

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 27, 2004

The Anchorage School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, September 27, 2004, at 6:44 p.m. in the Board Room, at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President, Tim Steele, presided.

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

Others Present: Jan Christensen, Enid Hunter, Mike Henry, Patricia McRae, Gail Opalinski, Jerry Sjolander, Eric Tollefsen, Janet Stokesbary, George Vakalis, Loretta Nabong, Ray Amsden, Pam Chenier, Stan Syta, Mark Mew, Rhonda Gardner, Michelle Egan, Larry Wiget, Brian Griggs, LTC David Jones, Robin Siegfried, the press, and other interested people.

- A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE, Tim Steele Presiding
- B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Macon Roberts announced that he attended the discipline training at KCC on September 14. This is a promising program that is meant to train teachers and principals from middle and elementary schools on proactive school wide discipline. The trainer trains the attendees who in turn train their fellow teachers at their schools to notice the type of behavior that eventually leads to suspension or expulsions. Mr. Roberts added that he would like the administration to comment on the success of the program later. Ms. Comeau replied that the administration would be happy to arrange that a later date.

Mary Marks announced that there would be an Audit Sub Committee at 10:00 tomorrow. Ms. Marks also mentioned that the schools held their open houses this week. It was exciting to have the parents meet the teachers for the new school year. The excitement is high and it is good to see the school year kick off well.

Jeff Friedman announced that the Policy Sub Committee would meet at 8:30 on September 30, and will be continuing the charter school discussion.

Crystal Kennedy announced that the Legislative Sub Committee would meet next Wednesday at noon. The committee has worked with Larry Wiget to put together information in regards to the candidate forums ASD

is hosting for all of the legislative seats in the municipality. Information regarding the forums is in the back of the boardroom.

Jake Metcalfe announced that there would be a "Walk to School" program at the beginning of the month. Tim Steele added that one of the ceremonies for the program will be held at North Star Elementary School. This safety program will be held on October 6. Mr. Steele commented that walking to school is a serious issue. Through this program we are able to receive input from the students and parents and identify the problems as well as the good routes to pass on to the students and parents.

John Steiner announced that a dedication ceremony is to be held at Wendler Middle School. Carol Comeau added that the ceremony, which is a dedication of the newly renovated building, would be on October 1, 11:30 a.m. at Wendler Middle School. The public is invited to attend.

Tim Steele reminded the public to fill out questions for the candidates on the forms in the back of the boardroom. Crystal Kennedy announced that there would be a forum on October 4 at Clark Middle School for the northern and eastern area candidates. Dimond High School will host the candidate forum on October 5 for the southern and western areas of Anchorage.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by: Jeff Friedman that the Agenda be approved as revised.
seconded by: John Steiner

The motion to approve the Agenda was unanimously approved as revised with a revision to the attachment of ASD Memorandum #7.

D. SPECIAL ADVISORY REPORTS

1. Student Advisory Board

Lorett Nabong stated that the Student Advisory Board held its meeting on September 20, 2004. Mr. Nabong thanked Jan Christensen, Gail Opalinski and Carol Comeau for attending and hopes that board members would be able to attend some of the future meetings. The board had elections for president and vice president. The board also discussed the Bear Necessities drive - a clothing drive and competition throughout the high schools. The board also spoke about the legislative candidate forums sponsored

by the district and the Youth Vote, which will be held on October 20. Carol Comeau spoke to the board on the bonds and budget. Each high school has something planned in support of the Mayor's Diversity Week and the minorities that attend the schools.

2. Military Delegate

LTC Jones reported that he attended two school open houses and was very impressed at the quality of the schools. LTC Jones commended ASD on its website. The teachers at both schools told the parents how to get information off the school websites. Many parents LTC Jones has spoken to appreciate the usefulness of the ASD website and especially appreciate the HSGQE information and sample that is located there. LTC Jones also mentioned that the new Eagle River area high school naming committee would meet tomorrow.

Carol Comeau reminded everyone that all of the candidates are invited to the debates.

Lorrett Nabong commented that the Student Advisory Board discussed questions under consideration as a student advisory board. These range from a graduated drivers license question to the HSGQE to Alaska Legislature funding of candidates' campaigns. The question that they unanimously agreed to focus on was "should funding for K-12 education be allocated so that more of it goes to the students in schools that are not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)."

3. M.E.C.C.

Mr. William Johnson was not able to attend but provided a written report to the Board.

E. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Guy Okada, President of the Anchorage Principals Association, spoke to the Board regarding the negotiations for the APA contract. Mr. Okada stated that many principals joined him tonight to remind the board members that mediation will begin on Wednesday morning. Mr. Okada stated that he hopes to give the principals good news Thursday of a contract proposal that they can vote on. Mr. Okada asked the board members to please try to understand what it is like to meet goals and

challenges only to have their salaries frozen and work under the terms of an expired contract. The principals work collaboratively with parents, students, and the community to create schools that all would be proud of and they expect fair and equitable compensation for their efforts. The principals would like to put their contract dispute behind them with an amicable and swift settlement. They trust the board members will do what they can to make it happen.

