

**MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF OCTOBER 22, 2001**

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, October 22, 2001 at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President Peggy Robinson presided.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE

Board Members Present: Peggy Robinson, Jake Metcalfe, Tim Steele, and Rita Holthouse. Dave Werdal, Harriet Drummond and Debbie Ossiander were excused from this meeting.

Others Present: Carol Comeau, Janet Stokesbary, Pat McDowell, Mike Henry, Gail Opalinski, Patricia McRae, Jerry Sjolander, Duane Moran, Lee Wilson, Michelle Egan, Stan Syta, Bill Mikawa, Larry Wiget, Bob Henry, Robin Siegfried, the press, and other interested people.

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

The Chamber Singers from Mirror Lake and Gruening Middle School, under the direction of Choir Director, Susan Birch, gave a musical performance for the audience.

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tim Steele briefed the Board on the day he spent riding a school bus route with ASD School Bus Driver, Paula Antz. Mr. Steele thanked Steve Kalmes, Paula, and the District's Transportation Department for doing a wonderful job.

Carol Comeau displayed the Heart of America Awards for Nunaka Valley, Government Hill, and Creekside Park Elementary School. ASD also received a Wild About Anchorage recognition award.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was approved as printed.

D. AWARDS/ RECOGNITIONS

E. PRESENTATIONF. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

## 1. Student Advisory

Corey Runnell briefed the Board on the Alaska Association of Student Government Conference, where 400 students from all over Alaska participated. They had Region meetings, where they talked about resolutions that they would bring to the student body and passed 16 resolutions. Mr. Runnell hoped to bring some of those resolutions before the Board during the next meeting.

## 2. Military Delegate

Lt. Col. Mulcahy thanked Patricia McRae for her help at the town hall meetings that were held a couple weeks ago.

## 3. M.E.C.C.

Mary Marks briefed the Board on the presentation given by Susan Churchill with the Mayor's Kitchen Cabinet Committee. Ms. Marks also stated that the M.E.C.C. completed their mission and goals at the last meeting and the committee is ready to move forward and be productive this year.

Carol Comeau mentioned that the Mayor's Kitchen Cabinet Committee is one of five task forces put together by the Mayor after the paint ball incident. It is a task force sub committee on education. There are no District employees participating on the committee. Ms. Comeau plans on requesting a special meeting of the committee and M.E.C.C. so they can understand what was behind the recommendations. Jake Metcalfe asked if there is an agenda for the AFN. Mary Marks stated that she would leave her booklet for the Board to review.

G. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Robert Hayes spoke to the Board regarding safety within the schools. Mr. Hayes commended Corey Runnell's comments regarding the book "It's Perfectly Normal."

Mr. Hayes also stated his concern over the fire alarm issues in the schools. Carol Comeau stated that Mr. Haye's case was investigated and a letter was sent to the former superintendent that has been read at numerous Board meetings, stating that there was no cause for action. Regarding his current lawsuit, no details can be discussed at this time and his attorney will be contacted when the deposition needs to be given.

#### H. CONSENT AGENDA

##### 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a. Special Meeting - September 24, 2001 4:30 p.m.
- b. Regular Meeting - September 24, 2001 6:30 p.m.

##### 2. ASD Memorandum #71 - Acceptance Of Continuation Grant Award: Title VII REAL Project

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept continuation grant funds from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA) Title VII Training for all Teachers grant program, in the amount of \$140,171. This grant focuses on professional development for teachers who provide instruction to limited-English-proficient students, but who do not expect to become bilingual education or ESL specialists.

##### 3. ASD Memorandum #81 - Acceptance Of Continuation Grant Award: Elementary School Counseling: Creating Successful Futures

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a continuation grant award from the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Office in the amount of \$320,704. This project provides counseling services that focus on prevention and early intervention for elementary students.

##### 4. ASD Memorandum #91 - Acceptance Of Grant Award: Project SERV Grant From U.S. Department Of Education

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a grant award

from the U.S. Department of Education, Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, in the amount of \$50,000.

5. ASD Memorandum #92 - Proposed Changes To The AASB Constitution And Bylaws

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt the proposed changes to Association of Alaska School Boards' (AASB) Constitution and Bylaws (Attachment A).

6. ASD Memorandum #93 - Change Of Former Northern Lights ABC Facility Name To The Charter School Center

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to implement the change in name of the former Northern Lights ABC facility to the "Charter School Center" on all District and Municipal records.

7. ASD Memorandum #82 - Personnel Report

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

No items were removed from the agenda.

ACTION:

Moved by Rita Holthouse  
seconded by Jake Metcalfe

to approve: the minutes from Special Meeting of September 24, 2001; Regular Meeting of September 24, 2001; ASD Memorandum #71, 81, 91, 92, 93, 82.

