

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

Regular Meeting

MINUTES

October 7, 2008

President Hajdukovich called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the FNSBSD Administrative Center at 520 Fifth Avenue. Lathrop High School's Jazz Ensemble led the Pledge of Allegiance and then performed for the Board under the guidance of Dennis Degnan, band director.

Present:

Leslie Hajdukovich, President
Sharon McConnell, Vice President
Jennifer Schmidt, Treasurer
Wendy Dominique, Clerk
Kristina Brophy, Member
Sue Hull, Member
Michael Fitzgerald, Base Representative
Timothy A. Jones, Post Representative
Ken Sample, Student Representative

Absent:

Howard Thies, Member

Staff Present:

Nancy Wagner, Superintendent
Wayne Gerke, Assistant Superintendent – Secondary
Dave Ferree, Assistant Superintendent – Facilities Management
Mike Fisher, Chief Financial Officer
Kathy Hughes, Executive Director of Alternative Instruction & Accountability
Peggy Carlson, Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Bob Hadaway, Executive Director of Special Education
Ron Gherman, Executive Director of Library Media & Instructional Technology
Gayle Pierce, Director of Labor Relations
Elizabeth Schaffhauser, Director of Employment & Educational Opportunity
Louise Anderl, Director of Federal Programs
Bill Bailey, Director of Public Relations
Sharon Tuttle, Executive Assistant to the Board

Others:

Cynthia Klepaski, Assistant Borough Attorney

PRELIMINARY ITEMS

ESP of the Month

Dana Martin, Crawford Elementary School kitchen manager, was recognized as the Extra Special Support Staff Person for October 2008. Nutrition Services Director Amy Rouse made the presentation.

BP Teachers of Excellence

BP Representative John Ringstad introduced the 2007-2008 BP Teachers of Excellence, including the teacher of the year, Christine Villano.

Patricia Aikman
Patricia Behner
William Kilgore
Sonja Marshall
Christine Villano

Woodriver Elementary School
North Pole High School
Randy Smith Middle School
Barnette Magnet School
Denali Elementary School

Board Member Retirement

Sharon McConnell was retiring from the Board and was recognized for her service on the School Board. Ms. McConnell was first elected to the Board in 2005. During her term, she served as vice president, in addition to chairing the policy review committee. Board members shared their appreciation for Ms. McConnell's dedication and service. She would be greatly missed.

Spotlight: Weed & Seed

Weed & Seed, a community-based strategy sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), was an innovative, comprehensive multiagency approach to law enforcement, crime prevention, and community revitalization. The strategy involved a two-pronged approach – law enforcement agencies and prosecutors cooperated in “weeding out” violent criminals and drug abusers, and public agencies and community-based private organizations collaborated to “seed” much-needed human services, including prevention, intervention, treatment, and neighborhood restoration programs. A community-oriented policing component bridged the weeding and seeding elements. Officer Alana Malloy, of the Fairbanks City Police Department, gave a brief presentation on the local Weed & Seed Program.

The Weed & Seed program was operating in its third year of a five-year grant. Through the program, law enforcement worked with joint task forces of law enforcement agencies from all levels of government. They aimed to reduce both crime and the fear of crime which empowered the residents living in the neighborhood, and set the stage for community revitalization.

In Fairbanks, the four Weed & Seed Strategies were implemented via four working subcommittees, plus some special project teams.

- Law Enforcement
- Community Policing
- Prevent, Intervention, and Treatment/Training
- Neighborhood Restoration

The Fairbanks Ringstad Park Neighborhood Weed & Seed area was bounded by 17th Avenue on the south, the Chena River on the north, Barnette Street on the east, and Wilbur Street on the west – which, according to the 2000 U.S. Census (the latest for which 100% block-level data was available) made it one of the most densely populated areas in the borough. Denali Elementary, Hunter Elementary, Barnette Magnet, Lathrop High School, and Ryan Middle School were all located in the Weed & Seed area.

Spotlight: Weed & Seed (continued)

The local program and working groups consisted of approximately 100 people and 30 partners. The subcommittees and teams met regularly. Fairbanks Weed & Seed Partners and Resources included:

- ☒ The Alaska Parent Line
- ☒ Boys & Girls Club
- ☒ Camp Fire Alaska
- ☒ Fairbanks Neighborhood Housing
- ☒ Fairbanks Youth Portal
- ☒ Interior Center for Nonviolent Living
- ☒ Literacy Council of Alaska
- ☒ Noel Wien Library
- ☒ Northstar Youth Court
- ☒ PORTAL
- ☒ Resource Center for Parents & Children
- ☒ Street Outreach Program
- ☒ The Salvation Army
- ☒ Volunteers-In-Policing

Involved community residents and businesses were key components to the program's success. Having more people outside and walking around their neighborhoods could only benefit civic life; working together as neighbors and citizens absolutely depended on rubbing elbows with each other. One of the prerequisites for lively pedestrian activity was that the streets and other public spaces were clean, comfortable, and inviting.

Bargaining Update

Gayle Pierce, labor relations director, gave an update on the negotiations between FEA and the Board of Education. The Board and FEA bargaining teams were currently at an impasse, following a mediation effort in mid-September and a subsequent bargaining session that had occurred September 30. Ms. Pierce reported the main issue in the dispute was compensation.

The Board's last offer was to amend the salary schedule in the first two years of the agreement by adding \$1800 to each cell of the salary schedule. Adding \$1800 to each cell represented on average, approximately 3% added to the teacher's salary schedule in each of the first two years of the agreement. For the third year of the agreement, the Board's proposal was to increase the schedule by 3% across the board.