Jim Kubitz spoke to the Board regarding planning money for West High School. Mr. Kubitz reported that he attended the September 7 Assembly meeting at which the assembly members dropped the funding for the planning money for West High School from the ballot because they were concerned that since it does not qualify for debt reimbursement it may bring the ballot down. Mr. Kubitz requested the board members to consider finding funding for the planning money. Mr. Kubitz introduced Susan Sullivan head of the alumni association and a West High School graduate and parent, Jim Bailey, principal, Dan Quinn, Ira Perman, and Virginia McKinney, who are parents of students at West High School joining him at tonight's meeting to let the Board know that they do not want to lose another year for this project. Mr. Kubitz reminded everyone that Susan Sullivan and Mary Mystrom came before the Board several years ago and requested the money for the remodeling of West High School, but that was 12 years ago. West High School now has 1900 students, and with Romig Middle School at 800 students under the same roof, it is a very large school on a very small site. Mr. Kubitz commented that it is difficult to compete with the tracks shared with Romig Middle School. Mr. Kubitz indicated that even though West is the only high school not on the November ballot, they will support the funding for the other schools. They really hope that ASD will try to find the funding since there is a lot of momentum at West High School right now because they have a great strong parent group and alumni association. Mr. Kubitz mentioned that the Rasmussen Foundation pledged to match funds they receive in order to replace seats in the auditorium.

Mary Marks commented that she is also a West High School graduate and appreciated the group bringing this forward. Ms. Marks assured the speaker that the Board will be looking at this. Crystal Kennedy asked Mr. Kubitz what he feels needs to be renovated at West High School.

Jim Kubitz replied that the math wing is old and worn out. Rooms do not meet specs for the classes offered to students. The hallways are not as big as they need be. The shared library is an issue - whether or not it works.

It needs a planner to take a good look at it and come up with a recommendation as to how it can work in today's world.

Jeff Friedman thanked the speaker for coming and for his dedication and support. Mr. Friedman added that there are other schools also in desperate need as West High School is as well. We have issues at Chester Valley, south Anchorage area and all over. Mr. Friedman stated that he has learned that we as a district can move up as a group or down and we need to stick together and support each other. Mr. Friedman feels there is support for getting money for West if we can find it and hopefully there is support for these other projects from the West community as well. Mr. Kubitz agreed that there is no shortage of things to do.

John Steiner commented that he also appreciated the speaker and he had been in support of having the money for the planning go on the bond. Mr. Steiner agreed that there needs to be something done if it is at all possible, so that the project does not slide behind.

Carol Comeau thanked the West High School group for their testimony at the Assembly meeting. Ms. Comeau explained that one of the things the District will look to is the fund balance or another source in order to bring a recommendation forward for planning money to identify the needs. Then we will be able to move forward, depending on how the bonds come out in November, and see where we can put it in the cue for design and construction. First we need to identify exactly what we need to do to support the educational program. Ms. Comeau is hoping to look at the opportunity with the Rasmussen Foundation and the alumni association to see if there can be some part of a match with that as well. Those are the two things that the administration needs to take some time to assess and then a recommendation will be brought back to the Board.

Tim Steele asked Mr. Kubitz if there is a committee established to discuss what needs to be done. Mr. Kubitz replied that he went to a couple of PTA meetings and there is an improvement committee. There is a large strong parent group that wants to participate in what needs to be done. Ms. Comeau added that first we have to identify the funds and bring the recommendation to the Board first.

Pam Keck spoke to the Board regarding safe walking routes to Bayshore Elementary School and Mears Middle School. Bayshore children are walking across streets through parking lots and between cars. The speaker suggested that perhaps they all need to learn to walk on one side. When you exit the school and take a right there is a curve, cars, bushes,

and kids and it is frightening. There is one crossing guard when you enter the school, but before you enter the school you have cars parked by an area where the students are crossing.

The speaker also mentioned that there is an area on 100th that goes to Resolution Point - at .6 miles and there is no room on either side - they have to walk on the road. It is less than a mile and half so there is no bus service. There is a greenbelt but the greenbelt is another ditch so they would have to go in the ditch and over the hill to get to into Bayshore and cut all the way through Bayshore. The speaker sees this as an opportunity to put a bus in there. The high school bus already comes back in there. It is paved and has two cul de sacs to turn around and would eliminate the congestion at the school. The speaker wants to find a safer way for the students.

Ms. Comeau asked the speaker to give her information in writing to Steve Kalmes.

Theresa Obermeyer reminded board members that she was a school board member 14 years ago and is now a 59 year old adult and the way she is treated is not going to change her because she knows who she is. The speaker expressed her concern about all of the children that she will never meet and that she feels there are a lot of wonderful people in the ASD and there is also a lot of evil. Ms. Obermeyer proclaimed that she has always been focused on educational law and that is what she knows best and it has been her career her whole life. Ms. Obermeyer mentioned that she has sued the University of Alaska and is proud of it, and at the end of it she had to write a check for \$17,161.00 in 1986. Ms. Obermeyer hoped that the board members would check her website at www.tobermeyer.info. Ms. Obermeyer stated that as an educator she has a property interest in her career but she was foolish enough to give up a paying job because she thought she could help the children more. Ms. Obermeyer added that she should have stayed in her job and get help concerning her property interest and career. Ms. Obermeyer mentioned that she has spent a decade defending herself against fabricated court charges.