VOTE:

Ayes: Steele, Holthouse,  
Robinson, Metcalfe

Nays: None

Absent: Drummond, Ossiander, Werdal

MOTION PASSED

Peggy Robinson noted to the public that with the approval of Memorandum #93, the Board changed the name of the former Northern Lights ABC facility to the Charter School Center. Also, the approval of Memorandum #92 changes the

AASB Constitution and By-laws and will only affect Anchorage as long as we have April elections. It will allow Ms. Ossiander and Ms. Robinson to continue on that Board for the full year.

I. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

ASD Memorandum #83 - Class Size Report

This report for the 2001-2002 school year is divided into the following categories: Elementary Education, Middle School Education, High School Education, Special Education, Bilingual Education, and Charter Schools. In addition, the Administration has compiled information on class sizes in the alternative programs and the student-to-counselor ratio at the six major high schools.

Each major department in the Instructional Division has provided detailed information on class sizes and, at the high school level, the counselor-to-student ratio.

Rita Holthouse commented that she was surprised that the number of kindergarten classes went down after the implementation of full day kindergarten in the schools. Patricia McRae stated that the numbers are keeping with the projections and that there are fewer classes because the number of students is down. Tim Steele mentioned it was interesting to point out that since the elementary population is declining and most growth had been as a result of kindergarten classes being hire than high school, we should meet our peak soon. Carol Comeau agreed and stated that much of the enrollment in Anchorage is based on economic trends. The Board continued to discuss the reasons for the decline in numbers. Patricia McRae stated that she is pleased with class sizes. This year, 18 per cent are in the 24 - 26 range. There was a shift from larger to smaller classes and it has remained stable, therefore it was possible to lower the teacher/pupil ratio. Carol Comeau mentioned that when the Board allocated staff in the spring to allow flexibility, they were able to do a better job of shifting classes. Pre registration also helped. Patricia McRae expressed her appreciation for the job that the principals did. Tim Steele mentioned it would be nice to use unexpended funds for more aides to assist in classrooms. Peggy Robinson stated that the Administration chose to use all class size reduction money in first grade. As we have gone to full day kindergarten and cut in half the number of aides, she is hearing more concern about the number of students in the classes. Ms. Robinson would like to put some money towards reducing kindergarten

classes. Ms. Comeau stated that the Administration would take a look at that.

Regarding Middle School, Gail Opalinski stated that she was pleased that core classes were decreased to an average size of 27. Middle School gained about 200 more students and the additional FTE was helpful. The principals have put a plan together on how to restructure if they need to add in a new team. They did a good job and the parents were flexible. Regarding a few large classes, Carol Comeau asked if adjustments would be made. Ms. Opalinski stated that she likes to wait until after Thanksgiving to see if more military students show up.

Mike Henry stated that he is proud of the numbers and that the average class size is down in seven of eight departments. There are 134 fewer classes this year that are 35 and over. About 70 percent of those classes are physical education classes. There has been an increase of 100 classes with 20 students each. There are some serious remediation efforts that are taking place in the high schools and by design, they have taken the students that have not passed the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam. There are also smaller reading, math and writing classes. Many of the AP courses have fewer than 20 students. Registration went smoothly because they hired counselors to come back early with the Learning Opportunity Grant money. Curriculum principals did an excellent job in putting the master schedule together. Rita Holthouse stated that she hoped that as we try to have the remedial classes smaller, there is also an effort to include having some of the advance classes under 20 as well. Ms. Comeau commented that because of the Learning Opportunity Grant and the additional \$70 per student this year, there is enough flexibility so the principals can do that. They are able to give more funds so they can have more remedial classes and not penalize the others. Ms. Holthouse asked if the regular education counselors receive assistance from the special education and bilingual counselors. Jerry Sjolander and Maxine Hill stated that they do assist the regular education counselors. Rita Holthouse requested information regarding the Case Manager position in the Weekly Report.

Jerry Sjolander spoke to the Board regarding the Special Education Program and noted projections and the needs of the different special education programs in the school. Speech/Language services have large caseloads due in part to vacancies in that department and the inability to attract new staff. OT/PT services have more students. Tim Steele explained his concern with special education problems, especially paperwork load. Jerry Sjolander stated that the paperwork has increased.

They are looking at some computerized systems and file sharing programs to enable staff to access IEPs of students who have moved to another school. Jerry Sjolander explained the step system and the student's ability to move from one level to another and transition from Whaley to a regular school.

