

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 8, 2007

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Thursday, February 8, 2007, at 5:07 p.m. in the Board Room, at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President, Jeff Friedman, presided.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE, Jeff Friedman Presiding

Board Members Present: John Steiner, Macon Roberts, Crystal Kennedy, Jeff Friedman, Mary Marks, and Tim Steele

Board Members Excused: Jake Metcalfe

Others Present: Carol Comeau, Rhonda Gardner, Leslie Vandergaw, Mike Henry, Patricia McRae, Enid Silverstein, Jerry Sjolander, Eric Tollefsen, Michelle Egan, Janet Stokesbary, George Vakalis, Ray Amsden, Pam Chenier, Marie Laule, Chad Stiteler, Johanna Lee, the press, and other interested people.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

C. SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

E. CONSENT AGENDA

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

1. ASD Memorandum #183 – Resolution Honoring Elizabeth Peratrovich Day

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School board approve a resolution recognizing Thursday, February 16, 2007, as Elizabeth Peratrovich Day.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner
Seconded by:

To approve the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve a resolution recognizing Thursday, February 16, 2007, as Elizabeth Peratrovich Day.

Members of the Board read the resolution honoring Elizabeth Peratrovich into the record.

WHEREAS, in 1945, the Legislature of the Territory of Alaska passed House Resolution 14 "to provide for full and equal accommodations, facilities and privileges to all citizens in places of public accommodation within the jurisdiction of the Territory of Alaska;" and

WHEREAS, this was the first anti-discrimination bill introduced and passed in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, Alaska Native Sisterhood (ANS) Grand President Elizabeth Wannamaker Peratrovich faithfully and passionately worked to overcome prejudice and discrimination toward Alaska Natives; and

WHEREAS, her vision, humanitarian work, and powerful testimony before the Legislature was instrumental in the passage of the anti-discrimination law;

WHEREAS, in 1988, the Alaska State Legislature passed a bill designating February 16 as Elizabeth Peratrovich Day in honor of the late ANS Grand President's pursuit to end discrimination.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage School Board recognizes February 16, 2007, as Elizabeth Peratrovich Day and encourages residents to recognize the great contributions Elizabeth Peratrovich made to our state and its people.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

Excused: Metcalfe

MOTION PASSES

2. ASD Memorandum # 177 - FY 2007-2008 Proposed Financial Plan (Revised) (Second Reading)

It is the Administration’s recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to prepare the Anchorage School District’s FY 2007-2008 Proposed Financial Plan as set forth in the projected revenue and expenditure schedules in the memorandum (Attachment A). The total budget recommendation is \$697,656,948. This includes individual fund budgets currently projected as follows:

	<u>FY 2007-2008 Financial Plan</u>
General Fund	\$ 546,393,934
Food Service Fund	16,322,000
Debt Service Fund	79,206,014
Local/State/Federal Grants Fund	<u>55,735,000</u>
Total - All Funds	<u>\$ 697,656,948</u>

The total of local tax contribution to be requested is \$206,757,251.

It is further recommended that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to adjust the budget expenditure ceiling and the above tax amount in accordance with any adjustment to the base student allocation (BSA) approved by the Legislature and Governor or to any changes in Charter Schools, enrollment adjustments, State approval of debt retirement projects, and the upper limit of the local property tax cap.

ACTION:

Moved by: Tim Steele
Seconded by: Mary Marks

To approve the Administration’s recommendation and authorize the Superintendent to prepare the Anchorage School District’s FY 2007-2008 Proposed Financial Plan as set forth in the projected revenue and expenditure schedules in the memorandum (Attachment A). The total budget recommendation is \$697,656,948. This includes individual fund budgets currently projected as follows: General Fund -

\$546,393,934; Food Service Fund - \$16,322,000; Debt Service Fund - 79,206,014; Local/State/ Federal Grants Fund - \$55,735,000. The total of all Funds is \$697,656,948. The total of local tax contribution to be requested is \$206,757,251.

It is further recommended that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to adjust the budget expenditure ceiling and the above tax amount in accordance with any adjustment to the base student allocation (BSA) approved by the Legislature and Governor or to any changes in Charter Schools, enrollment adjustments, State approval of debt retirement projects, and the upper limit of the local property tax cap.