F. CONSENT AGENDA

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

1. Approval of Minutes:

- Special Meeting - August 2, 2004 4:30 p.m.
- Regular Meeting - August 2, 2004 6:30 p.m.
- Special Meeting - August 16, 2004 4:00 p.m.
- Special Meeting - August 23, 2004 4:30 p.m.
- Regular Meeting - August 23, 2004 6:30 p.m.

2. ASD Memorandum #30 – School Board Policy Revisions: Section 350 – Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs and Section 351.1 – Observance of Religious Holidays (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading, the proposed attached changes to School Board Policy 350 Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs and 350.1 Observance of Religious Holidays.

3. ASD Memorandum #7 – Aquarian Charter School Changes

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the proposed revisions to the Aquarian Charter School charter.

4. ASD Memorandum #50 – Personnel Report

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

The following memoranda were removed from the Agenda: Memorandum #30, #50.

ACTION:

Moved by: John Steiner
seconded by: Jeff Friedman

to approve the Minutes of Special Meeting of August 2, 2004 4:30 p.m.; Minutes of Special Meeting of August 2, 2004 6:30 p.m.; Minutes of Special Meeting of August 16, 2004 4:00 p.m. ; Minutes of Special Meeting of August 23, 2004 4:30 p.m.; Minutes of Regular Meeting of August 23, 2004 6:30 p.m. ; and Memorandum #7

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum #30 – School Board Policy Revisions: Section 350 –
Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs and Section 351.1 –
Observance of Religious Holidays (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading, the proposed attached changes to School Board Policy 350 Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs and 350.1 Observance of Religious Holidays.

MOTION:

Moved by: Crystal Kennedy to approve ASD Memorandum #30 .
seconded by: Mary Marks

Carol Comeau explained that this has been an issue that has been discussed for a good part of a year. Anchorage has become diverse and along with that diversity we are finding challenges that have come before us from many families saying that they want to make sure that we are aware that their children deserve to feel comfortable in school year-round and not just at certain times of the year. Some of the issues that came forward were a lack of balance in music programs, overabundance of art activities surrounding Christmas, and a number of things. Ms. Comeau then asked Dr. Enid Hunter to convene a committee to look at this issue and the current policy and develop some guidelines, which were done and distributed last year. Ms. Comeau added that she is very pleased with where we are with the proposed changes.

Jan Christensen commented that it would be good for Dr. Hunter to talk about the committee and guidelines, which were disseminated throughout the District. Then the committee came forward to the Policy Sub Committee, where their recommendations were accepted with just a few word changes.

Dr. Enid Hunter reported to the Board that the committee had lots of people to the table, some with very strong views and they met several times. The committee utilized the framework neutrality requirements that the District of Columbia public schools used to develop guidelines to go to

schools, principals and staff members to use and to determine what activities and how to focus in and better understand what activities are appropriate and what balance is. It is a very difficult area because it concerns strong feelings by a lot of people. The guidelines were distributed last November and feedback was positive. It increased awareness and sensitivity. Dr. Hunter added that she thinks that what they did was that they just got back to focusing on the importance of using instructional time for instructional purposes. Dr. Hunter further stated that it was a long and arduous process but a very rewarding one.

Jeff Friedman commended Dr. Hunter and the committee for the work they did on this. It was very well done and simple to look at. It was easy for the Policy Sub Committee to listen to the reasons for the changes, and do only minor tweaking. It was a rewarding process because it was so well done before it came to the sub committee. Mr. Friedman commented that in several places it refers the staff back to what is the educational value of what they are doing - how it fits in the curriculum. That is something these days we all have to be asking ourselves more and more and Mr. Friedman is glad that it is included in policy here and probably will be in other places as well.

Crystal Kennedy appreciated this and the effort that went into this issue as well as Mr. Friedman's comment regarding getting back to focusing on student achievement and what the goal really is. Ms. Kennedy asked if there is a definition for the term "religiously neutral" that is used. Ms. Kennedy stated that it left a few questions in her mind because it talks about being religiously neutral in observance of a religiously significant holiday. Ms. Kennedy wondered how you could do both in the same sentence that way. Dr. Hunter replied that we are people with very strong traditions and our school system has been built around a lot of these. The term "religiously neutral" means you have to ask yourself, "is it balanced and are all stakeholders represented?" You can't make it sterile but you can create a real awareness and dedication to make whatever you are doing neutral.

Carol Comeau gave the following example, which has been dealt with in a number of schools for a number of years: There is a heightened interest, especially in elementary schools, from Thanksgiving to Christmas, or Winter Break. In many cases there is a preponderance of focus on Christian music, Christmas music, etc. and complete exclusion of recognition of the holidays important to the Jewish community and other religious and cultural groups. Many parents have said that their children do not feel comfortable coming to school during this time because their

beliefs are being completely ignored and not acknowledged. Ms. Comeau had a number of meetings with religious groups who asked when we are going to get to the point of being a religiously neutral school district. Every student should feel comfortable all year long. It has become an increasing issue over the last couple of years. Ms. Comeau added that to her, religious neutrality means that if someone brings up a tradition or custom from one religion they ought to do enough research to bring up examples of others so that children understand that there are multiple religious beliefs in the United States, and certainly in Anchorage.