Regarding Gifted Education, Jerry Sjolander stated that they are close to projections. Carol Comeau commented that there is discussion for a model and there may be a pilot program in a couple of schools. At this time the students are spending too much time on the bus and not enough time on instruction. They need to find a way to better address the needs of the students.

Maxine Hill spoke to the Board regarding the continued growth of the Bilingual Education program. There has been an increase of 532 bilingual students over last year's enrollment. The Newcomer Center has experienced a lot of growth. Carol Comeau stated that they may need to increase staff. Ms. Hill will work with Dale Cope and Pat McDowell.

The Board recessed at 7:55 p.m. and reconvened at 8:10 p.m.

ASD Memorandum #84 - End-Of-Month Membership Summary For September 30, 2001

The end-of-month membership report for September 30, 2001 is attached. The total active enrollment at the end of September was 49,676, a gain of 156 students from the September 30, 2000 total of 49,520.

Table 1 compares the membership on September 30, 2001 with the totals from September 30, 2000.

Carol Comeau stated that the actual enrollment is 49,676 students. The school-by-school counts have been added to this report. Rita Holthouse mentioned the overcrowding at Ptarmigan and asked how it was working. Patricia McRae stated that the students are taking a bus to Chester Valley and it is working well. Carol Comeau stated that parents wanted this as a solution and that is why it has gone well.

Sand Lake is over 120 capacity and Ms. Holthouse asked if there were any plans to help with the overcrowding. Carol Comeau stated that there is the possibility of one relocatable on site and the Administration will work with MOA to see if we can put one somewhere on site. Ms. Comeau stated that eventually we may need to add a couple of classrooms since

the other neighborhood schools nearby are full.

Rita Holthouse commented on the high school enrollment and how it compared to last year's report. The high schools that are growing are not where the opinion is that they are growing. The growth seems to be in the East/West Area. The opinion is that the growth is happening in the South Anchorage and Chugiak area. Carol Comeau stated that the demographics are changing. The only way to solve the problem is the new middle school in Muldoon.

Peggy Robinson stated that there are a number of schools right below 120 percent, i.e. Bayshore, Taku, Tudor, and Susitna. Ms. Comeau stated that we continue to monitor these schools and will have to look at boundary changes. Peggy Robinson commented that when working on projects for bonds and bringing up the capacities, we've been typically listing instructional classrooms and not on the square footage. The State and the other districts look at the basis of square footage. We also need to look at converting over to looking at the square footage. Ray Amsden stated that Facilities developed a new standard of capacity based on the DEED. Carol Comeau stated that it would be helpful if the next membership report has this information. Tim Steele added that it might be helpful if we were to report both of them.

#### ASD Memorandum #85 - Facility Project Report For The Month Of September, 2001

The monthly Facility Project Report Update and Change Order Report for the month of September is attached. There are no exceptions to report this month.

#### ASD Memorandum #86 - Project Status Report

This is a report of activities and project status changes in Major Capital Projects during the period of October 4, through October 15, 2001.

Ray Amsden mentioned that we continue to try to minimize disruption as much as possible and will provide a separate report on Chugiak High School, per Carol Comeau's request.

#### ASD Memorandum #87 - Status Report: Submission Of Discretionary Grants, First Quarter

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

Carol Comeau stated that the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative grant was not funded. Rita Holthouse mentioned that no school district in Alaska received the grant. There could be something that is causing the districts to get marked down. The comments of the grant readers have been requested.

ASD Memorandum #88 - Conflict Of Interest: First Quarter Report  
FY 2001-2002

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 first quarter report for the FY 2001-2002 school year.

ASD Memorandum #68 - Out-Of-District Travel - First Quarter Report  
FY 2001-2002

The attached Travel Report summarizes the travel taken by District employees and School Board members during the first quarter of FY 2001-2002 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 #51 - Operating Budget Transfers - July/August/  
September Monthly Report FY 2001-2002

The attached report of budget transfers for the time period of July/August/September 2001 that were processed in the Integrated Financial Accounting System (IFAS) includes the following.

Peggy Robinson commented on the recruitment incentives. Jerry Sjolander explained the \$3,000 recruitment incentive, which depends on years of experience.

J. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Theresa Obermeyer commented that the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association meets this week and she is optimistic that her husband will pass the bar.

K. COMMUNICATION & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

Peggy Robinson commented that the ASAA approved sanctioning girls' bowling for this year. She and Jim Taylor went to a Title IX presentation.

L. EXECUTIVE SESSION –  
(PERSONNEL/FINANCE/NEGOTIATIONS/LITIGATION)

M. ADJOURNMENT

The Regular Meeting of October 22, 2001, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:50 p.m. October 22, 2001.

---

Peggy Robinson, President

---

Harriet Drummond, Clerk

---

Date Minutes Approved