The Board's goals were to respond to the local needs and to remain competitive with the other large school districts. The district had a need to increase the entry level salaries for teachers from \$37,969, which it was in the 2007-08 school year to over \$40,000 in the 2008-09 school year. All of the other large districts had entry salaries that were higher than Fairbanks. Anchorage's entry salary was \$41,266 and Mat-Su's entry was \$39,039. The Board addressed the need by amending the schedule and adding a flat \$1800 to each step. The result in the first year would be a 7.7% increase on the base, bringing the base to \$40,904 in the first year of the Board's proposal.

Bargaining Update (continued)

The Board needed to be mindful of the salary schedule amounts and after about seven years of experience in the district, the career salaries of teachers in Fairbanks exceeded those of the other large districts by thousands of dollars. Although the district wanted to retain that very competitive status in that area, there was a goal to maintain, but not extend the district's advantage in the area.

As a result of the Board's proposal of adding \$1800 to each cell and then 3% to the schedule in the third year, Fairbanks teachers would remain the best paid career teachers amongst all the other comparative districts. There was a need to be responsive to the expectations of the teachers regarding a fair contract settlement. The expectations had to do with the high and increasing cost of living in Fairbanks, and contract settlements achieved in Anchorage and Mat-Su.

Part of the Board's response recognized the importance of steps on the salary schedule. The steps on the district's salary schedule were approximately \$1900 and represented a 2.6% - 6% increase for those eligible employees depending upon where they were on the schedule. Since many employees were not eligible, overall, on average, steps represented approximately a 2% increase.

In summary, Ms. Pierce said the Board's last position presented in bargaining on September 30 was on average a 5% increase on salary for each of the three years. The 5% included the value of steps and the salary table increases. The Board had also proposed to amend the salary schedule by adding a new column where teachers could be placed if they held a master's degree and either held National Board Certification or held a therapist's or psychologist's license to teach. The Board believed the new column would assist in recruiting and retaining teachers in hard to fill positions.

In regards to the issue of health insurance, the proposal to reduce the employee contribution was recommended by the Joint Health Committee and was incorporated in to both the Board and FEA proposals. The savings to be gained for employees annually by the new options and pay structure recommended by the Joint Health Committee were significant – over a \$1,000 savings for an employee who chose family coverage, nearly \$1500 savings for an employee who chose employee and spouse or employee and dependent coverage, nearly \$2,000 savings for employees who chose employee only coverage, and nearly \$3,000 savings if the coverage was waived all together. The health insurance benefit change was in addition to the salary offered. Ms. Pierce stated FEA had not acknowledged the benefit as a component of the bargaining, although it had been incorporated into the initial FEA proposal.

Ms. Pierce stated FEA's arguments for not including the health benefit as a component of bargaining where – it would not cost the district anything to provide the reduced employee contribution; second – it was not an increase in the salary schedule; and third – the money saved by the teacher was already money that belonged to the teacher. Ms. Pierce said the change in the health insurance pay structure reduced the employee contribution to the cost of health insurance from approximately 24% to 14% of the costs. Consequently, the district's share would be increased from 76% to 86% of the costs. It would be a significant gain for employees and would cost the district approximately \$1.75 million dollars. By increasing the amount of money employees had to spend on something other than health insurance costs, employees would experience a gain in take-home pay.

Bargaining Update (continued)

Ms. Pierce stated the Board's last offer was reasonable, fair, and met the goals of the district. She said the next step in resolving the bargaining impasse would be to select an advisory arbitrator to come to Fairbanks to hear each side present its position. A request had been made to the American Arbitration Association to send a list of arbitrators to both the district and FEA. The parties would choose an arbitrator and a hearing would be scheduled on a date agreed upon by all parties involved. Ms. Pierce said it could be weeks and possibly months for the arbitration hearing to be scheduled. After the hearing, the arbitrator would have approximately 30 days to write an opinion. The Board and FEA would then sit down for one last bargaining session to resolve the dispute.

Ms. Pierce assured everyone the Board desired to reach a bargaining agreement as soon as possible. She said the Board's team was ready and willing to discuss settlement options with FEA's team wherever and whenever the parties could agree to meet.

Ms. Pierce said the district's Chief Financial Officer Mike Fisher would be sending a memo by email to all district employees. The memo would provide more detail about the Board's position, as well as information on the district's budgeting process and current budget.

AGENDA

MCCONNELL MOVED, SCHMIDT SECONDED, TO ADOPT THE AGENDA WITH
CONSENT ITEMS.

The following consent items were moved:

accepted the Youth First Program Grant in the amount of \$100,000, per Fiscal Note 2009-07.

accepted the Alaska Reading First Grant in the amount of \$254,227 for year six, per Fiscal Note 2009-08.

accepted the Department of Education Appropriations Act of 2008 Grant in the amount of \$208,756, per Fiscal Note 2009-09.

accepted the Title 1 Neglected and Delinquent Competitive Year One Grant in the amount of \$141,706, per Fiscal Note 2009-10.

accepted the Artists in the Schools Grant in the amount of \$15,000, per Fiscal Note 2009-11.

approved the minutes from the work session September 11; the special meetings September 15, 16, & 24; and the regular meeting September 16, 2008, as submitted.

approved Budget Transfer 2009-022: Reorganization of B.E.S.T. & L.I.F.T. in the amount of \$692,152.

approved Budget Transfer 2009-029: Districtwide Math Program in the amount of \$26,200.

approved Randy Smith Middle School's request to raise funds to send students to Rome, Italy, March 6-14, 2009, to build on previous foreign language and cultural knowledge, at no cost to the district.