Crystal Kennedy asked if this particular change in policy gets us there. Ms. Kennedy commented that it seems that there are probably a lot of ways to interpret this and wondered how something like this is implemented. Dr. Enid Hunter stated that she thinks it is a response to the community and used the example of putting a tree with decorations on it in the lobby and someone was upset by it because they thought it was a Christmas tree when it was actually called a "giving tree." To say no trees at all is going to do nothing but create a lot of confusion and hard feelings among people. To really try to work with someone who has a question about it and explain and hear is the purpose of this whole thing. Several incidents did come up where a constituent went to the principal and a very wonderful discussion came out of it and the problem was solved. Dr. Hunter added that she thinks this needs to be a guideline and not a hardened fast rule. Superintendent Comeau stated that it is essential that every teacher know the students in their classrooms. When they start doing activities they need to be sensitive. If we want our public schools to accept all children as equals, which they are, then we have to be sensitive to all of their needs to feel comfortable every day - not just some of the time. Ms. Comeau added that this is similar to our candidate policy. If you invite one you have to invite all. People told Ms. Comeau that they offered to go into a classroom to discuss the holidays of the Jewish faith and the teacher didn't know enough about it and felt very uncomfortable so thought she could not teach about it at all. That is not true at all, and by laying out these guidelines and by recognizing that there is a difference between proselytizing in a classroom than there is in educating and teaching about all the different cultural traditions or religious holidays. That is perfectly acceptable. Ignoring them because someone does not know about them or does not personally agree with them is not acceptable. We are trying to give our employees guidelines so they will feel more comfortable when a parent does come in and offers to talk to the class or wants to bring up an issue that their child feels uncomfortable and bring that issue forward. In the past, some parents did not feel

comfortable bringing the issue forward. The parents need to feel comfortable bringing these kinds of things forward to us.

Jeff Friedman stated that, from the policy committee prospective, the idea in policy of trying to give general guidance of philosophy, which is that we don't want to prohibit discussion of religion in school at all, but we don't want to make it so that only some people feel comfortable talking about religion. So, the idea that we don't promote or inhibit religious views and try to recognize that other people may need some help from the teacher in bringing other viewpoints to the classroom is in the policy. The administrative guidelines may change as we get more experience with this and other things happen. They may become quite detailed. At this point we are not able to say, and the Board should never be able to say what the administrative guidelines should be, but we are not able to put a whole lot of measurable detail in because there is a lot of judgment calls involved. Mr. Friedman further commented that the broad guidelines of the policy are what we are trying to get at and he feels they are good.

Ms. Kennedy appreciated the comments and assurance to her concern that this isn't to the exclusion of any particular group or opinion of someone.

Macon Roberts pointed out that it is good that the parents have the discretion about it, because in the new policy the parents have the option of taking the student out of the program without any punitive action to the student.

John Steiner commented that in the third sentence after speaking of the constitutional requirements to maintaining religious neutrality, we state, "The district should neither encourage, discourage nor disparage religious beliefs or activities." Mr. Steiner stated that the possibility would be to talk about balanced discussion but you can't balance in the sense of every single possible way of believing on a topic but you can be neutral in not endorsing, disparaging or discouraging any particular one. Throughout this new policy, not only is the neutrality word used but also the word "diversity." We talk about diverse beliefs, a variety of beliefs, and respecting mutual understanding of other beliefs. So it is absolutely not to stifle all discussion but to make sure that there is a broad recognition of a variety out there and that it not be lost.

Jake Metcalfe asked Mr. Friedman what the policy committee members' vote was on this going forward to the Board. Mr. Friedman replied that the vote was 2-0 with one person absent.

Mr. Metcalfe announced that he was ready for the question and supports this on first reading based on the fact that it sets a good policy and a good way to address these issues. When we are living in a global society like we are now it is important that our students learn about different religions and cultural groups and get a fair balance of education in those matters. That will make this society a lot more tolerant.

Tim Steele commented that he thinks this is the great way to go and tries to put more tolerance, fairness and understanding into the process. It also focuses on the educational value of what is going on. Mr. Steele thinks it way over-due and it is a good step in the right direction.

Crystal Kennedy questioned the statement, "Students shall not be graded on participation or non participation in any of the above events." Ms. Kennedy asked if this is talking about particular events that do not acquire a grade or do we need to put in something there in terms of there will be alternative assignments and assessments for those wanting to opt out of participating? Ms. Comeau replied that she does not feel that needs to be added. If someone objects to being part of a music program, for instance, and it's a part of a class, and it is in direct conflict with religious beliefs, there needs to be some accommodation on the front end of that. There are other times when supplemental literature could need to be substituted in a class if it is something that would need to be substituted. Ms. Comeau feels it is sufficient the way it is because it has been discussed with our teachers for a long time to work with parents and it will vary depending on what the issue is at the time.

