

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

Regular Meeting

MINUTES

October 20, 2015

President Haas called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the board room of the FNSBSD Administrative Center at 520 Fifth Avenue. North Pole Middle School's 8th Grade Advanced Orchestra led the Pledge of Allegiance and performed for the board under the guidance of Barbara Nore, orchestra director.

President Haas read the district's mission statement: *"Our mission is to provide an excellent, equitable education in a safe, supportive environment so all students will succeed and contribute to a diverse and changing society."*

Present:

Heidi Haas, President
Wendy Dominique, Vice President
Allyson Lambert, Treasurer
Lisa Gentry, Clerk
Sue Hull, Member
Michael O'Brien, Member
Sean Rice, Member
Kobe Rizk, Student Representative

Absent:

Sean Williams, Post Representative
Richard Cole, Base Representative

Staff Present:

Dr. Karen Gaborik, Superintendent of Schools
Lisa Pearce, Chief Financial Officer
Sandra Kowalski, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education
Dan Schmidt, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education
Traci Gatewood, Executive Director of Human Resources
Dave Norum, Executive Director of Facilities Maintenance
Kathie Wassmann, Executive Director of Special Education
Melanie Hadaway, Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Janet Cobb, Executive Director of Technology
Sharice Walker, Director of Public Relations
Helen Clark, Director of Federal Programs
Sharon Tuttle, Executive Assistant to the Board

PRELIMINARY ITEMS

2015 Kids Voting Poster, Writing & Podcast Contest Winners [0:07:57]

Kids Voting North Alaska, in conjunction with the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, held a local poster, writing, and podcast contest for K-12 students. Michelle Daml, elementary curriculum coordinator, and Chad Hutchison, Kids Voting board member, made the presentation.

Podcast Contest – 1st Place Winner		
Grades 6-8	Kaiden Hafele	Barnette Magnet School

2015 Kids Voting Poster, Writing & Podcast Contest Winners (continued)

Poster Contest – 1 st Place Winners		
Grades 3-5	Emma Morrissey	North Pole Elementary School
Grades 6-8	Makayla Curtin	Barnette Magnet School
Grades 9-12	Kiara Simpson	West Valley High School

Spotlight: North Pole Middle School [0:14:19]

Rich Smith, North Pole Middle School principal, provided a spotlight on North Pole Middle School. Mr. Smith highlighted strategies the school used to recognize student achievement in both the areas of academics and behavior. As a school, they had adopted the "Grow Your Mind" philosophies that included various traits associated with each grade level. By adopting the common behavior expectations for common areas such as hallways and utilizing the CHAMP (Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, & Participation) framework, the school was seeing improvement throughout the building. Mr. Smith explained how the school acknowledged and rewarded students for no tardies and perfect attendance, both by month and by quarter. The rewards and recognition were inexpensive, but yet meaningful incentives such as gym time during lunch and being first in the lunch line.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

Board member discussion ensued. Board members appreciated Mr. Smith's presentation and liked the school's "Grow Your Mind" theme. They had questions and comments on the school's course offerings and attendance incentives. They were pleased to see rewards that were not costly, but yet were very effective and provided meaningful incentives for students. Board members commented on the CHAMP model and liked the philosophy of keeping students informed of expectations; students should never have to guess what was expected.

AGENDA [0:25:23]

GENTRY MOVED, RICE SECONDED, TO ADOPT THE AGENDA WITH CONSENT ITEMS.

The following consent items were moved:

accepted the Monthly Management Reports for September 2015 (pre-closed).

approved the minutes from the special meeting and work session on October 5, 2015, as submitted.

awarded IFB 16-F0002 for the purchase of a Van, Cutaway, Flat-Load Box with Dormer and Load Ramp to Seekins Ford Lincoln Mercury for \$53,347.28.

approved Randy Smith Middle School's request to send students to Spain and Portugal in June 2016, where students will study the culture of the countries, at no cost to the district, and if the State Department issues travel warnings, students will not travel.

approved Hutchison High School's request to send students to Belize, March 13-20, 2016, where students will study the culture of the country, at no cost to the district, and if the State Department issues travel warnings, students will not travel.

approved the Personnel Action Report for the period September 28 – October 9, 2015.

