; and six years on the School Board. A common thread through those professional experiences is their occurrence within the framework of public education. Ms. Holthouse's father was a high school principal and superintendent for over 40 years in Kansas and her mother and sister were both public school teachers. Ms. Holthouse stated that she grew up in a family that celebrated the existence of public education and engaged in discussions about the need in a democracy for all people to be well educated and prepared to vote and to be contributing citizens. Ms. Holthouse stated that at a young age she fully understood that the future of this country, as a democracy, depends on having a strong system of public education, open to all races, abilities, and socioeconomic level, an education system that accepts and makes every possible attempt to educate to the maximum degree possible, all young people. Ms. Holthouse recited a statement made by Thomas Jefferson in 1816:

“If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never can be.”

Ms. Holthouse continued stating that because of her commitment for a strong public education she would like to talk about one issue the new Board would be facing. That is the new federal education legislation entitled No Child Left Behind. Ms. Holthouse stated that it is her opinion that the No Child Left Behind Act is a premeditated and pervasive attack at the federal government level on the institution of public education in this country. Ms. Holthouse stated that the framers of this legislation are on public record as favoring school vouchers, which would use public funds to pay students' tuitions to private and religious schools. Their discomfort with diverse school populations is public record. Ms. Holthouse stated that in her opinion, the NCLB was designed to

undercut support for public schools and create a groundswell of support for the voucher system in several ways. #1. It forces public schools to concentrate their resources on their lowest achieving students. The needs of struggling students should be a high priority in all districts. However, each district should be also encouraged and allowed to provide challenging educational programs for its highest achieving students and for its largest group - the great number of students in the middle. #2. It establishes a complicated labeling system of public schools that makes it almost impossible for a comprehensive school with a diverse population to avoid being detrimentally labeled as not making adequate yearly progress. If the students in one of the 30 subsets do not score well enough on a standardized exam to not show adequate yearly progress, the entire school will be publicly labeled as not being successful. #3. The federal government fails to provide sufficient funding for all of these mandated programs, criteria and requirements. #4. NCLB evaluates each public school solely with students' scores on specialized standardized achievement tests. To survive, the schools are going to be forced to focus on the materials that the test companies believe should be taught, on test-taking skills and on a few curricular areas. #5. NCLB blind reliance on standardized test scores as an evaluation of public schools is perhaps the most repugnant of all of its features. Of course schools should be evaluated and accountable. Those evaluations should be shared with the students, the parents, and the communities. However, the exclusive reliance of NCLB on standardized tests, covering a limited curriculum and based on test companies rather than the states' and districts' views on what should be taught and when, would be laughable if it did not have possible dire consequences for public schools. Consider the plight of school districts such as Anchorage, with 93 home languages other than English represented in its students with hundreds of students from other countries who are still learning English. When NCLB requires that almost all of these students be tested in English with no accommodations.

No Child Left Behind is based on the supposed success in raising test scores in Texas. A recent study has just been released on the prime example - Houston public schools, where the Secretary of Education was superintendent. They found that in one particular year in grade seven there were over 18,000 students. Two years later, in grade nine, there were only 9,000 students. There had been a reduction of over 53 percent of the young people in the school district over a two-year period. Administrators in the district are now coming forward saying they were strongly encouraged to encourage students who did not do well on these tests to withdraw from school or move to alternative programs. Many just dropped out. Ms. Holthouse added that No Child Left Behind is a

misnomer for this federal legislation. It was not conceived and is not being implemented with the true intent of helping each child in public schools. It 's intended to weaken the public education system in this country and promote the use of public funds through vouchers to private schools. Public educators, districts and schools boards need to come forward about their concerns with this legislation.

In closing, Ms. Holthouse thanked the Anchorage community for giving her the opportunity these past six years, to work in public education from an entirely different perspective - that of the School Board. Ms. Holthouse stated that she has enjoyed almost all of those six years. Ms. Holthouse stated that she agrees with the saying attributed to Helen Keller, "When one of life's doors closes multiple doors open." The trick is to keep one's eyes on the open doors rather than on the one that just closed. To the new Board members and returning ones, Ms. Holthouse stated, "Call me if you wish, but don't expect any solicited advice from me, because I'm going to be too busy checking out the open doors."

Carol Comeau presented Ms. Holthouse with a gold pan and read the following inscription:

"With sincere thanks and appreciation for your years of service to the students and staff of the Anchorage School District." May 1997 - April 2003.

Ms. Comeau thanked Ms. Holthouse for all of her work and support.

Jake Metcalfe introduced former School Board Members, Pattie Higgins, Jim Arlington, Carol Stolple, Walt Featherly, Dave Werdal, Kelly Haney, and Assembly Member, Anna Fairclough in the audience.