Mr. Steele asked the superintendent what kind of training will occur and how will this new policy be introduced to the personnel in the schools. Ms. Comeau responded that after this has passed the second reading it will be distributed to the executive directors who will discuss the changes with the principals and they will go over them with their staff. The word will go out to the parents and it will be on the website. Jan Christensen will give it to MECC and anyone else with advisory groups. Dr. Hunter will work with the curriculum coordinators and staff development.

John Steiner commented on religious symbols. One of the points made in the process is that there are some things that are not religious per say, such as candy canes, mistletoe, etc. which never the less have an association with a holiday and if we go overboard plastering rooms with Santa Clauses we may appear to be endorsing a particular holiday. The administrative guidelines mentions religious symbols and does not cover that aspect of it. The administration might want to take a look at it so that

teachers are conscious of that distinction which is not in the past policy but was a particular interest in this process. Ms. Comeau replied that she thinks that is the example that Ms. Hunter gave with the tree and how it gets changed from what it has been. They need to think through how much instructional time; whether it is the artwork or music or writing assignment; and to really keep these kinds of guidelines in mind. This will be discussed with the principals as soon as this is past through second reading.

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

ASD Memorandum #50 – Personnel Report

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

MOTION:

Moved by: Jeff Friedman to approve ASD Memorandum #50.
seconded by: John Steiner

VOTE:

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

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

The Board recessed at 8:45pm and reconvened 8:55 pm.

G. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

ASD Memorandum #51 – Enrollment Status Update For FY 2004-2005

As of September 20, 2004, the tenth day of school, the Anchorage School District has achieved 99.6 percent of its September 30, 2004 projected membership. The September 20, 2004 total of 49,315 students is 184 students from the September 30th projected of 49,499.

ASD Memorandum #52 – Profile of Performance 2003-2004

The Profile of Performance is the Anchorage School District (ASD) report to the School Board and the community on the academic achievement of Anchorage students and schools. The report is divided into two parts. Each is briefly described below:

Part I provides an overview of the District and the success of the District in meeting the School Board Goals for the 2003-2004 school year.

Part I of the report also provides a summary of performance across the entire District on a variety of indicators used in the identification and analysis of achievement gaps among the ethnic and other groups designated by the federal No Child Left Behind act and related Alaska state regulations.

Part II of the report provides summary profiles for each of the Anchorage schools. Part II includes information on the attainment of school goals, staff and student demographics, and student academic achievement at the school level.

Superintendent Comeau announced that this is our major report card to the community about the performance, from various perspectives, of the 2003 - 2004 school year. The Administration has gone through an assessment of the School Board goals from last year and how they made progress or did not make progress in some areas. The Administration would like to discuss some ideas on how to improve in those areas over time.

Ms. Comeau thanked the instructional and assessment divisions for their fine work. It is a lot of detail work, especially since NCLB is upon us. It is also a lot of work due to the deadlines established by the federal government and the state, as well as the District's deadline by the end of September to issue this major report card to the community. The Administration would like to discuss this year's School Board goals at the first October meeting.

Jan Christensen introduced Ed McLain and complimented Dr. McLain and his team for their outstanding job on this report.

Dr. McLain began the PowerPoint presentation and reviewed with the Board the data, which came from multiple sources - the Department of Education as well as various departments. This is important. It has been a

big piece behind the efforts this year. It really helps to make sure that all of the information is linked together. This is one of the big changes. They have made sure that they are pulling all the sources from the related data processes. Dr. McLain thanked the staff at IT and the student management system for their work with them. The Profile is presented in two parts. The first is the district achievements and the second is the individual school achievements, which is the bulk of the report. Each one is designed in the same format with demographic data and achievement data. The report is available on paper as well as on the ASD Website.

Dr. McLain explained the demographics enrollment and NCLB information. There is a new table, which speaks to the primary language groups. Dr. McLain reiterated that it is really an important piece of information because it does show some of the diversity. When we speak about languages spoken at home we are referring to the primary language. Dr. McLain commented that he is sure we have a great number of homes where there's English and another language spoken, but it would appear from Page 15 that we do have a sizeable percentage of students who come from homes where a language other than English is the mode of communication.

The primary focus tonight is the ASD Mission and Goals. The goals are worked with at the beginning of the year to form templates that are then shared with the various instructional divisions. They then received the data from them and from the SMS. Dr. McLain thanked the Board members for providing them with number targets because it is one thing to speak about increased achievement and decreased or non achievement but they provided them with numbered targets so they can now talk about how far above and below, which is very useful when reviewing the charts.

The fourth section covers the other profile indicators, the SAT and ACT reports, and the parent/student surveys. This section also includes the glossary of terms.

The measurements used for state, district and site NCLB and state reporting and accountability are the Terra Nova - CAT 6 for grades 4,5,6 & 9; the State Benchmark Tests for grades 3,6 & 8; and the HSGQ for grade 10 and students in grades 11 and 12 who have not passed all three parts. Also referenced and discussed are the District Reading Assessment (DRA) in grade 3; ACT and SAT and parent, student and staff survey results.

Mr. Steele thanked Ed McLain for the presentation and the Herculean work he and his staff have done.