Consent Agenda (continued)

accepted the gift of a small, grid interconnect solar PV system, valued at \$25,700, from Sonny Lindner, Johnson River Enterprises, LLC to Two Rivers Elementary School, which will be used to provide students with insights into the construction, operation, and performance of solar PV systems and provide educational opportunities in many subjects.

accepted the gift of \$1,500 from the Ben Eielson High School Booster Club to Ben Eielson Junior Senior High School, to be used for the school's boys' basketball program.

accepted the gift of \$1,000 from Friends Community Church to Ben Eielson Junior Senior High School, to be used for the school's Fellowship of Christian Athletes Club.

accepted the gift of \$5,271.49 from the Raven Football Lions to Ben Eielson Junior Senior High School, to be used for the school's football program.

accepted the gift of \$2,000 from Richard and Janice Raugust to Hutchison High School, to be used for the school's tennis program.

accepted the gift of \$5,000 from Northern Area Aquatics to Lathrop High School, to be used for the school's swim/dive program.

accepted the gift of \$5,000 from Northern Area Aquatics to West Valley High School, to be used for the school's 2008-09 swim team program.

accepted the gift of \$1,794 from Fairbanks Youth Sports to West Valley High School, to purchase hockey helmets for the school's hockey program.

accepted the gift of \$2,000 from Dr. Cary Keller to West Valley High School, to be used for the school's athletic training program.

approved the Personnel Action Report for the period September 10-October 1, 2008.

acknowledged the 2008 Summer School Report.

acknowledged the Personnel Information Report for the period September 11-October 1, 2008.

acknowledged the Board's Reading File.

acknowledged the Coming Events and Meeting Announcements.

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS

Pat Turner, 141 Nilgrub Avenue, a teacher in the district, stated it had been the first time in his 26 years of teaching in the district that he had felt the need to come before the Board to speak. He had proudly served the district for 26 years and had demonstrated his loyalty to his school and community by staying at one school the entire time. During his tenure, Mr. Turner had spent tens-of-thousands of dollars to further his education to become a better teacher so he could better serve the community.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS (continued)

During his 26 years, Mr. Turner had witnessed a number of contract negotiations – at times not pleased with the district's offer of compensation for his expertise. In prior years, he had been downright upset when he had to settle for step and column freezes during some of those negotiations, but he always understood the district's position. But that had not been the case this year. Mr. Turner had been and was still outraged at the district's initial offer of 0%-0%-0%. He didn't know if the Board understood that their offer had been a slap in the face to every teacher in the district. He had taken the offer to mean that either the Board had no clue about what teachers did, how hard they worked and how much they gave of themselves to their students, or the Board really did not care about their staff.

Mr. Turner had heard over and over again the lip service the Board had given about how much the Board cared about teachers. But at this point, the way he viewed the Board's words, were simply that – lip service. When it really came down to walking the walk, the Board had failed and ended up insulting all teachers. Mr. Turner said he had again been insulted by the Board's offer of a 1.5% increase, and again by the offer of a 3% increase. He had also been insulted the Board had held the new health care package hostage until the contract was settled – they were two separate issues. He was insulted the new health care package had been offered to the principals and ESSA members, but not the teachers. Mr. Turner was thankful the ESSA members had turned down the Board's offer until all members could participate; and shame on the principals for accepting it.

Mr. Turner understood the district's budget, as approved by the borough, had a 4.8% increase written into it for teacher increases. With that, he was confused. He had always understood the reasoning for tough negotiations in the past – the money was simply not there. But the money was already included in the district's approved budget, but the Board was choosing not to offer it to their supposedly valued staff and were holding on to it for some unknown reason. It had made no sense to Mr. Turner and strengthened his feelings that the Board did not value the teachers of the district.

Mr. Turner assured the Board he supported the FEA negotiating team's position 100% and understood clearly the negotiations could last for a couple more months. If negotiations did not turn out well, he assured the Board he owned a pair of bunny boots, a nice parka, and snow pants and he could spend a lot of time outside holding a picket sign. In the 26 years with the district, Mr. Turner had never heard so much talk from other district employees about their willingness to join him out there. He said it was past-time for the Board to settle the contract – allow him to get his focus back on his classroom.

Tom Richards, 2450 Green Acres Drive, a long time teacher with the district, recalled previous FEA negotiations. In the mid-to-late 80's FEA and the district had agreed to a two year contract. In year one – there had been 0% on the base and no step increase. In year two – there had been 0% on the base and a step increase. With that contract, Mr. Richards recalled there had been no discussions about striking, as teachers understood with the poor economic conditions in the state and locally at the time, the district had not had the money to provide raises.

Mr. Richards had originally planned to speak about pay increases, but had decided instead to allow the FEA bargaining team to speak for him. Simply put, he said the offer on the table discussed earlier by Ms. Pierce, was simply not enough. People constantly heard from elected officials that teachers needed to be paid more. He suspected that some of the current Board members were on the record for saying something similar. Mr. Richards felt the Board had been presented with a situation; an opportunity to reach the goal of paying teachers more without cutting orchestra, band, or the myriad of programs that were sometimes necessary to review to meet the budget.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS (continued)

Mr. Richards understood the Board might have been concerned with the legacy they would leave for other Boards to fulfill. He asked the Board to consider on one hand, they could leave the legacy of the continual struggle to fill positions; experienced teachers leaving the district for similar pay in more pleasant climates or to be near grandma; and of possibly putting the students, community, and district resources through a strike. Or on the other hand, the Board had the opportunity to leave a legacy of hiring and retaining the best teachers – who felt appreciated, valued, and supported.