Consent Agenda (continued)

acknowledged the Personnel Information Report for the period September 28 – October 12, 2015.

acknowledged the Superintendent's Budget Transfer Report for October 20, 2015.

acknowledged the Long Term Suspension & Expulsion Report for the 2015-2016 school year, as of October 13, 2015.

acknowledged the Board's Reading File.

acknowledged the Coming Events and Meeting Announcements.

ADVISORY VOTE. 1 AYE: RIZK

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

7 AYES: RICE, O'BRIEN, HULL, GENTRY, LAMBERT, DOMINIQUE, HAAS

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS [0:28:03]

None

OLD BUSINESS

Included in the Consent Agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2016-06: Honoring Alaska Native and American Indian Heritage Month [0:29:02]

Resolution 2016-06 honored Alaska Native and American Indian Heritage Month and proclaimed the month of November 2015 for Native cultural activities throughout the district.

Core Value/Goal: Respect: Embody respect for the diversity and dignity of all.

RICE MOVED, LAMBERT SECONDED, TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2016-06:
HONORING ALASKA NATIVE AND AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH.

Mr. Rice read the resolution for the public record.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

BOARD QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

None

ADVISORY VOTE. 1 AYE: RIZK

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

7 AYES: DOMINIQUE, RICE, O'BRIEN, HULL, GENTRY, LAMBERT, HAAS

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

Superintendent Report [0:32:45]

Core Value/Goal: Effective Communication: Establish transparent and consistent communication to increase student, parent, staff, and community connectedness with the district.

Superintendent Report (continued)

Superintendent Dr. Gaborik reported on the lockdown earlier in the day at Arctic Light Elementary School. The evacuation went smoothly and the administration would be working with law enforcement regarding the incident.

The weather continued to be a challenge. The administration was continuing their work with transportation and First Student on alternate bus routes. Dr. Gaborik explained alternate routes were sometimes a day-by-day event, depending on the situation of each route. The overall goal was not to cancel school and utilize alternate routes when possible. Dr. Gaborik extended her appreciation and thanks to parents for their cooperation and patience.

Dr. Gaborik brought the revised 2015-16 calendar to the board's attention. The calendar was adjusted for the inclement weather day on September 30, 2015. The last day of school for students was pushed back one day to May 19, 2016. The professional development day and teacher work day were also pushed back by one day each. The calendar had three inclement weather days built in to it. Having used one, there were two weather days left. Dr. Gaborik noted graduations dates would remain unchanged.

Dr. Gaborik reminded the public the board was recruiting for at-large members for their Parent Engagement, Board Diversity, and Board Curriculum Advisory Committees. The recruitment announcement was pushed out to PowerSchool and the district's Facebook page. The application deadline was Friday, October 23.

Dr. Gaborik announced the district's upcoming Partners in Education breakfast, scheduled for November 6 at 7:00 a.m. at Randy Smith Middle School. The breakfast would honor and thank businesses for their partnerships, donations, and contributions to the school district. Dr. Gaborik provided board members with a copy of the district's Education Tax Credit brochure. She also announced the recent appointment of Yatibaey Evans, the district's ANE coordinator, as president-elect of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA).

BOARD QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Board member discussion ensued. Item for information only; no action required. Board member comments and questions included the process for board member representatives on the Parent Engagement Committee, communication and notification to parents and students regarding alternate bus routes, status of classes with high student numbers, and a request for the number of students without computers, smartphones, or access to the Internet.

Dr. Gaborik provided an update on staffing at schools with high student numbers. Anderson Elementary added one teacher in the primary grades, Nordale added a full-time aide in kindergarten, and at Woodriver a teacher was added for a 2-3 split class.

Transportation Contract Update [0:45:08]

Lisa Pearce, chief financial officer, Renee Tonne, transportation coordinator, and Bart Grahek, director of procurement and warehousing, provided an update on the current status of the transportation contract.

Core Value/Goal: Effective Communication: Establish transparent and consistent communication to increase student, parent, staff, and community connectedness with the district.

Ms. Pearce reported First Student, the district's transportation company, was still facing many challenges – not enough drivers, attendants, and crossing guards; weather conditions; alternate routes; consistent and accurate communications; late drop-off and pick-up times; and other route issues. The statewide RFP for transportation services was also looming.