Jeff Friedman asked Dr. McLain, "As board members what are the general conclusions we should reach from the report?"

Dr. McLain replied that one of the directors said, "Whatever the District puts its attention to it gets done." Dr. McLain stated that this would call for a greater focus at getting our students up to the proficient level. The Goal One is a critical one and Dr. McLain would hope it is seen as a call for some focus. That goes hand-in-hand with the second goal. The achievement in goals that relate to the AP and advanced scores show that while we are looking at bringing the basics up we are not looking at focusing on our obligations and efforts of our kids that are already proficient and are ready to advance, so he is glad to see those going hand-in-hand. As a final piece, Dr. McLain sees the drop-out rate reduction as an example of where we put focus on and got results and he thinks that is commendable.

While looking through the personnel report for teachers that were hired, and after doing a rough calculation, Jake Metcalfe came up with 2.5 percent Alaska natives being hired. Mr. Metcalfe anecdotally thinks that students within certain categories are going to do well if they have a certain percentage of teachers equal to the number of students that are in the school. Mr. Metcalfe suggested that one thing that could be added to the District demographics is the percentage of teachers in the different categories. Mr. Metcalfe thinks it is important that we diversify our teaching base at least, if not all levels of employees, within the District.

Carol Comeau commented that while reviewing the report last night she did the same thing and highlighted the candidates from the different ethnic groups. Ms. Comeau reported that she wants to talk to staff about getting an update and bring Ms. Bellamy and Mr. Tollefsen in to discuss what we have done in the last year on recruitment to diversify our teachers as well as administrators. Ms. Comeau added that she will schedule them to discuss this as part of either a goal for next year or to simply give the Board update on demographics of teaching staff.

John Steiner commented that in looking at the schools that had percentages of economic disadvantages on Page 17 under Tab 2 in the tables noted which schools were Title 1 schools and the percentages of kids that came from low income families, it looked like sometimes we had schools with higher percentages of economically disadvantages that

weren't Title I and Title I schools with slightly lower economically disadvantages. Mr. Steiner wondered if it has to do with signing up for free/reduced lunch and is it possible that at some of these schools that by a greater campaign to document it would qualify more schools for federal funding. Carol Comeau responded that the District is given a certain amount of Title I funding and then it is up to the District to identify the schools who meet the 50 percent or more qualifications. Patricia McRae explained that different formulas are used by Title I and by the demographics department to come up with these percentages. The Title I free and reduced lunch data is based on a count that is done in January and is based on all of the kids that are at that school that are eligible for free/reduced lunch on that date, and this data is arrived at by different means. Ms. Comeau replied that she was not aware of that and there needs to be clarification. In Ms. Comeau's past experience as a Title I principal all the free and reduced lunch forms were collected and turned in. All of those that met a 50 percent criteria made it into the mix of Title I and they took the allocation in Title I that was available and they divided it up. Ms. Comeau reiterated her comment that this needs to be looked at.

Mary Marks pointed out Table 8 on Page 22, which shows the six-year special programs population. It has bilingual migrant ed, Title I and the Indian Education program. In 03/04 it has 2654. Ms. Marks asked if that was the total number of families that sent in the questionnaire form to Indian Ed. Doreen Brown responded that it is the number of students served by Indian Ed staff. We counted 30 minutes as one session and that was the number of students that was served. The number of families is not indicated on this report.

John Steiner expressed the need for clarification on the evaluation of students successfully completing the Algebra I in grade 8, Geometry in grade 9 and Algebra 2 in grade 10. The language used in the summary part of the Profile of Performance memorandum talked about the numbers enrolled, which made Mr. Steiner question whether we are talking apples and oranges between enrolled and successfully completing. As Mr. Steiner added that the way he understands it, the numbers that are described there for enrolled are limited to the numbers that successfully completed it and successfully completing includes those grades D and above. Dr. McLain responded that Mr. Steiner is correct for purposes of this chart and recognized that whether one wants to consider D successful is one of those pieces that could be argued but they get credit for it. It is a tougher standard than simply enrolled. Enrolled and dropped out is not included. Mr. Steiner commented that he would tend not to consider D successful simply because if a student thought they were going to get a D

they probably would not want to move up to an advanced class and take it a year early. Ms. Comeau assured Mr. Steiner that the Administration will be looking at that. Most will say that C and above is successful. Mr. Steiner appreciated Ms. Comeau's comment and added that it would be interesting to compare the rate of the grade distribution compared to the grade distribution among the students who take it at normal grade level. That would show whether students who are volunteering or are encouraged to take it early are having successes at a greater or similar rate than those students who took it at the normal year. Mr. Steiner pointed out that since this showed a big jump this year, we should begin to see a big jump in the HSGQE at the tenth grade level as those students come through. It will be interesting to track that.

