

**MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING OF AUGUST 11, 2003**

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, August 11, 2003 at 6:30 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: Crystal Kennedy, Tim Steele, Jake Metcalfe, Jeff Friedman, John Steiner, and Macon Roberts, and Mary Marks

Others Present: Carol Comeau, George Vakalis, Jan Christensen, Janet Stokesbary, Mike Henry, Jerry Sjolander, Enid Hunter, Patricia McRae, Gail Opalinski, Eric Tollefsen, Stan Syta, Larry Wiget, Robb Boyer, Loretta Nabong, Mary Kay Sambo, the press, and other interested people.

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jeff Friedman announced that the next School Board Policy Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 21 at 8:30 a.m. in Room 322/ Administration Building.

Tim Steele announced that the next School Board Legislative Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 13 at 8:30 a.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

Carol Comeau commented that registration is beginning this week for elementary and middle school students; high school registration begins next week. She also noted that the Dimond High School ribbon cutting celebration is scheduled for Thursday, August 14 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Mary Marks announced that there is a Totem Pole Raising reception scheduled at the Alaska Native Heritage Center on Saturday, August 23 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

John Steiner announced that the next School Board Audit Subcommittee will meet on Monday, September 22 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in Room 320 at the Administration Building.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda for the August 11, 2003 School Board meeting, with the addition of an addendum to the Personnel Report, was unanimously approved.

D. AWARDS/RECOGNITION/PRESENTATIONS

E.. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

1. Student Advisory

Lorette Nabong commented that students are excited about returning to classes this fall and are becoming involved in student sports, which are beginning this week. The Student Advisory Board meetings will be resuming their meeting schedule once school begins.

2. Military Delegate

LTC Peter Mulcahy did not have a report.

3. MECC

William Johnson announced the next scheduled MECC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 21 at 12:00 noon in Room 320/Administration Building. He encouraged the public to apply for openings on the committee and stated that this was an excellent opportunity to serve the community. Mr. Johnson noted that there are three open seats on the committee.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Maureen Loeffler stated that she runs a preschool in Girdwood, has a Master's Degree in Education, and has previously taught high school and disabled students. She is here tonight speaking on behalf of J. B., who has been tested by an ASD approved psychologist, scored in the range for early admission, and has been recommended by the psychologist for early admission to kindergarten this fall. J.B. will turn five years of age in December 2004. Ms. Loeffler feels that J.B. is emotionally mature and physically ready to attend kindergarten. She stated that the District does not cooperate with those parents who have students whose birthday falls outside the window, but are ready to enter kindergarten. Ms. Loeffler

stated that Rogers Park is not offering a preschool this year for gifted students and attaining private services for a gifted preschooler is very expensive for a parent.

Carol Comeau expressed her concern over the confidentiality issue of a student being discussed in an open meeting, and whether Ms. Loeffler had the permission of the parent to discuss her child. J.B.'s parent was in the audience and verbally gave her permission to Ms. Loeffler to continue discussing her child.

Patricia McRae noted that state law allows districts to develop their own procedures regarding early age admission to kindergarten. She further noted that ASD does not consider those students born outside the one month window period established by the District from August 15 through September 14.

Jerry Sjolander commented that the District does provide services for gifted preschool. Unfortunately, J.B. did not qualify for the gifted preschool program. Carol Comeau further noted that there is nothing outside the one month window period to allow services for this child.

G. CONSENT AGENDA

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

1. ASD Memorandum #3 - Approval of Change order: Wendler Middle School Renovation Phase II

It is the Administration's recommendation the School Board approve contract modification number two in the amount of \$523,654 to increase the Alcan General, Inc. contract for the Wendler Middle School Renovation Phase 2 project.

2. ASD Memorandum #7 - Revisions to School Board Policy 433-443.2 Students and Student Personnel Services (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading, the attached proposed changes to School Board Policy 433-443.2, Student Services. The School Board reviewed the proposed changes on First Reading at their meeting on May 19, 2003, (Memorandum #295), but took no action and referred the issue back to the policy sub-committee. The School

Board Policy Subcommittee reviewed the proposed changes at their meeting on June 24, 2003, and agreed to forward the attached proposed policy changes to the full School Board for approval.

3. ASD Memorandum #8 - 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 Memorandums #7 and #8.

ACTION:

Moved by John Steiner to approve Memorandum #3.
seconded by Jeff Friedman

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum #7 - Revisions to School Board Policy 433-443.2
Students and Student Personnel Services (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading, the attached proposed changes to School Board Policy 433-443.2, Student Services.