Transportation Contract Update (continued)

First Student currently provided 91 regular bus routes, 41 special education bus routes, 4 hazardous routes, 15 crossing guards, and activity transportation through charters. The company operated from two bases – one in town and one in the North Pole area. The average daily ridership was approximately 7,800 students. The district ran a three-tier system out of Fairbanks and a two-tier system out of North Pole to align with the staggered start times of elementary, middle, and high schools, which provided substantial cost savings. Buses were contracted on a daily rate basis, which meant the district paid for the bus if it had 5 students on one tier and 35 students on an earlier or later tier. In determining ridership and routes, the district utilized the Alaska Administrative Code, Title 4, Chapter 27, (4 AAC 27: Transportation of Pupils) which provided ridership guidelines and route determinations. The district worked hard to be consistent in adhering to the state guidelines.

Ms. Tonne spoke to First Student's current staffing needs, the district's late bus notification system, alternate bus route concerns, and communication to parents and students regarding alternate routes.

Mr. Grahek updated the board on the transportation contract. The district was in the fifth year of a five year contract. The current contract ran through August 2016. The district had an optional five year extension on the contract. Normally, the district would consider negotiating with the incumbent to try to exercise the extension option. However, through direction from the legislature, the Big 5 districts were asked to spearhead an effort to coordinate a more uniform pupil transportation solicitation. The idea was to try to get all five districts to seek bids at the same time and have as similar terms as possible. Other directives given were to obtain a ten year contract rather than a five year, with the thought it would increase competition, along with incorporating clauses for fuel adjustments and liquidated damages. Mr. Grahek spoke to the extreme challenges in starting school this year and the district seeking liquidated damages. Contractors needed to protect themselves against the worst case scenarios, which meant they factored in the cost of liquidated damages.

Fairbanks had some unique obstacles facing pupil transportation such as the weather and the need for indoor storage. Mr. Grahek reported the Big 5 districts had worked together to develop some common contract language; each district also had area-specific language to meet their unique needs. All five districts issued their request for bids at the same time and held pre-proposal conferences together. The period of solicitation was closed on September 29. The offers were being reviewed and they hoped to have things wrapped up in a couple of weeks. The district was working with Anchorage and Mat-Su to coordinate their announcements of intent to award at the same time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dewayne Taylor, 6438 Richardson Highway, a previous bus driver, spoke to several concerns regarding First Student, most of which were not new. Mr. Taylor wanted the board to know the concerns previously brought to their attention still existed and made for hazardous work conditions. Mr. Taylor's wife also drove a bus and he shared specific concerns to her bus and other buses, such as a lack of automatic chains and non-working radios. He urged the board to take a close look at First Student and what they were not providing before awarding them a contract.

Pat Moss, 2608 Roland Road, grandmother to district students, pointed out the transportation company was not the only company having trouble filling vacancies, but with such strict guidelines, it was becoming more difficult to hire personnel. Ms. Moss also spoke to the lack of communication and difficulties getting information regarding alternate routes to students and

Transportation Contract Update (continued)

parents. She was not allowed to use her cellphone at work, and when the power was out, she had no way to check her email or charge her phone. Even some of the radio and television stations were off the air because of no power. During the recent power outage, when she was unable to determine where her grandkids were, her grandson not knowing which route to get on, ended up walking eight miles home.

Patti Bryant, 2950 Northpoint Court, a Hutchison High School parent, spoke to the incident mentioned earlier, it was her son who walked eight miles home. Ms. Bryant spoke to the need for better communication – she received no call or any contact about her son. She was frightened for her son’s safety; fortunately, he made it home safely.

President Haas requested the transportation department work with Ms. Bryant to address her concerns.

Michael Campbell, 1045 Gaffney Road, Ft. Wainwright school liaison officer, expressed his gratitude to Ms. Tonne and her staff regarding post transportation. The department was a continuous supporter of Ft. Wainwright’s unique population and needs. With a rotating population and housing changes, the department had done a great job providing creative and innovative options to serve the post’s changing school zones and transportation needs.

BOARD QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Board member discussion ensued. Item for information only; no action required. Board member comments and questions included communication for parents and families without access to technology, liquated damages, alternate routes, OSHA and other regulations and state mandates governing First Student and pupil transportation, daily contract rates, transportation funding, quality control options, and contract oversight to address concerns.

