

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MINORITY EDUCATION CONCERNS COMMITTEE

MINUTES
April 16, 2002

The Minority Education Concerns Committee met on Thursday, April 16, 2002, in Room #320 in the ASD Administration Building.

1. CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL - RICHARD BENAVIDES

The meeting was called to order telephonically by Richard Benavides at 7:08 p.m.

Members Present
Richard Benavides
Marilyn Andersen
James Allen
Talakai Finau
Victoria Parham
Paul Swetzof

Members Absent
Alfredia Tyler
Reality Canty
Craig Alston
Clarissa Ridgway

Others Present
Pat McDowell, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ACTION:
Moved by Paul Swetzof to approve the agenda for the
Seconded by Talakai Finau April 18, 2002, meeting

VOTE:
Motion passed unanimously.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION:
Moved by Paul Swetzof to approve the minutes from
Seconded by James Allen the February 21, 2002, meeting as
amended

VOTE:
Motion passed unanimously.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The committee read and accepted the letter of resignation from Mary Marks. Mary resigned her position as Chairman of MECC to serve as a newly elected member of the ASD School Board.

5. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Pat McDowell presented the Superintendent's report. She announced the upcoming Curriculum audit and updated the group on the passage of the school bonds at the April 2 election. She talked about the Heritage Fair at Clark Middle School which took place on April 17 and was available for all students in the school to view during the school day and for parents and the community in the evening. Pat invited the group to the Volunteer Reception to be held at the Fairview Elementary School on May 1. She also explained the AEA contract extension to the committee.

6. There were no SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

7. OLD BUSINESS

James gave an update on Romig, which was very positive and complimentary to the school. Richard requested that the committee send a written report to the parents who came to speak at the February meeting. The committee wants the parents to know MECC looked into the issue and there was another side to consider. Marilyn and Mary also went to Romig; they attended a meeting with Bridge Builders to see about starting a student organization.

James raised the question about the role of the MECC and what their "authority" is. Pat explained that MECC is intended to provide advocacy and assistance to parents and others, not to investigate or conduct hearings. The group agreed. Richard asked if the MECC should receive training in the District's processes so they could better convey that to the parents and help them get through the bureaucracy. Paul believes a major goal of MECC is to identify "systemic" problems at schools and in the District. James compared what the group has accomplished this year to previous years and felt they had done well at raising the profile of MECC and getting into schools in a positive fashion. He talked about a booklet at his worksite called "Where to Turn" and wondered if MECC should put together a resource and referral manual. Pat agreed that the ASD could do an orientation in the fall with the MECC, showing them school options available, procedures for special needs, the whole discipline process from reported infraction to, if necessary, Board hearing, trainings ASD does for staff, etc.

Marilyn said, after hearing Debbie Ossiander's comments last week, she was concerned about whether the ASD curriculum is preparing students for the college they want to attend. Pat explained the range of coursework and Credit By Choice, which enables students to put many types of special experiences onto transcripts. Victoria mentioned a "Frequently Asked Questions" format possibly on the website, which might apprise the public of such things.

New MECC brochures were distributed and the group applauded an absent Clarissa for her efforts.

Business cards (generic for committee members) were distributed.

8. COMMENTS

James led the discussion about Richard fulfilling the role of acting president until June 30. The members consented unanimously.

Pat will bring Jan Christensen to the May 16 meeting. Jan will be the new Assistant Superintendent for Instruction starting on July 1.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.