Ms. Comeau applauded the advocacy of the hundreds of people who have emailed, called, and testified on the various issues involved with the budget and the budget process. The most difficult thing about the budget process is that it takes all year and it keeps everyone in turmoil for about three-quarters of the year. The process is a terrible way to do business and is so unfair to all of the District's employees, students, and their families. She explained that she is required to bring a balanced budget to the School Board based on the best information available and that many of the recommendations included in this budget came through the budget review team process.

Ms. Comeau reiterated that, until there is a definitive answer from the legislature and the governor that they are going to pay the PERS/TRS shortfall, amounting to a total of \$74,000,000, the administration will have to make additional recommendations for very severe cuts to this budget. In that case, many of the review team recommendations that have not yet been incorporated in to this budget may have to be implemented.

Ms. Comeau reviewed the recommendations to the hockey program. She explained that no other items were cut or reduced in order to restore the hockey program. What will be done is to implement a significant increase

in the activity fee for hockey and certain other sports. A committee will be formed with representatives from hockey, swimming, soccer, and cross-country skiing. These activities include facility and trail rental fees that substantially increase the cost of these activities. Ms. Comeau also noted that here is a significant shortfall in the vending machine revenue this year as a result of the new Wellness policy. While the administration believes that the policy change was the right thing to do, they now have to figure out different ways to support those activities which had previously relied heavily on vending machine revenue. She assured everyone that all of their input has been taken very seriously.

Public Testimony on the FY 2007 - 2008 Proposed Financial Plan

Mr. Tim Thompson, School Business Partnership chairman, thanked the Board for fully funding the School Business Partnership in the past. He briefly reviewed the program and the benefits to the District, their students, and the businesses involved in the Partnership. Mr. Thompson thanked the Board for their continued support.

Ms. Victoria Oberly, the parent of two elementary students, spoke in support of the AVAIL program. She indicated that her interpretation of the message being sent to the community through the recommendation to eliminate the AVAIL program is that when the students need support the most the District is going to cut them off. She asked the Board to rescue AVAIL from the budget cut list. She encouraged them not to judge why a student would choose a certain venue to obtain an education, but instead be proud and encouraged that these individuals have decided to give education a second chance.

Ms. Maya Butler, a 2001 AVAIL graduate, spoke in support of AVAIL. She explained that she had attended ninth grade at West High School but became homeless during the summer following ninth grade. She shared that, while she was a student at AVAIL, the breakfast and lunch programs there were often the only food she had. Ms. Butler noted that she is currently enrolled in UAA and is working toward a major in English with a minor in Spanish. She is currently studying for the LSAT. She credits the AVAIL program for her success.

Ms. Amanda Muncey, a current AVAIL student, reported that following the last meeting of the Board the students at AVAIL met to discuss what they could do to improve the program. She shared some of the activities and plans being made at AVAIL to help increase the graduation rate.

Mr. Mike Gumbleton explained that he was the original writer of the grant that developed AVAIL. He noted that AVAIL, in contrast to the SAVE program which requires students to be employed, was developed to help students develop the skills required to secure a job. Employers can teach young people what it takes to do a job on the job but the students must already know the importance of going to work, being on time, and having the right attitude. He believed that the cost of the program is covered by the student funding formula. In addition to the core academic subjects there are other important things taught at AVAIL including personal responsibility, self esteem, and job skills. Mr. Gumbleton noted that AVAIL students are making the choice to better themselves and their circumstances. The program was designed to handle long-term dropouts and there are no other programs within the District designed for that purpose.

Ms. Amanda Reese, a current AVAIL student, spoke in support of AVAIL. She noted that she had attempted to enroll in SAVE but was told that there was a waiting list and that she would be required to have and hold a steady job which she did not have at the time. When she called AVAIL she was immediately welcomed and enrolled. She believed that the students who attend AVAIL are kids who had lost all hope and had completely given up until finding the program and the love and support of the staff there. Ms. Reese contends that if AVAIL is closed that there will be children left behind.

Mr. Steiner asked Mr. Gumbleton to speak to the requirement in other programs that students have to be within striking distance of graduation in order to enroll. He wondered how attending AVAIL rather than other alternative programs with higher graduation rates is beneficial to students. Mr. Gumbleton noted that the AVAIL program is meant for students who, due to difficult life circumstances, are unable to make it in other programs.

Ms. Ashley Vincent, currently a senior at AVAIL, spoke in support of the AVAIL program. She explained that AVAIL is for more independent or self-motivated students. She credits the AVAIL staff and their encouragement for her success.