Mary Marks commented on the fact that some schools did not make AYP, and some are at level two and one school is at level three. Ms. Marks asked, "Who comes to the table to talk about the plan, and how is the message distributed to the community?" Jan Christensen replied that we are in the process of working with schools that are developing a plan. The Title I schools and the school at level one in particular, have a very specific document that they have to present to the state. Ms. Christensen explained that she and her staff have met with the principals and outlined what the state requirements are for the plan. The principals will bring the draft to Ms. Christensen, Julie Jessel, Patricia McRae, Gail Opalinski, and Rhonda Gardner. They also need to report on how they are communicating their plan and how they are working with staff and community to develop the plan, how they are looking at their data and targeting it. Ms. Christensen explained that she has also requested data from each classroom so she can take a look and get a good understanding of where students are specifically, as we are all really focusing on how to close the achievement gap. There has to be a peer review by state law before the plan is sent in. The superintendent will also meet with each principal and review the plan after Ms. Christensen and her team has reviewed it. The principal works with the staff, parent community, bilingual, migrant ed, Indian education, special education, etc. depending on which cells did not make AYP. Superintendent Comeau added that she will be asking the principals who was involved and how did they get the word out, how did they get the invitation out to these different entities so there was meaningful opportunity for input for the plan.

Mary Marks asked Ms. Comeau how the 21st Century Learning programs play into this. Ms. Comeau explained that these school improvement plans are day program plans. The 21st Century Learning program is an enrichment opportunity in certain schools. They can be incorporated into

the plan if that is how the school community comes forth. It is not necessarily what is going to be evaluated. The 21st Century program is a separate program funded by grants. It is not part of this profile of performance. Ms. Comeau stressed that she would certainly think that Clark or one of the other schools that has the 21st Century Learning program need to look at that student data, work with the school improvement planning effort and be part of that process, because that is what their whole purpose is - to enrich and enhance the academic program during the day.

John Steiner found interesting the information from the parent/student surveys. There were good comments and it was good to see that those who completed the surveys are generally satisfied. Mr. Steiner noticed a wide difference among the schools in the number of surveys that were returned at each school and it is hard to know whether some of the results would be different if the distribution at the schools would be different. Mr. Steiner asked the superintendent to comment if anything could be done to try to get more surveys returned. Ms. Comeau replied that it is difficult to get surveys returned. Every school works hard to get these out but it really comes down to whether or not parents choose to turn them in. Everything imaginable has been tried. Mr. Steiner thought that if some schools are successful it might be good to find out what they did to have more success in having surveys returned than those schools that did not.

Mr. Steiner wondered about the fact that the staff results were not available by school because they were submitted anonymously and Mr. Steiner thought this would be very useful information to have. Dr. McLain responded that this was the first year they did it by using My Learning Plan on the internet for easier access and they did not know that by choosing the anonymous would not allow them to get back the site specific information. This will be corrected for next year.

Tim Steele commented that it was interesting to see that the survey results fairly closely mirrored the results from the surveys that are done for the bonds and other independent surveys. Mr. Steele also commented that he thinks this is a much better document than in the past in terms of making it easy to see how we did with regards to the goals and the accomplishments we had. We can learn a lot from it. Mr. Steele looks forward to looking at the recommendation from the administration on the specifics of the Board's goals. We have probably made the easy progress on some of these but we also have a lot of data to see how we can make progress or identify some of the reasons for the anomalies we saw on those results. Mr. Steele added that he was pleased with how we did.

There are obviously some areas that we can learn from – certainly in the dropout rate and the effort to reduce that rate was successful. Not only did we have some increase in participation in the AP classes but we also had some broadening in terms of those groups that were participating in the advanced placement classes. It is tough to close a gap when the upper end is moving up as well, but that is what we want to do. We want to bring all of the kids along and we did. We not only moved the whole bar up but we also closed the gap a bit. So, this showed some successes and some ways to go. The AYP bar goes up this next year. In looking through, there are some schools that have already met it but there are also some that will struggle making that higher bar. We still have our work cut out for us.

Jake Metcalfe commented on a job well done and added that he is impressed at how available the information is to the public. Mr. Metcalfe asked if there was a media breakdown of information so the media can ask questions. Ms. Comeau replied that she was interviewed earlier today and the Administration would be available to meet with them if they would like. We will also have information readily available for them.

John Steiner expressed his concern on raising the bar for AYP and wondered if there was any consideration at the state level for making these a little more incremental rather than big leaps and then flat for three years. Laurel Vorachek explained that the reason they looked at three-year increments initially was that when you are looking at a new system the thought behind it was that you need time to get that system in place. It actually is our third year on this annual measurable objective. So we looked at three-year increments knowing then that we would have to make some significant jumps the last three or four years but also recognizing that there may be some changes in the law during that process. Because we are going to a new testing contractor and a new standards-based testing for grades 3 through 10, the state has asked the feds if they would let us maintain the same AMO for one more year. The federal government has not responded to that request yet. Ms. Comeau commented that the commissioner and former commissioner have always pushed hard for allowing credit for progress and growth and that is not being acknowledged. There are 18 or more states that have also requested the Department of Education to not only show this but to tell the real story of what teaching and learning is all about and give credit for progress and growth, even when people don't reach a certain bar. If they are making growth, that should be noted and applauded. So far Secretary Paige and his staff have not chosen to support that. Regardless of how this November election comes out we are hearing more and more that people

understand this and they are going to make some modifications to NCLB after the election. Ms. Comeau and Mr. Wiget met with Representative Don Young's aide and were told that Representative Young is working on drafting some proposed changes. Ms. Comeau discussed with her the need for progress and growth to be acknowledged. Ms. Comeau does not want to lose sight of what Dr. McLain said about raising all the kids and keeping the high achievers high and working hard to get more kids in those opportunities i.e. the higher level math and AP courses. We need to keep working on the higher level students as well as the middle level and not put all of our efforts and funding into just one part of a group of our students. They all need to be challenged to the highest level.