ACTION:

Moved by Jeff Friedman to approve Memorandum #7.
seconded by Tim Steele

Theresa Obermeyer stated that her work as a college professional was in student services. She feels that the District does not sufficiently explain the legalities to an expelled student. Ms. Obermeyer stated that her son's senior year was ruined over an incident that occurred during his senior year. She spent over \$4,000 in court fees. She would like to see the District focus on student potential and not just the rules. Ms. Obermeyer would also like to have a courier deliver a Board packet to her home prior to a scheduled meeting because she does not have access to the memorandums.

Jeff Friedman noted that the public has access to the Board memos on the ASD Web Site on the Friday before the regularly scheduled Monday Board meetings.

Jan Christensen reviewed ASD Memorandum #7 with the Board and noted the changes.

Jeff Friedman noted that there was a substantial amount of work that went into this policy review prior to him being on the Board. He doesn't think these current changes are anything more than grammatical changes.

Carol Comeau noted that the maximum school age has been clarified, which now conforms with state law.

John Steiner stated that there would be another opportunity for the public to speak on the early entry age issue during second reading.

Tim Steele commented that this is the second year that the School Board Policy Subcommittee has been working on this section. It was tabled in May until now. Mr. Steele feels that this section of policy is much better and clearer. He recommends the Board approve this policy change on first reading.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum #8 – Personnel Report

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

ACTION:

Moved by Tim Steele to approve Memorandum #8.
seconded by Mary Marks

Theresa Obermeyer stated that the personnel report is very important and is concerned for those employees and the reason they have left the District. Ms. Obermeyer noted that in the August 7 newspaper, she saw a legal notice about Premara/Blue Cross and asked what percentage of the employees have this insurance. Jake Metcalfe stated that this topic has

nothing to do with the personnel report. Ms. Obermeyer asked Mr. Metcalfe to research this legal notice, because she believes that Premara/Blue Cross is going to go public.

John Steiner asked for an explanation of the leave of absence policy. Carol Comeau noted that every employee has the right to apply for leave in accordance with their negotiated agreement. Eric Tollefsen commented that employees were encouraged to take leave due to budget constraints. This is a tool to keep employees employed with the District and not experience layoffs. Mr. Tollefsen further commented that most of the leave requests are teachers; first year requests are normally granted; second year requests are scrutinized carefully; and third year requests are not normally granted. Carol Comeau noted that each division is required to hold back a certain number of positions to use for over enrollment. People on leave could be contacted to return, but this is not normally done. Ms. Comeau commented that many of these employees have young families and it is a good option for them to take leave.

Macon Roberts commented that it is important for employees to take a leave of absence and come back recharged.

Jake Metcalfe noted that there is no discussion on this report about benefits; this report deals with promotions, terminations, hires, leaves, etc.

Carol Comeau introduced Chuck Nygard, new principal at SAVE High School, and Carrie Fleischhacker, newly appointed assistant principal at King Career Center.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

I. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. ASD Memorandum #9 - Project Status Report

This is a report of activities and project status changes in Major Capital Projects during the period of June 13, 2003 through July 25, 2003.

Mary Marks noticed that there is not a status report on charter schools. Carol Comeau stated that the construction is not being paid out of the ASD budget. Highland Tech High Charter School is paying for their construction out of their current budget.

Tim Steele noted that it is difficult to keep track of the phases of construction and completion dates. He asked if the Board could have an update in this area.

Ray Amsden responded that when the Capital Requests Advisory Committee is updated, he will provide a list of where the District is to the Board as well.

2. ASD Memorandum #10 - Conflict of Interest: Fourth Quarter Report FY 2002-2003

The attached listing of employee Conflict of Interest Waiver and Disclosure actions is forwarded in accordance with School Board Policy Section 725.44. This information is provided as the fourth quarter report for the FY 2002-2003 school year.

No Requests for Waiver were received between April 1, 2003 and June 30, 2003. Attachment A lists employees who submitted Requests for Waiver between April 1, 2003 and June 30, 2003. All Disclosure Statements and Requests for Waiver for the year 2002-2003 expired on June 30, 2003.

3. ASD Memorandum #11 - Fourth Quarter and End of 2002-2003 School Year Suspensions/Weapons/Expulsion Report

Information regarding suspensions and expulsions for various offenses, including weapons, is collected from the elementary, middle, and high schools each quarter. This information, as well as year-end summaries by school and category for each Instructional Division level for the 2002-2003 school year, is shown in the narrative information below and in Attachments A - L.