John Steiner read a poem for the three retiring School Board Members:

Tribute to Harriet, Rita, and Debbie

In government and culture three lives sometimes converge  
Triumvirates and troikas or great trios then emerge.  
Some of us whose hair grows gray think Peter Paul and Mary  
Or maybe on the zany side it's Curly, Moe and Larry  
Or maybe for the younger set you'll think the Dixie Chicks  
Surpassing those three Spice Girls, yet another three-voice mix.

But here we have the Anchor Chicks who've served well on this Board.

In harmony or counter point, the minutes well record.

Long before the Spice Girls, the School Girls made their marks  
On students here in Anchorage with wisdom, sometimes sparks.

And now they take their final bows, and turn to leave the stage  
For two compelled by term limits, for one a turn of page.

They leave yet full of vigor, full of youth that won't grow old  
And with us they leave a record that is surely triple gold.

Mary Marks stated that it has been a privilege working with Ms. Drummond, Ms. Holthouse and Ms. Ossiander and has appreciated their knowledge, kindness and mentorship. Their hearts are truly in education.

Tim Steele spoke of his heartfelt thanks to the three retiring School Board members. Mr. Steele stated that they are all well educated, intelligent, hard working and are here for the right reason. They have left a tremendous legacy. Mr. Steele stated that he was lucky to live across the street from Harriet Drummond when his children started school. Mr. Steele's wife and Ms. Drummond were close friends. Mr. Steele stated that he is happy that he decided to run for the School Board. This is rewarding work. It is not for money, or grandeur, but you are here with it in your heart to do the right thing. Mr. Steele stated that they have made him proud and a better board member. Mr. Steele also stated to Corey Rennell that the Board will miss him, admired him for the time he put into the position and thanked him for his service to the District.

Jake Metcalfe thanked the bargaining units, the Administration and the Superintendent as well as the three retiring Board members for all of the hard work that they have done.

F. ADJOURNMENT OF 2002-2003 – SINE DIE

School Board President, Jake Metcalfe, moved to adjourned the last School Board meeting of 2002-2003. The Board recessed at 7:43 p.m. and reconvened at 8:05 p.m.

G. OATH OF OFFICE OF NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

Judge Sigurd Murphy administered the Oath of Office to Macon Roberts,

Crystal Kennedy and Jeff Friedman, who were sworn into office as the three new School Board Members of the Anchorage School District.

H. ORGANIZATION OF 2002-2003 SCHOOL BOARD

Superintendent Carol Comeau presided as temporary chairman until the School Board President for 2003-2004 was elected.

a. **President**

The Board unanimously elected Jake Metcalfe as the president of the Anchorage School Board for the 2003-2004 school year.

b. **Vice President**

The Board unanimously elected Tim Steele as the Vice President of the Anchorage School Board for the 2003-2004 school year.

c. **Clerk**

The Board unanimously elected Mary Marks as the Clerk of the Anchorage School Board for the 2003-2004 school year.

d. **Treasurer**

The Board unanimously elected Macon Roberts as the Treasurer of the Anchorage School Board for the 2003-2004 school year.

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was unanimously approved.

J. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

K. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

1. Student Advisory Board

Lorett Nabung, a sophomore at Dimond High School, and the new student representative for the Anchorage School Board stated that he looks forward to working with the Board and Administration and hopes that we will continue to achieve successful gains. The

next Student Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for May 15, 11:30 at KCC.

2. Military Delegate

Lt. Col. Mulcahy stated that the Transition Council Institute would meet again this Thursday and Friday. It is open to all parents and anyone who has issues facing transient students.

3. M.E.C.C.

William Johnson stated that the M.E.C.C. met on April 14th. A report given by Atisa Logo on ways that ASD and the community can improve the success of Hispanic and minority students. Gail Raymond also briefed the committee on the proposed changes to the grades 4, 5, and 6 science kits. The committee thanked the retired Board members and Corey Rennell for their service and welcomed the new Board members as well as Mr. Nabung.

L. CONSENT AGENDA

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

1. ASD Memorandum #256 - Resolution In Support Of Administrative Professional Day, April 23, 2003

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt the attached resolution designating April 23, 2003 as Administrative Professionals Day in the Anchorage School District.

2. ASD Memorandum #216 - Resolution Designating May 7, 2003 As National School Nurses Day

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt the attached resolution designating May 7, 2003 as National School Nurses Day.

3. ASD Memorandum #259 - Approval Of Proposed Program change For Denali Elementary School

It is the Administration's recommendation that Denali Elementary

School, including the intensive needs program, convert to an all Montessori program for the 2003-2004 school year.

4. ASD Memorandum #246 - Personnel Report

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

The following memoranda were removed from the agenda: ASD Memorandum #259.

ACTION:

Moved by John Steiner

Seconded by Mary Marks

to approve ASD

Memorandum #256;

Memorandum #216; and

Memorandum #246 with  
addendum

The motion was unanimously approved.