Mary Marks commented on the information on Page 21 regarding the special education population. Ms. Marks observed that the number of health impaired students increased by 56 students and the number of autism students increased by 15 students. Ms. Marks commented that we use a lot of titles and labels trying to figure out where our kids are at in academics, etc., for instance the number of children that come from low income families. Our highest one is at Mt. View, the second North Star, and the third is at Tyson. Ms. Marks warned people to not allow these labels to affect us in a way that we can't get past it. We need to set high standards of all of our students across the District and that is what the Board wants to achieve. Ms. Marks would hope that we as leaders can educate the parents as to how we can bring everyone going forward, along with the students that tend to hang on to these negative labels. They can achieve as much as the others. It is important that we not hang on to the title that one comes from a low economic area, etc. Our community needs to take ownership and accountability as well as the educators. When we have your child in our schools we don't look at you or your children in that fashion but we look at successful students. Ms. Marks does not like labels but understands that this book is a very valuable tool. It gives her a direction as to how she can ask her principals at her schools what they are doing with the money, how are they going to bring up the academics for the students, what are the resources that they are going to bring in and how are they going to communicate to our school business partners that we need their assistance? It is very important that our families be out there talking to the principals and taking these questions.

Jeff Friedman appreciated Ms. Mark's comments and stated that it is often discouraging to say we live in a multicultural society where we say everyone is treated equally and then we are breaking them down into groups and say we are looking at them differently. It helps to think that

we have to disaggregate this data into different groups but in the classroom they are disaggregating the data into groups of one. Is this child doing well? Does he need help in math; does she need help in reading? That is where the real teaching is going on. Mr. Friedman feels comfortable knowing the teachers are looking at each student as an individual.

Carol Comeau commented on what Dr. McLain said in the beginning of his presentation. The elementary reading initiative is a good thing to look at. Dr. McLain said when we focus on something and put our resources behind it we make significant gains. If you look at the history of the elementary K-3 reading initiative that has now morphed into the elementary reading initiative, Ms. Comeau thinks the proof is in the pudding because it is showing that more and more kids being successful by the end of third grade. It is through lots of training that is very targeted and very specific so that teachers have multiple strategies so they can look at individual students and what their needs are and figuring out what strategies are going to work for them. We need to do the same thing with math that we did with reading. Ms. Comeau will challenge the math department to look beyond a certain adoption to see what is working and not working. We have not poured our same amount of resources into our math program that we did in our reading program. The middle schools and high schools are making huge gains in reading also because of the Board's willingness to put funding towards that. It is paying off because they can not only read but they can read the content in their other courses as well. As we build our budget for next year, even with the gap and deficit that we always seem to have we need to look at where we want to target our resources that are going to show real results for all students, not just the low-achieving students. We can never lose sight of staff development for teachers, paraprofessionals and our principals. That is really when they succeed - when they have a lot of tools to assess and decide what approach is going to work best for those students. The most successes are through really focused, targeted, staff development, and plowing the resources in to really address certain things instead of trying to cover them all. That is always a challenge to make those decisions on what is really paying off and what needs more attention.

ASD Memorandum #45 - Semi-Annual Report of Professional/Consultant Services on Contracts Over \$10,000

In accordance with School Board Policy Section 725.132, the semi-annual report for Professional/Consultant Services on Contracts over \$10,000 for the period January 1, 2003 through June 30, 2003 is attached.

ASD Memorandum #3 - Campbell Elementary School Restroom Renovations - Emergency Procurement

In accordance with School Board Policy Section 725.23, Emergency Contracts, this memorandum reports action taken by the Administration to expedite the contract award for completion of the restroom renovation project at Campbell Elementary School, following termination of the original contract. A contract to complete this work was awarded under emergency procedures to Consolidated Contracting and Engineering in an amount not to exceed \$220,050.

ASD Memorandum #53 - Facility Change Order Report and Completed Projects for the Month of August 2004

The monthly Facility Change Order Report for the month of August 2004 is attached. There are no exceptions to report for this month.

The monthly Facility Change Order Report for the month of August 2004 is attached. There are no exceptions to report this month. There are no completed projects to report for this month.

ASD Memorandum #54 - Project Status Report

This is a report of activities and project status changes in Major Capital Projects during the period of September 2, 2004 through September 17, 2004.

- H. PERSONS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS
- I. COMMUNICATIONS & SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS
- J. EXECUTIVE SESSION-
(PERSONNEL/FINANCE/NEGOTIATIONS/LITIGATION)
- K. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Meeting of September 27, 2004, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:25 pm.

Tim Steele, President

Jeff Friedman, Clerk

Robin Siegfried, Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approved