Mr. Richards reported that Anchorage Superintendent Carol Comeau had said that when the Anchorage School District had negotiated their last teacher contract, the district did not have the money to fund the contract, so it was up to the legislature. Mr. Richards could assure the Board that his teaching friends in Anchorage felt their district understood and appreciated what they did with comments like Ms. Comeau's and a contract that met the economic needs.

Mr. Richards was not a radical union man, as many who had worked with him when he was FEA president knew, but he felt the current bargaining session had been very unfortunate. From the district's opening offer of 0%-0%-0% and no recent significant movement in the money sector, Mr. Richards truly believed a strike was inevitable. It was clear the district had the money to offer reasonable raises. It was clear it cost more to live in Fairbanks than it did in the other four major markets. It was clear the teachers had done their part when it came to handling the community's children by any measure used. It was clear to Mr. Richards, a loyal employee of 29 years, if no raises now, when. He urged the Board to go back to their negotiating team with a new set of economic parameters and send a message to the state, to the community, and to the teachers, that Fairbanks was the best district in Alaska and the Board appreciated and understood the difficult jobs teachers did, and did well.

Nancy Duez, PO Box 55553, a teacher in the district, had not come before the Board to speak on negotiations, but rather class size. Ms. Duez said she had a split class of 5th & 6th graders this year. She had recently attended a meeting where she had been informed by members of the district's administration that the Fairbanks district had excellent class sizes. She wanted to know what the district did to figure their calculation because at Woodriver, where she taught, there were 1st grade classrooms with 27 little bodies – which was way too many bodies if you were trying to teach them to read. As an intermediate teacher, Ms. Duez was concerned, because she would be receiving those students in about four years.

Ms. Duez liked to compare building a student's education to that of building a house. If a good foundation was not laid, there wasn't anything to build upon. If the foundation was weak, cracks would develop over time, and structural damage would occur to the house. If students did not have a firm foundation laid in the primary grades, they were being set up for future school failure.

Ms. Duez noted a landmark experimental study conducted in Tennessee known as STAR (Student Teacher Achievement Ratio) in which students in primary grades K-3 were placed in classes with a class size of 13-17 students. Researchers had found that STAR students in smaller classes in grades K-3 earned significantly higher scores on basic skills tests in all four years and all types of schools. A continuation of the study, known as the "Lasting Benefits Study" tracked students beyond 3rd grade and the students in smaller classes continued to achieve at higher rates than their peers, even after they returned to regular class size classrooms in grades 4 and beyond.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS (continued)

Ms. Duez said the study also suggested the benefits of small classes increased as students moved from kindergarten to 3rd grade. In kindergarten, small classes accounted for 55% of the students who scored in the top 10% on standardized measures. The percentage rose at the 3rd grade level – 78% of the top scoring students were from the small class group. The study clearly showed the benefits of smaller class size.

When the class size issue had been discussed at their staff meeting, Ms. Duez stated they were told there were 14 other elementary schools in the district with large class sizes – like that made it okay. She said wrong was wrong at any level. For the sake of the students, Ms. Duez asked the Board to investigate the situation and do what they could to ensure the students received the solid education foundation they all deserved.

Ken Brown, 170 Humboldt Way, was a first grade teacher at Woodriver Elementary with 27 first graders in his class. A colleague, also in attendance at the meeting, had 27 first graders in her class, along with a special needs student that spent a lot of time in her classroom. He and Ms. Duez, who had testified before him, had not collaborated and he had not been aware she was going to be there to testify. But as she had stated, he too had been in attendance at the meeting when they had been informed there were 14 other elementary schools in Fairbanks that had even higher classrooms numbers than they had.

Mr. Brown did not feel there was any way the high numbers could be justified. He was certain that when the beginning readers, writers, and mathematicians took their first achievement test in 3rd grade, the district would then recognize there was a problem and would throw additional resources at it. But by then, it would be too late.

Mr. Brown said he came in early every day, as did his colleague, and they both stayed late almost every evening. He felt the Board and he and his colleagues could solve the problem, but there were so many levels of bureaucracy between the Board and where he was in Room 10 at Woodriver, the problem had not been solved. It was not a new problem – every year the district refused to count the kindergarteners that came from Bright Beginnings, Open Arms, and other private kindergartens in their plans for Woodriver first classrooms, even when they knew they were coming. Every year they came, but there were never any plans for that. Every year the school scabbled and some years an extra 1st grade was created a couple of weeks into the school year. Sometimes a K-1 or a 1-2 class was created – they have done a lot of different things over the years, but it was always last minute scabbling once the school year had started – which could not be good for kids.

Mr. Brown was passionate in his plea for Board members to come to his room and see for themselves firsthand what was going on. He reported the class had been reading an *Aesop's Fable - The Dog and the Shadow*. It was a story where the dog was crossing a creek with a big piece of meat in his mouth and he saw his reflection in the water. He had dropped the piece of meat in his mouth because he wanted the other piece of meat he had seen in his reflection too. He loses the real thing because he was grasping at his shadow.

Mr. Brown emotionally and passionately told of one of his first graders - the smallest one in the class, who had been the last one out to lunch, the last one to clean off their table, and the last one to get dressed for recess. He admitted he had been a little frustrated by how slow the student was getting ready for recess, but then the student had said a very wise thing that touched Mr. Brown very much. The student told Mr. Brown that they were just like the story they had been reading in class. Mr. Brown wondered if they meant the dog, the meat – he was trying to figure out what the student meant. The student said they were just like the story about the dog and the meat and Mr. Brown asked in what way. The student said "I'm the real thing."