Ms. Anissa Dang spoke in support of the AVAIL program. She reviewed many of the personal aspects of the program. She also noted that her circumstances preclude her from holding a job and that she does not have access to a parent, both of which are required to register and attend other

alternative programs. Without the AVAIL program she does not believe that there are any options for her in the District.

Ms. Meagan Stewart explained the various means by which the AVAIL staff helps students set goals for graduation. She explained the weekly contracts and two-month plans established by students in conjunction with staff. She also noted that there are monthly meetings for seniors. She felt that every student in the program has an idea of what needs to be accomplished to stay consistent in their progress. She reiterated the importance of the location of AVAIL to many of the students. In response to the report of the low number of AVAIL students who have attempted other alternative programs, Ms. Stewart noted that many students have tried to enroll in other programs and have been turned away before ever being enrolled. She credits the AVAIL program with helping her set personal goals and following through with commitments. She contends that the program is designed to build professionalism and work ethic and is exactly what most teenagers need.

Mr. Dante McCormick, a current AVAIL student, spoke in support of the program. He credits AVAIL for completely changing his life and giving him the opportunity for a future.

Mr. Bob Churchill, a parent of two students who graduated through alternative programs, spoke in support of retaining optional programs within the District. He noted that the question comes down to meeting the unique needs of students and believes that AVAIL does just that. He encouraged the Board to find a way to support this program. He noted that these are the students who can least afford to lose anything.

Ms. Maria Coleman, parent of former AVAIL student, believed that AVAIL saves lives. She shared the experiences of her eldest daughter and the assistance that both she and her daughter received through the program. She noted that graduation rates are faulty statistics to measure the success of this program.

Ms. Marks asked how students will be able to enroll in other programs if, as students have testified, they are not employed or do not have parental support. Ms. Comeau noted that the Child in Transition program works with a number of homeless young people in the District. Mr. Henry explained that there are a variety of actions which can and will be taken to work through the transition but acknowledged that it will not be easy. Ms. Comeau noted that this recommendation came through the budget review team and through the administration. She took responsibility for

making the recommendation to put this program on the list. She noted that there have been a number of discussions on this recommendation. She assured everyone that, if the recommendation is approved, the administration will work in every way possible to make these transitions work.

Mr. Steiner asked whether the student count used to build the budget assumed that all of the AVAIL students would remain in the District or if adjustments were made under the expectation that some AVAIL students would not continue in other programs. He wondered what impact the loss of a given percentage of AVAIL students would have on the District's revenue from the state. Ms. Comeau explained that no adjustments were made for any anticipated loss of students. She noted that the administration is working under the assumption that students can and will be successful transitioned to other programs.

Ms. Tresia Coleman, an AVAIL graduate, noted that she had tried to get into other alternative programs in the District and had been turned away. After graduating from AVAIL she was able to attend college and credits the staff and program for her success. Mr. Roberts asked why other programs had turned her away. Ms. Coleman explained that other programs seemed more concerned about their program requirements than the needs of individual students and had offered to take her application but gave her no indication that they would ever even follow-up.

Ms. Marks asked whether alternative schools have an age limit on students they enroll. Ms. Comeau explained that the state of Alaska has a statutory limit which indicates that, other than students with an IEP, students age out at 20 years of age. There have been exceptions made on an individual case-by-case basis for students that are on track to graduate, although the District does not receive funding for students who turn 20 during the count period.

Mr. Richard Emanuel spoke in support of the Battle of the Books program. He noted that the return on investment for the program is extremely high. The program promotes reading which a skill that is fundamental and essential to academic success. He encouraged the Board to find a way to save the Battle of the Books program.

Ms. Marks asked for an update on the issue of charging a fee to Battle of the Books participants. Ms. Comeau reported that the sponsoring organization does not allow students to be charged for participation.

Mr. Ben Iris, a member of the Information Technology Budget Review Team, indicated his belief that an initiative should be established at the highest priority to work with everyone necessary to have a realistic budget timeline that builds sensible to a balanced budget. Secondly, he requested that the administration conduct an independent audit of the IT Department and its policies with the goal to improve the value of delivery for IT investments. In addition he made several suggestions on how to strengthen the IT Review Committee and also suggested delaying any decision on the Student Information System until further evaluation of a more cost effective option could be pursued. Mr. Friedman requested a hard copy of Mr. Iris' remarks for the Board and the administration.