Carol Comeau introduced the new principals and supervisors for the 2003-2004 school year.

ASD Memorandum #259 - Approval Of Proposed Program Change For Denali Elementary School

It is the Administration's recommendation that Denali Elementary School, including the intensive needs program, convert to an all Montessori program for the 2003-2004 school year.

ACTION:

Moved by Tim Steele

seconded by Mary Marks

to approve ASD Memorandum #259

Carol Comeau stated that this has been discussion over the past few years with the parents and staff. We wanted to bring it to the Board as we begin to move into the new school facility. Over the last few years there has been a decline in neighborhood enrollment and there has been a discussion on why it really is a wonderful program for the entire school. All the research has been clear that the Montessori program, which was developed to help the achievement levels of inner-city schools, is a very structured program with a very high level of standards and is also something

we believe would be most effective when the whole school is focusing on it. It has been difficult for the neighborhood program to thrive because the numbers have continued to go down.

Patricia McRae stated that in Denali Elementary, instruction occurs in multi-grade settings. Because of attrition in the neighborhood program, and when the population starts to drop, it forces combination classrooms. So those students are already in a multi-grade classroom setting. Moving to all Montessori gives the neighborhood teachers the benefit of the whole philosophy and structure that is based in multi-grade. This adds the foundation, collaboration and support for the Montessori program that helps students achieve.

Karen Rigg introduced Angel Jacovsky, Margie McNeill, Linda Stewart, and Janice Banta. They support this instructionally sound decision that needs to be made now. Ms. Rigg thanked Colonel Mulcahy and Brian Riggs for their support while being at Kennedy Elementary.

Ms. Riggs stated that the neighborhood program diminished over the years. The neighborhood parents are finding this multi-sensory instruction works for their students. They would like to use the Montessori strategy so all students can succeed at Denali.

John Steiner asked Ms. Comeau to explain what the choices are for the students who do not want to attend the Montessori program. Ms. Comeau stated that if the parents wanted to go to North Star, transportation would be provided.

Tim Steele commented that there has always been a closeness between the neighborhood program and the Montessori program and he thinks this is a natural process. Classes have been fairly small because not all of those in the neighborhood program decided to attend JFK Elementary. Mr. Steele applauds the effort. Mr. Steele recognized and thanked Margie McNeill for her support and involvement over the years at Denali Elementary School.

Lt. Col. Pete Mulcahy commented that it has been a joy having the students and staff of Denali on the installation. It has worked out very well and it was great seeing kids on the playground at JFK. Even with the increased security, we made it work.

VOTE:

Ayes: Marks, Kennedy, Steele,  
Metcalf, Friedman,  
Steiner, Roberts

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

M. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

ASD Memorandum #248 - Out-Of-District Travel - Third Quarter Report  
FY 2002-2003

The attached Travel Report summarizes the travel taken by District employees and School Board members during the third quarter of FY 2002-2003 for both in-state and out-of-state travel. This report complies with the travel procedures established with the revision to School Board Policy Sections 156, Board Member Travel, and 526, Staff Travel.

ASD Memorandum #250 - Operating Budget Transfers - March Monthly  
Report FY 2002-2003

The attached report of budget transfers for the time period of March 2003 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.

John Steiner requested information regarding the public relations item on the first page. Carol Comeau stated that we had extra advertising items that were more than anticipated. This budget transfer was put in to make sure we have enough money to cover the budget. John Steiner added that Board and Administration needs to make sure we let the public know that funds are being used for the classroom. Ms. Comeau commented that 78 percent of the budget goes into instructional support.

Tim Steele commented on the \$96,000 transferred to provide funding for purchasing the Scientific Learning/Fast Forward Program as a pilot project and the PLATO software license for the secondary schools. This peaked Mr. Steele's interest in terms of expanding the online program that is at West and the Continuation School and wondered if that is what this program is for. Mike Henry stated that Mr. Steele is correct. The PLATO online software is for remediation and credit recovery. Benson and Wendler will use this next year. It is from LOG funds.

Tim Steele asked for an update on the Alaska Studies curriculum. Jan Christensen stated that we are moving through process and should have something by June. The Administration will give an update at next meeting.

ASD Memorandum #251 - End-Of-Month Membership Summary For March 2003

The total active enrollment at the end of March was 49,135. This enrollment represents an increase of 44 students when compared to end of month March 2002. Table 1 compares the membership totals.

Ms. Comeau stated that we are 894 students less than at the beginning of the year. We are still trying to determine if this is the normal migration. We are trying to get as much up-to-date information as we can from the military regarding housing. Everyone is waiting to see what will happen with the budget, the military, the legislature and a whole range of things. John Steiners asked if the drop is occurring all over the district or is it focused in different parts of town. Ophelia Dargen-Steed stated that it is occurring all over but mainly in higher grade levels. Mike Henry stated that compared to last year we are up over 300 students in high schools. John Steiner stated that as a Board, District and community - we need to be watching to see if students leave because they feel they can't pass the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam.