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS (continued)

Jeff Werner, 5382 Grant Teton Road, the current state director for the Future Farmers of America (FFA), had the privilege of working with approximately 400 young people throughout the state developing premier leadership and personal growth and career success through agricultural and natural resources education. Mr. Werner spoke of his gratitude to the Board, staff, and teachers whom had prepared the young people in the Fairbanks community for the upcoming National FFA Convention where students would be participating. There would be over 50,000 young people and teachers at the convention and Fairbanks should be very proud of the students that were representing the district in the competitive events they would be participating in and the national awards they would be receiving. Not to steal the students' thunder, but Mr. Werner said he knew a few secrets the students did not. He said the Board and community could share the energy and excitement of the national convention with the students through the National FFA Convention website – there would be many events telecasted live. The website was www.ffa.org.

Mr. Werner reported Ryan Middle School had an FFA program as part of their after school program, under the direction of Marilyn Krause. He explained that FFA was an activity that integrated agricultural science, natural resources math and English, and all the different things the teachers in attendance and throughout the district represented. Mr. Werner said some of the young people in the district were going to go places that some just imagined, and the district had the challenge to prepare them for the road that was ahead of them.

North Pole High School also had a great after school FFA program integrating all the math, English, and sciences. Mr. Werner explained that students in the program had grown flowers in their new green house and sold them as a fund raiser to help fund their program. Mr. Werner challenged the district to help both of the FFA programs to find more funding and resources needed to help facilitate their activities.

Mr. Werner encouraged people to go to the FFA's website. Their national convention was scheduled for October 23-26, 2008. He said the Fairbanks group would definitely make their community proud. Mr. Werner, as a research horticulturalist at UAF, had the opportunity to work with the young people at the Tanana Valley Fair, at the petting zoo, at Pike's Greenhouse, Chena Hot Springs, and many other places – he was so proud of all the students that he had wanted to share it with the Board.

Steve Laroe, 226 Glacier Avenue, speaking as an individual, thanked Ms. McConnell for her service and serving on the Board for the past three years. He very much appreciated her service. Mr. Laroe thanked the Board for recognizing five excellent teachers – the BP Teachers of Excellence. His two daughters had the opportunity to have had two of the teachers that had been recognized. Mr. Laroe stated the teachers had done an excellent job with his daughters.

Mr. Laroe thought it would have been nice if the Board had offered the other side (FEA) equal time for the public to hear and understand the Fairbanks Education Association's (FEA) position.

Speaking as FEA president, Mr. Laroe said the last time he checked the Mat-Su salary schedule, which was in August 2008, the bachelor +0 was \$40,600. He knew for a fact that the last offer made to the FEA bargaining team on September 30 was the health care package, a one-year contract, \$1800 per cell, and the opportunity to negotiate the 2009-2011 contract only after the district had completed their negotiations with the Education Support Staff Association (ESSA), which would take place later in the spring.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS (continued)

Mr. Laroe's necktie showed two people shaking hands in agreement because something had been concluded. He told the Board they were missing the opportunity to show vision so that the students of the district could have the teachers of quality retained and recruited that they needed. The legislature gave the district the dollar after they were asked to do so. The money was available. Mr. Laroe said FEA did not want it all, they understood that. What they did not understand was – where they were today. Mr. Laroe suggested the two groups sit down and talk. FEA was and had always been available and ready.

Tim Dow, 1714 Cosgrave Drive, a 15-year Pearl Creek special education teacher, stated it was the first time in 15 years the school had so many vacancies in their special education staff. He said they had desperately grasped at trying to fill the vacancies with certified specialists who were certified to teach special needs children. Pearl Creek had a great staff. Mr. Dow was very concerned with the district's ability to retain occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, and special education teachers, as well as highly-qualified teachers to teach in certain areas throughout the district. The Board had to recognize and understand the problem as well.

Mr. Dow was aware the health care committee had spent many hours putting together a health care package that would work for everyone – principals, ESSA, teachers, and exempt staff. It had been designed for everyone and designed to go into effect for everyone. Now principals and exempt staff would be taking advantage of it, with teachers and ESSA staff left out. Mr. Dow had heard the phrase – *it took a village to raise a child*. He asked the Board to look at what offering the health care rate reductions to select groups was doing to the ranks - what was it telling teachers and ESSA members.

All Mr. Dow and all the teachers wanted was a fair settlement that was competitive. He did not agree with Ms. Pierce, the district was not competitive – not in Alaska, not in the nation. Mr. Dow thought the district had been competitive when he first started teaching, but not now. He thought the Board had the opportunity to lead they way by paying teachers a fair salary and keeping up with the times – they had the opportunity to do it now.

Mackenzie Staiger, 3059 Westgate Place, a 5th grade teacher at Woodriver Elementary, spoke about large class sizes. Last year, as a 5th grade teacher, she had 28-29 students throughout the school year. It was extremely difficult to have 28-29 students in a room and she was very thankful they had come to her very well prepared, as they had had smaller classes during their primary years. They knew how to read, they knew the routines, and they knew the structure of school because they had been in school for 5-6 years. Ms. Staiger said she had not been in a situation like Mr. Brown or his colleagues trying to teach six-year olds what school was all about and instill the love of learning into them.

Ms. Staiger's class was "buddies" with one of the large first grade classrooms and when they met, there were 55 people in one classroom – it was loud and a difficult situation. She felt it was very unfair. Ms. Staiger felt Woodriver scrambled every year to make the primary grades small, consequently making the intermediate grades large, but that was okay. It was well known that classes had to be small in the primary grades so children could learn to read and learn to love being in school.