In accordance with the School Board's adopted goal to "Establish a supportive learning environment by providing safe and caring schools which are barrier free, by promoting health and wellness, and by collaborating with other community agencies where appropriate," all efforts were focused to provide safe and healthy schools. This goal has been supported by the employees at each

school as well as by the students and their parents and the business and general community. Again this year, the Anchorage Police Department was extremely supportive in its assistance to the schools. The attached discipline/suspension reports from the elementary, middle, and high schools show the statistics for the fourth quarter and the recently completed school year and the schools' efforts to address this important goal.

Carol Comeau noted that this is the fourth quarter and end of the year report which summarizes the various suspensions/expulsions. She stated that there were no students at the elementary level that were expelled. She asked each division to respond to questions.

Jeff Friedman asked if there are changes in the federal law on how the District looks at causality. Jerry Sjolander responded that this issue is under debate, but we will not see significant changes in the law on discipline. Carol Comeau noted that the Council of Great City Schools has brought forward the topic of dual discipline for discussion. She stated that we need to continue to urge interaction with the public on this topic.

John Steiner asked about the category "disobedience" on page 3 of the elementary 4th quarter report and why it was not listed on the annual category or if it was rolled into the "other" column. Patricia McRae did not have that information readily available and will get back with Mr. Steiner.

Jeff Friedman commented that our "other" categories are much larger than most. He suggested that if there are a lot of specific others that could fit, perhaps we need to look at dividing them. Carol Comeau commented that we must have certain categories for the victim and the perpetrator. Jan Christensen stated that we must use defined categories under state regulations and keep track of the victims as well. If the categories were changed, it would be difficult to compare with previous years.

John Steiner noted an increase in fighting and threats on both suspensions and expulsions at the high school level as well as willful disobedience. He asked Mike Henry to comment on this. Mike Henry responded that this also concerns the school staffs. He is not sure when the numbers go up if we are just catching more students. Mr. Henry did verify that the physical and verbal threats have increased. Gang activity across Anchorage has also increased.

He stated that Todd Arndt has set a goal for high schools, during the 2003-2004 school year, to reduce fighting by 25 percent. Mr. Henry believes that Mr. Arndt can attain that goal.

Carol Comeau noted that the School Resource Officer program made an impact during the fourth quarter as well. They have a strong presence and are a valuable asset to the high schools.

Mary Marks asked how we can use students to empower other youth on getting this non-violence message across. Lorret Nabong stated that at Dimond there are many different programs going on, i.e., Violence Club, Alcohol Abuse and Sexual Abuse Clubs, and programs that have peers educating their peers on the best way to solve problems. Mike Henry noted that there are unique clubs and programs in each high school. He further commented that the Administration always turns to student organizations and students to ask for their assistance.

Crystal Kennedy stated that it would be helpful to have the student population numbers next to the number of those students suspended when comparing the numbers to previous years. She is not sure the problem is getting worse, but that the population of students may have increased at that particular school.

Macon Roberts commented that it pleases him that the drug and alcohol expulsions in high schools have decreased. This is the lowest in two years. He noted that this is a small improvement.

John Steiner also noted that there has been a decrease in harassment and assaults.

4. ASD Memorandum #12 - Status Report: Submission of Discretionary Grants, Fourth Quarter 2002-2003 School Year

The purpose of this report is to inform the School Board on a quarterly basis of new grants that have been submitted for funding.

5. ASD Memorandum #6 - District Recruitment and Retention Project Evaluation Report for the 2002-2003 School Year

During the 2002-2003 school year, the Training and Professional Development Department oversaw the Federally funded and State administered Recruitment and Retention Grant. Kay Bennett was

the contract coordinator, for the grant, which had specific areas of permitted focus.

Carol Comeau stated that Robb Boyer and Kay Bennett had overseen this grant and feels that it was a resounding success. She is pleased as were the teachers who participated. Ms. Comeau noted that they truly benefited from their mentorships.

Robb Boyer noted that the mentoring program has been very successful and that ASD is considered a leader in this area across the state. Dr. Boyer gave a brief overview of the grant and the program within the District. He stated that there is significant research on quality mentoring programs and that they do help to retain and keep staff. Those schools with low turnover of teachers help with student achievement. Dr. Boyer also commented that we are helping the teacher to become a quality teacher. The Anchorage Education Association is also an active partner in this grant.

I. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

J. COMMUNICATIONS & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

Jake Metcalfe announced that he is very proud that our Superintendent, Carol Comeau, has been named the Alaska Superintendent of the Year by the Alaska Association of School Administrators.

Tim Steele gave a brief update on the Alaska Association of School Boards summer board meeting and the administrative and location changes.

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

L. ADJOURNMENT

The Regular Meeting of August 11, 2003 adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Jake Metcalfe, President

Mary Marks, Clerk

Mary Kay Sambo, Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approved