Tim Steele stated that it looks like the decrease is in elementary from last year. Carol Comeau stated that we are looking at the beginning of this year and the current decrease now. Mr. Steele commented that one of the goals is to try to decrease the dropout rate. Mr. Steele hopes we are attempting to get exit interviews to find out why the students are leaving.

ASD Memorandum #252 - Facility Change Order Report And Completed Projects For The Month Of March 2003

The monthly Facility Change Order Report for the month of March 2003 is attached. There are no exceptions to report this month.

Mr. Steele expressed his concern over the number and size of the Attachment B Changeovers. Ray Amsden stated that we watch them carefully, but the changes that occur are items not in the construction documents that have to happen to complete and execute the project. We have seen some decline in overall quality of our documents and that does

drive changes. We do watch those and carefully categorize them so that we learn from those experiences.

John Steiner stated he would be interested in tracking the total percentage of B changeovers for different schools and projects and seeing if any are coming in over five percent.

ASD Memorandum #254 - Assessment Calendar For 2003-2004 School Year

The Districtwide group assessments scheduled for the 2003-2004 school year includes the following tests and surveys. Completion dates are the dates materials are to be returned to Assessment and Evaluation.

Carol Comeau stated that the HSGQE has been moved to in Feb 17, 18, and 19, which is a short time since school doesn't start until the first of September, so the schools, students and teachers will be assessed in a very short amount of time in class. Ms. Comeau understands that they are doing this so the State can get the tests back before schools, particularly in rural Alaska, leave in May. However, it does a great disservice to our teachers and students in really having enough time to adequately teach the curriculum to the standards that they're being assessed on. John Steiner asked if we have any information on whether there are different times of the year when we have more difficulty in getting a large percent of students in school, i.e. transportation or illness. Mr. Steiner wondered if there is a problem, within this period, of hitting the 95 percent attendance and test taking. Ms. Comeau stated that January through March is prime instructional time. It can depend on whether or not we have a flu epidemic. Mr. Steiner asked Ms. Comeau when she would like to see the test take place. Ms. Comeau stated that March is as good as we are going to get so that we can get the results back before the end of the year. The middle of February seems too early.

N. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There were no other speakers.

O. COMMUNICATION & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

Macon Roberts thanked the public and voters who supported him. Mr. Roberts is very appreciative for the contributors and those who enabled him to get the word out to voters. Mr. Roberts stated he is very grateful and humbled by the overwhelming mandate that the public gave

him to be in this position.

Mary Marks stated that she is grateful to hear Tim Steele bring up the mention of the Alaska studies and she is also anxious to hear about the progress. Ms. Marks further stated that, at some point the Board needs to start talking about our dropout rates and what we are doing to close the gap. Ms. Marks also suggested producing a yearly calendar for the community so they can be aware of the different items that are coming up. Carol Comeau replied that the Administration could look at how to make sure those key opportunities can be distributed. A lot of people go to the web page for information.

John Steiner welcomed the new Board members and encouraged the public to get in touch with the Board to notify the members of topics to consider.

Jake Metcalfe mentioned that the Board would schedule a team building meeting for mid May. Tim Steele stated that he would like to chat about the format for the team building mtg. Mr. Steele has heard some comments from people in terms of things they would like to see. Mr. Metcalfe stated that he would be happy to take the input into consideration when scheduling the team building meeting. Mr. Steiner suggested taking the issue up at one of the items at the 4:30 Special Meeting. Mr. Metcalfe stated that it would be fine, but if there are any ideas they would like to bring forward, that it would also be acceptable.

Tim Steele announced that several of the Board members are flying to Juneau this Friday for the Association of School Boards statewide meeting and workshop for the new members. The Board will also be meeting with the legislators to discuss the districts' needs.

Ms. Comeau mentioned the compass piece by Jim Clark from the Governor's office on pupil transportation. The Administration is preparing a response because we feel the current bill will not meet the needs of pupil transportation. Steve Kalmes will be in Juneau Tuesday to speak to Legislators.

Mary Marks mentioned that she will be leaving on May 12 for Washington D.C. The Community Education department nominated her for an After School Alliance Award, which Ms. Marks is honored to accept.

P. EXECUTIVE SESSION -  
(PERSONNEL/FINANCE/NEGOTIATIONS/LITIGATION)

Q. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Meeting of April 21, 2003, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:10 p.m.

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Jake Metcalfe, President

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Mary Marks, Clerk

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Robin Siegfried, Recording Secretary

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Date Minutes Approved