Ms. Staiger would become a parent in the school system next year, when her child entered school. She could honestly say that she would look elsewhere for her student if class sizes were 28-29 students. Her daughter was a quiet 4-year old that had a difficult time in large crowds. Her daughter's preschool teacher had already expressed concerns about her being quiet. Ms. Staiger

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS (continued)

was concerned about her daughter not being able to learn what she needed to learn in kindergarten and first grade if she was in a class of 28-29 other students and getting lost because she was the quiet one. She was worried whether her daughter would get a fair education or would she be left behind because she might need a little more attention. Ms. Staiger was very concerned as an incoming parent.

In a recent class Ms. Staiger had attended, she had heard it was easy to see what a district valued just by looking at their budget. She was not certain what the Board valued. She had a hard time figuring it out because of the state of the teacher's contract and the size of the primary classes.

Ann Pearson, 1364 Little Fox Trail, a member of the community, a voter, a parent, and a teacher – the Board was her Board. Her children had gone through the Fairbanks school system and their teachers, many of whom still taught in the district, deserved to be well paid. Ms. Pearson was a proud teacher at Arctic Light Elementary School. She tried to do the best job she could, as do her colleagues. She had been very insulted by the district's offer of 0%-0%-0%, as well as 1.5%-1.5%-1.5%. She said 4.5% sounded better, but she felt the teachers deserved the best they could possibly get. Ms. Pearson was nervous and passionate about the issue. She said the teachers deserved a fair salary because they tried so hard to make it a good community by educating the children and future leaders of the community. The teachers deserved a fair contract that showed how well they were respected by the Board. As a taxpayer, Ms. Pearson thought the teachers deserved the best! She had many voices and she was entitled to every one of them. Ms. Pearson asked the Board to please listen to the parents, the teachers, and taxpayers and pay the teachers what they deserved so they could get back to work.

Patrick Lovely, 2214 Larissa Drive, a Lathrop teacher and a parent, had similar feelings to those already expressed. He had two young children and it would cost him \$20,800 to keep his children in daycare. He asked the Board to consider a few things. At Lathrop, Mr. Lovely said they had three staff members who were in their 20's – so if a teacher had a bachelor's degree with zero experience, they would begin at \$39,000. If they had families – Mr. Lovely asked how they would make it on that salary. If you were making \$39,000 and took out \$20,000 for daycare, there wouldn't be much left unless you had a spouse that worked.

Mr. Lovely shared the story of a student teacher at Lathrop that had left teaching approximately three years ago for a job in advertising. In advertising, the gentleman had made \$75,000 his first year. When the gentleman had pegged that out to the teacher's salary schedule, he had determined it would take him 15 years to get to the \$75,000 – why would he go back to teaching. Mr. Lovely stated it was more expensive to live in Fairbanks than in Anchorage or Mat-Su and Fairbanks teachers needed to be paid more. Mr. Lovely felt there was a lot of angst and many teachers that were becoming angry – they wanted a raise. He asked the Board to keep the ball moving in a positive direction – perhaps exert some pressure to get the offers up.

Wendy Demers, 3370 Arthur Court, a 4th-5th-6th grade teacher at Chinook Montessori School, agreed with the other teachers who had already commented. It had upset her to hear the public comments about teachers having three months off and working 7:45 a.m. -3:30 p.m. Ms. Demers asked for a show of hands of anyone that worked those hours. (No hands were seen.) Ms. Demers said there were no teachers that worked those hours – there were no teachers that came at 7:45 a.m. and left at 3:30 p.m. Teachers had meetings after school, they worked, they met with children, they worked through lunch, they worked through recess, they worked in the summer to upgrade their educations so they could be better teachers, they worked evenings, they communicated with parents on the phone – they were always working. For teachers not to get a pay increase to keep up with the cost of living was ridiculous.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS (continued)

Andrea Williamson, 1422 Beechnut Street, a teacher with the district, had come to Alaska nine years ago and found it to be an awesome place. At that time, she recalled the district had paid substitute teachers \$90 a day – where she had come from they had been paid \$45 a day. Ms. Williamson's original plan was to stay a year and then return to Ohio, where there was a teacher glut. Ohio had pulled out more teachers than any other state in the Union and teacher positions had been lost for the past five years. Ms. Williamson never returned to Ohio and raved about how wonderful the district was – how much they paid their teachers, how much time they gave their teachers for professional development. She paid \$30 for health care her first year with the district; she now paid \$148.91 for herself, as her husband was active duty military and did not require the district's insurance.

Ms. Williamson stated that three years ago when her husband had been up for orders, he had asked her where she wanted to go. She said no where, she had wanted to stay in Fairbanks. She loved Fairbanks, the district, the school she taught in, and the people she worked with. She also wanted to become vested in Tier II. Her husband extended his Fairbanks duty. Ms. Williamson said her husband would be up for orders in a year and this time when he had asked her if she wanted to stay, she had said no, she no longer wanted to stay. She said she would be vested in the retirement system; the district was not offering a raise, health care did not look like it was going to improve, and the living conditions did not look like they were going to improve.

Ms. Williamson thought the district was wonderful and asked the Board not to destroy it by destroying the teachers or community members. She said the students understood the value of a good teacher; everyone understood the value of a good teacher. If the investment in the students and children was not made now, they would forget to invest in us when it was needed. Ms. William thought it would be a shame – democracy needed educated people. The Board needed to show their support for that by supporting the teachers and schools.