Mr. Duane Moran spoke in strong support of the K-12 library program. The libraries help provide reading skills, comprehension, and information identification and retrieval. He noted that money spent in support of the libraries is money well spent and well invested in the community.

Ms. Jennifer Childress contended that, in light of the teacher negotiations, the District is wedded too closely to programs. She noted that in any normal situation she would never ask the Board to cut programs that support what teachers do in the classroom. She typically appreciates any and all support that she can get. She believed, however, that the best programs in the world are ineffective without the ability to recruit top quality teachers to implement them. The members of the budget review team that Ms. Childress served on agreed that it would be better to cut programs than classroom teacher positions elsewhere in the budget. She questioned why programs are being kept and teacher positions being cut. She encouraged the Board to reprioritize the budget and negotiate a competitive contract for teachers.

Mr. Ron Fuhrer, AEA president, suggested that all funding decisions must be based on the District's mission statement, "Educating All Students for Success in Life". With this mission it seems logical to Mr. Fuhrer that the very last thing to be cut would be classroom teachers. He wondered how other proposed expenditures can be justified with the budget recommendation to cut 114.4 FTE classroom teachers, only 12 of which are due to decreased student enrollment.

Mr. Francis McLaughlin spoke in support of the AVAIL program. He believed that eliminating the program is not worth the cost savings to the District. He urged the Board to support vulnerable teens and fully fund the AVAIL program.

Mr. Steiner requested a recess to review some responses to requests for information. The Board went into recess at 6:15 p.m. The meeting was called back to order at 6:41 p.m.

Ms. Comeau explained that the revenue picture continues to change which continues to be one of the most frustrating aspects of building a budget. Last week the District heard from the Municipalities Office of Management and Budget that the official consumer price index, which is what has to be used in the tax cap calculation, has been set at 3.2% for 2006, which is less than the 3.9% that was used to build this budget. That amounts to a decrease of \$1 million for next years' budget. That is countered to some extent by a slight population increase resulting in a net decrease of \$434,000. In addition to that there has been a reduction to the school improvement grant. In light of all of these changes the administration strongly advised that if the Board chooses to reinstate any items to the budget they would not look to cut a lot of other items to make up the difference. She suggested that the District would be much better served to wait until the teacher contract is settled, the principal contract is settled, and what the revenue source will be is known. Mentioning the proposed cuts to the education budget at the federal level, Ms. Comeau noted that it is critical for everyone to rally together to lobby aggressively for additional funding at the municipal level, the state level, and the federal level. It is just not acceptable for the federal government to keep adding unfunded mandates to public education.

Ms. Comeau explained that the administration is recommending that the Board consider reinstating funding for Battle of the Books. She indicated that it is unfortunate that the Alaska Association of School Librarians does not allow even a small fee per student to offset some of the costs of the program. In addition, the administration recommended the reinstatement of the AVAIL program with the clear understanding that there will have to be some changes made to that program. She applauded the advocacy that has been shown for AVAIL although she remains very troubled by the schools' graduation rate.

Mr. Steiner asked whether the administration has already developed proposed reductions given the requirement that the Board approve a balanced budget. Ms. Comeau explained that the cuts that have been recommended at this point will, in all likelihood, have to be revisited after the legislature and governor complete their educational funding. She believed that the administration has a suggestion that meets the standard that is required without going in and trying to piecemeal items to balance the budget. Ms. Stokesbary explained that the tax cap limitation has not

been finalized and ultimate revenues remain unknown. What has generally been done when there are any additional revenues found is to request an S version of the budget before the Assembly. She noted that, at this point in time, the loss of revenue recently identified has been put in to the unallocated dollar amount in the non-departmental line item. As Ms. Comeau indicated, action generally has to be taken later in the process in response to adjustments made by the legislature that reflects both any changes with local tax contribution and/or state revenues. That information is noted in Attachment B of the memorandum. Ms. Laule reviewed and explained the documentation.

Mr. Steele expressed his appreciation for the recommendation for reinstating Battle of the Books and AVAIL. He voiced his continued concerns regarding the cuts to the library liaison positions.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by: Tim Steele To add \$27,000 back into the budget for
Seconded by: John Steiner the Library Liaisons.