The board noted the need to inform and educate students on safety and bus procedures so students were not putting themselves in harm’s way by walking home. The board also suggested parents and students be informed at the beginning of each school year on their regular bus and their alternate route.

Dr. Gaborik stated if the board was interested in an update on the transportation contract negotiations, she would recommend an executive session.

HULL MOVED, GENTRY SECONDED, TO CONVENE IN EXECUTIVE SESSION WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, TO DISCUSS TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT NEGOTIATION MATTERS, THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHICH, COULD HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE FINANCES OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT.

The board convened into executive session at 8:56 p.m. The board adjourned from executive session at 9:51 p.m. [1:55:47]

President Haas thanked Ms. Pearce, Ms. Tonne, and Mr. Grahek for the comprehensive report. She also thanked the individuals who testified.

BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS & COMMITTEE REPORTS [1:56:20]

President Haas, on behalf of the entire board thanked the North Pole Middle School orchestra and congratulated the Kids Voting Contest winners. She thanked Mr. Smith for the spotlight on North Pole Middle School; it was good to hear about the “Grow Your Mind” program. She congratulated Ms. Evans on her position of president-elect to the National Indian Education Association.

BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS & COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)

President Haas announced several upcoming meetings:

- Saturday, October 24, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. – Work Session with John Sedor – Board Training
- Wednesday, October 28 at noon – Special Meeting – Oath of Office & Board Reorganization
- Thursday, October 29 at 5:30 p.m. – Work Session with Borough Assembly
- Monday, November 2 at 4:00 p.m. – Work Session with Interior Delegation

Mr. Rice thanked Ms. Pearce, Ms. Tonne, and Mr. Grahek for the transportation report.

At 9:54 p.m.: [1:58:41]

HULL MOVED, O'BRIEN SECONDED, TO SUSPEND THE RULES AND CONTINUE THE MEETING UNTIL 10:15 P.M.

President Haas asked for and received no objection and continued the meeting.

Mrs. Hull provided an update on the State Board of Education. The state board approved the cut scores for the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) assessment. AMP data was tied up with issues and it was taking a little longer than expected to get the data to school districts. She shared a presentation by Dr. Susan McCauley which helped explain achievement data and new higher standards.

Mrs. Hull provided her input regarding topics from the recent legislative committee meeting, including funding, district cost factors, a possible resolution regarding the use of state reserve funds, the board's legislative leave-behind flyer, district fund balance, and the borough's lapse ordinance. She provided board members with a copy of a flyer regarding the lapse ordinance.

Mrs. Hull asked about the status of the teacher evaluation parent input form. Dr. Gaborik explained it was in the final stage of revision and should be out soon.

Mrs. Lambert thanked everyone for their reports and congratulated Ms. Evans on her appointment. She announced the Citizen Budget Review Committee would be meeting on Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in the board room.

Mrs. Dominique appreciated all the public testimony. It was good to hear from people and what was going on around the district. Mrs. Dominique requested information on the number of students/families in the district that did not have Internet access and/or smart phones.

Mrs. Gentry added her thanks for the presentations. There was a Career Technical Education Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for November 4, 2015 at 5:30 in room 341 on the third floor.

Mr. O'Brien thanked the North Pole Middle School orchestra and added his congratulations to Ms. Evans. He thanked Dr. Gaborik and her staff for their attention to the busing situation and working to make it better. Mr. O'Brien appreciated the administration addressing the board's concerns regarding some specific large classes and the addition of staff to Anderson, Nordale, and Woodriver.

Superintendent Dr. Gaborik announced:

- College and Career Fair, Wednesday, October 21 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Carlson Center for juniors and seniors
- Parent-Teacher Conferences, Monday and Tuesday, October 26 & 27

BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS & COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)

President Haas appreciated the Partners in Business breakfast and thought it would be a great way to recognize all that businesses throughout the community did for students and the district. She hoped board members would be able to attend. She invited board members to the Red Ribbon Kickoff at Arctic Light Elementary School on October 23 at 9:30 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 10:08 p.m.

Submitted by Sharon Tuttle, executive assistant to the Board of Education.