Christie Dyer, 2402 Nelson Road, a teacher at Ben Eielson Junior Senior High School, had witnessed both personally and over the Internet, a lot of venomous acrimonious anti-teacher comments – at the grocery store, over the Internet, and people coming into the school. Ms. Dyer had found it disappointing and degrading to know that people who had earned their office by running on the platform that they would do the best for education were not following through on their promises. Ms. Dyer felt they were not showing their support for teachers and education to the public, therefore perpetuating the evil comments towards teachers. She thanked the Board for the time and forum to voice their opinions and listening to them. But she thought it was getting to the point that listening was not enough. Teachers would like to be treated in the manner in which they deserved to be treated.

Suzanne Graves, 1526 Evergreen Street, thanked Board members for being on the Board and serving the community; she recognized the time commitment. Ms. Graves has been a teacher at Woodriver Elementary for eighteen years and a teacher for longer than that. She had three grown children and two grandchildren. Many of the comments heard through the evening applied to her. Ms. Graves had been born and raised in Anchorage. She came to Fairbanks in her early twenties and finished her teaching certificate in Fairbanks. She had teacher friends in Anchorage, one of which was hired the same year she was, and was very aware of Anchorage's salary schedule, as well as Wasilla's – where she had grown up. When comparing the three districts, they were comparable in some ways, but not in others. She said when comparing step and column increases they were not comparable because Anchorage had something like 92 steps or columns.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS (continued)

Ms. Graves noted the difference in her fuel bill over the past year – it had gone from \$300 a month last year to \$600 a month this year. A friend of hers that was a teacher in Anchorage still used natural gas at a cost of \$225 a month. So when comparing living costs, it was not at all the same – very different economics – like comparing apples and oranges. When talking about the different teacher contracts and systems, you had to really look at them. Ms. Graves told the Board they had to look at the economics of Fairbanks – how houses were being heated, how they were living and how the contracts worked in the other areas. She cautioned the Board to be careful in comparing the different salary tables amongst the different districts.

Greg Stoddard, 5970 Telemark Trail, thanked the Board for the time and forum to express concerns. Mr. Stoddard stated he was a pretty simple guy, in a pretty simple world. He said when you had the money, you spent the money on the most important resources you had – he had seen it in the state time and time again. If the money was not spent where it was valued the most – on the human resources – then where would it be spent. It was about time the district started treating the human resources in the district the way they deserved to be treated. Teachers were responsible for the children in their classrooms and the Board was responsible for making sure there was money for teachers to do their jobs.

When Mr. Stoddard attended school they had the new math. He told the Board he had heard some really new math previously stated in the meeting. There were numbers he didn't even understand – he didn't know scattergrams, he didn't know spiograms, he didn't know steps, columns, up or down. All Mr. Stoddard knew was his check was approximately \$7 more than it was last year.

Mr. Stoddard appreciated the Board's time, but they really needed to listen to the people in the trenches that did the job day-in and day-out. Listen to the thousands of teachers who put in the 10-12 hours a day the job required to do it well. Mr. Stoddard asked the Board to appreciate what they had heard over the course of the evening and make the right decisions. Put the charts and graphs away and realize the district had already been given the money – a simple raise and health care for everyone – that was why they went to work and what they expected.

Diana Childs, 3385 Venus, thought she could put the information into a perspective that would be easier to understand. Ms. Childs was in her ninth year of teaching in Fairbanks. She held a bachelor's degree with 35 extra credits. She was still paying off her student loans from her degree. Ms. Childs was a single parent with two kids in college. She was considered to be highly qualified to teach elementary school, middle school social studies, and middle school English, and she was also eligible for the weatherization program. Her children were eligible for the Peel Grant. Ms. Childs was an educated person eligible for programs meant for poverty people and that was after nine years of teaching with the district. She asked the Board to look at the situation from her perspective and determine if that was what they wanted the students to be looking at. The other day a student in her classroom asked why anyone would want to teach and another student said especially for what they get paid – and those were the comments of 8th graders.

Ron Metzner, 5001 Haystack Drive, a Lathrop teacher, said including the reduced costs of health care did not show up in his salary towards retirement. His retirement was based on his last five years of work and even though it technically counted as more money, it wouldn't show up on his retirement. If the Board was going to give teachers a raise, it needed to be a raise.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS (continued)

Tammy Smith, 4201 York Avenue, a teacher in the district, appreciated being able to come before the Board to speak. Ms. Smith said she knew many of the Board members personally and appreciated the work they had done on the Board. But it was time for Board members to really listen to the teachers. She was very proud of the jazz band that had performed at the beginning of the meeting and Mr. Degnan who had worked hard to get the performance arranged. She was also proud of the BP Teachers of Excellence who had worked so hard. Ms. Smith noted that none of that happened in a vacuum. She knew Board members knew that and some members had even worked in her classroom so they knew how hard she and other teachers worked. She noted Board members had worked hard beside her to make sure the children were getting the very best education they could get. Ms. Smith had been discouraged by the number of teachers that were feeling disrespected and feeling like they were not getting everything they needed in order to survive their own profession.

Ms. Smith had recently been in Anchorage where she had heard the statistics on the number of newly hired teachers that had left the state. The statistics were shocking and concerning to Ms. Smith and the Board needed to be aware of them. Of the teachers who had been hired under the new defined contribution retirement program – out of the 1700 this year, 30% of those teachers had left the state. Ms. Smith told the Board if they wanted to have quality educators and the ability to attract and retain good teachers and programs, the Board had to pay teachers what they needed to sustain their own profession.

Jeff Hebard, 1192 Bemis Court, a teacher in the district for 18 years, had never before been compelled to speak before the Board on matters regarding negotiations on the teachers' contract. The fact that Mr. Hebard was there should be a strong indicator that this particular round of bargaining was different. Teachers were not being unreasonable in their salary request of slightly more than 4% per year. In fact, the request was in-line with the contracts other districts around the state had awarded their teachers over the past couple of years.