Mr. Steele felt that there was rationale for the reinstatement of funding in terms of maintaining the management link provided by the liaisons. He also referenced the desire to hold a work session on Libraries of the 21st Century. He is very concerned that District libraries are down to a pretty bare-bones situation.

Ms. Comeau asked the Board to defer this action until after the work session takes place and the administration is able to come up with a plan to address questions about the role of the library in the 21st century and what kind of staffing will be needed.

AMENDMENT to the AMENDMENT:

Moved by: John Steiner To amend the amendment on the table
Seconded by: Tim Steele to add to the end of the first sentence of
the main motion "Attachments A - C".

VOTE on AMENDMENT to the AMENDMENT:

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

Excused: Metcalfe

ACTION PASSES

Mr. Steiner spoke in support of adding funding for the Library Liaisons. He indicated that, since the Board will be revisiting the whole issue of libraries a different direction may be chosen after the work session. Until that decision is made, however, Mr. Steiner was more comfortable leaving this process with the liaison positions restored. Other Board members indicated their willingness to wait until after the work session to make any changes to this recommendation and noted that they would not be supporting the amendment.

Mr. Friedman noted that if he could only increase one department in the schools it would be the library. He could not, however, justify adding the liaison positions back into the budget in light of other needs.

Mr. Steiner reiterated the importance of getting the most benefit from every dollar spent and explained his belief that the dollars spent on having a districtwide library coordination function has such a high value to the District that it should be saved. He noted his difficulty in voting for the other items included in the budget proposal knowing that the District would be losing that function and believing that there are other things that are less valuable.

VOTE on AMENDED AMENDMENT:

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

Excused: Metcalfe

ACTION FAILS

Mr. Steele moved to add the statement "Attachments A-C" to the end of the last sentence of the main motion. The amendment to the Main Motion passed by unanimous consent.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by: John Steiner

Seconded by: Macon Roberts

To eliminate from the cuts reflected in Attachments A-C both the Battle of the Books and the AVAIL Program based on the recommendation of the superintendent.

Mr. Steiner noted that the Battle of the Books is another area where he believes that each dollar spent provides much more than a single dollar of

value. On the subject of AVAIL Mr. Steiner noted that there is clearly some concern regarding the graduation rate however, even if a student does not have enough credits to graduate he would rather have them participating in the education process through AVAIL than not be in education at all. On the other hand, the program should definitely be tight enough to push towards graduation rather than facilitating students to ease through the system without ultimately graduating. Mr. Steiner acknowledged that work also needs to be done to get NCLB to recognize that a program that is specifically designated for the students in this position shouldn't be penalized for reaching out to this population.

In response to a question from Mr. Friedman it was clarified that \$249,923 was recommended for reinstated to the budget relative to the AVAIL program.

Mr. Roberts asked whether the AVAIL program would be allowed to function without Title I funding and therefore not be held to Title I requirements. Ms. Comeau noted that AVAIL is in school improvement status and can not independently decide to give up their Title I funding. Mr. Roberts reported that he had visited the AVAIL program and came away with the impression that the District really does need the program. He agreed that AVAIL and the students in the program need to do as much as possible to meet AYP.

Mr. Steele voiced his appreciation for the move to reinstate funding for the AVAIL program. He recognized the importance of the program to the population that it serves. He also spoke in support of Battle of the Books. He noted that the Board had cut elementary school addenda from five to three so, although this amendment will fund the Battle of the Books for the districtwide competition, it remains a choice at the individual schools to use one of their addenda to support the program at the school level.

Ms. Marks indicated her hope that the administration would look at the process of how students are interviewed and enrolled at all of the alternative programs. Many of the students seeking enrollment in these programs already feel rejected and it is important to assure that they do not experience further rejection from the District.

Ms. Kennedy voiced her appreciation for the recommendation to reinstate AVAIL. She asked how the determination is made to make a program a stand-alone program rather than linking it to another school. As an example she noted that KCC is a program yet students who attend KCC are still connected to their home comprehensive high schools. She

wondered why AVAIL is separated out and whether what it offers can be provided under the umbrella of a comprehensive high school, just be housed in a separate location. It did not seem fair to her to compare a program specifically geared toward such a high-risk population to other comprehensive high schools.

Ms. Comeau explained that AVAIL began as a result of securing a federal grant and reviewed some of the history and evolution of the program. The administration believed that the program needs to remain a separate and distinct entity. The students and staff there need to work very hard to improve their graduation rate. They can, in fact, make AYP if they show growth under the safe harbor provision.

Mr. Friedman noted that he had come into the meeting pretty convinced that he would not be supporting a motion to restore funding for AVAIL. He had changed his mind after hearing the testimony and some of the actions that the school has already committed to. The passion exhibited by the students is hard to resist and it is just that kind of passion that the Board and administration is trying to encourage. He was reminded that we are judged by how we treat the least among us and believed that we need to help those who need help the most and that is exactly what AVAIL is doing. He referenced Albert Einstein who said that not everything that can be measured counts and not everything that counts can be measured. We may not be making AYP with this program but we are saving one student at a time and that is what we are here for.

Mr. Friedman was impressed that the Board had received as many positive comments about and support for Battle of the Books as they did for the hockey program. That indicated to him that the community supports all kinds of activities, both academic and athletic.

VOTE on AMENDMENT:

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

Excused: Metcalfe

ACTION PASSES

Discussion returned to the Main Motion as Amended.

Mr. Steele indicated that he would be approaching the legislature regarding the need to change this budget process. He noted that he would be suggesting funding a two-year budget. He will suggest the first

year include a substantial increase so that the District can do what needs to be done in terms of compensation for employees and supporting valuable programs. He will also encourage that the second year be funded with a built-in growth factor. Preparing a two year budget this year would allow each future legislative action to address budgets that are a year out which would then allow districts around the state to go through the budget planning process with the knowledge of what their revenues will be. He believes that there is a good chance that this can be accomplished this year because the governor has already voiced her interest in forward funding education. In addition, all of the legislators that participated in the various forums around the community committed to making education their number one priority. He also hoped that legislators recognize the need to move on the PERS/TRS issue.

Ms. Marks reviewed several recommendations that she had been prepared to make this evening. She is dismayed with the number and extent of the cuts being made while the District continues to try to provide all the services required to support our students.

Mr. Roberts reported that several members of the Board will be going to Juneau this weekend to lobby the legislature for education funding. What makes this process even more frustrating for him is the knowledge that we are living in one of the most prosperous states in the country. He is hopeful that the governor will keep her campaign promise to forward fund education. The system obviously needs to be fixed. Every year at this time he is reminded that the legislature failed many years ago to take the opportunity to implement a permanent education fund and wonders where we would be if that action had been taken. The next best thing in Mr. Roberts' opinion is to implement a two-year funding plan and find some mechanism to inflation-proof education funding.

Mr. Steiner indicated that he would like to have a work session on Information Technology including the issue of the proposed Student Information System. He noted that it has already been determined that there will be an independent review of the procurement process for the Student Information System. Given some of the questions raised by the budget review team Mr. Steiner would like to have some additional information and comfort about whether we are on the right.

Mr. Steiner commented that there is some validity to the statement that was heard several times during public testimony that teachers are more important than programs. The statistical information brought forward tonight that 50% of our teachers have less than seven years experience

indicated to him that there are a lot of teachers that really need the support that the programs provide. He noted that, according to the reading he had done, the reason teachers leave the teaching profession, especially early on, is not because they are not getting paid enough but because they don't have the support. It is his feeling that cutting support for the teachers will cause the loss of many more teachers than compensation issues will. We would do our teachers a great disservice if they are not provided a certain base of support. In terms of the process, Mr. Steiner commented that it would be more efficient if the revenue numbers could be more realistic based on a statute that actually had some kind of an inflation adjustor included so that the budget could be balanced based on a more realistic expectation of funds.

Mr. Friedman encouraged everyone to contact their representatives to let them know where they stand on education funding.

Ms. Comeau reiterated that the administration and the Board will be doing everything they can to educate the legislators about the whole picture and the reasons that significant increases are needed in educational funding. She also noted that the public also needs to be educated about educational funding. It is important to keep the momentum up. It is essential for the future of this state and this community to have a healthy, strong education system.

VOTE on the MAIN MOTION as AMENDED:

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

Excused: Metcalfe

ACTION PASSES

F. COMMUNICATIONS & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. Steele announced that there will be a Math Counts competition at West High School this Saturday.

G. ADJOURNMENT

The Regular Meeting of February 8, 2007, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:52 p.m.

Jeff Friedman, President

Mary Marks, Clerk

Johanna Lee, Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approved