Mr. Hebard felt some of his comments might be repetitious, but they were worth repeating. He believed the administration was in jeopardy of damaging what many around the state regarded as one of the healthiest employer-employee relationships. During his tenure as a teacher, Mr. Hebard had always felt like the district valued its employees even in tough economic times. In past rounds of bargaining, the administration had turned to the teachers and told them they could only afford 1.5%-2.5% and after careful evaluation of the district's economic situation, the teachers had settled for those modest raises even though in many years the salary increases failed to keep pace with inflation. The current round of bargaining was different.

The State of Alaska, the district's largest funding source, was in the midst of its best economic times due to the high price of oil – with the state legislature raising the Student Base Allocation (BSA) resulting in an \$8-9 million dollar increase in funding to the district. In addition, the amount was forward funded for three years. Mr. Hebard said if one looked closely at the district's budget for the current year, the average teacher salary with steps and columns would be \$61,500. The district had budgeted for an average teacher salary of \$65,290 – an increase of 4.8% budgeted for the current school year. The question now was – if the money had been approved by the legislature and the district had already budgeted for the pay increase, why couldn't a settlement be reached. The only answer that had been given, as employees, was the district's bargaining team, which represented the Board, did not think the teachers deserved it.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS (continued)

As Mr. Hebard had said earlier, he had always felt valued as a professional by the district. He could tell the Board at this time, he no longer felt that way. The \$1800 per cell that Ms. Pierce spoke of earlier would equate to 2.4% salary increase for him next year. Mr. Hebard asked the Board if they felt that was fair. He said his phone number was in the phone book and he encouraged Board members to call him if they thought it was fair. He said he would be calling many of the Board members to discuss the issue with them personally.

Mr. Hebard asked the Board to please do what was right for everyone involved and please instruct the bargaining team to come back to the table with a reasonable and respectful offer. Teachers did not expect to get rich on the salary the district could afford to pay, but they did expect to be paid what the district could afford to pay. The Board's bargaining team had made no attempt to convince the FEA team that the district could not afford the reasonable raise the teachers were asking for. Mr. Hebard thanked the Board for their time.

The audience was standing room only and each of the public comments was followed by strong applause.

The Board took a break at 8:51 p.m. The Board reconvened at 9:01 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Included in the Consent Agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Watershed Charter School

The Watershed Charter School Academic Policy Committee has submitted an application for the operation of a charter school beginning in 2009-10. The School Board reviewed and discussed the application with Watershed representatives and district administration on September 11, 2008. Included under separate was the proposed contract between the Fairbanks North Star Borough Board of Education and the Watershed Charter School, including a summarized version of the application as submitted and reviewed by the Board. After the Board's approval, the contract would be submitted to the State Board of Education along with a state application form and any supplemental material.

SCHMIDT MOVED, MCCONNELL SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE
WATERSHED CHARTER SCHOOL CHARTER APPLICATION AND THE
CONTRACT FOR 2009-10.

Chief Financial Officer Mike Fisher said although there had been a few areas needing clarification during the Board's work session with the Watershed Charter School representatives on September 11, 2008, there were no major outstanding issues that arose from the work session that needed to be corrected. The proposal was not without its challenges. Both the Board and the Watershed Charter School representatives realized that finding suitable space was usually the main concern regarding charter schools and it was no different with this proposal.

Watershed Charter School (continued)

Mr. Fisher stated the short time frame between state approval of a charter school and when the school started up, made the challenge difficult. He said regardless of whether the Board approved the charter request or not, the district was required to submit the charter application to the State Board of Education, along with the minutes of the meeting. If the School Board approved the application, the State Board of Education would vote on the approval at one of their regularly scheduled meetings. Mr. Fisher was not certain if the request would make their December agenda, their January telephonic meeting, or their regular March meeting.

Mr. Fisher said Watershed Charter School Academic Policy Committee President and Head Teacher John Carlson was available to answer any questions. He reiterated the motion was to approve the Watershed Charter School Charter Application and Contract for 2009-10.

BOARD QUESTIONS

Mrs. Schmidt asked about some language changes in Exhibit A-2 – Special Conditions for the Watershed Charter School Contract, Item #1. She noted the language regarding non-encumbered monies at the end of the physical year being automatically rolled over had been deleted and language had been added that stated encumbered monies outstanding at year-end were reported as reservations of fund balance and would automatically be carried forward to the new fiscal year budget. Unspent and unencumbered funds at fiscal year-end would be reported to the Board of Education and could be re-appropriated by the Board at their discretion. Mrs. Schmidt asked if the language was standard with the rest of the district's charter schools and inline with state law. Mr. Fisher stated it was standard language with all the district's charter schools. In layman's terms he explained that schools had outstanding orders at year-end and the funds rolled forward to the next year so when the goods arrived, they were paid for out of the encumbered funds. At year-end, if there were any unspent funds and they had not been set aside for the orders, those monies rolled into their fund balances and came before the Board for approval. Mr. Fisher noted the charter schools were conservative throughout the year and shouldn't be penalized for being conservative.

Mrs. Schmidt asked Mr. Fisher about Item #3 – Exhibit A-2 – Special Conditions for the Watershed Charter School Contract – for the term of the charter contract; the district would assume responsibility for assessing, providing, scheduling, and coordinating all special education services. The district would withhold fifty percent (50%), or an amount agreed upon by the Watershed Charter School and the Board. Mrs. Schmidt asked how it was determined if it was 50% or another agreed upon amount. Mr. Fisher said in the funding formula there was a block funding that went to cover special education, vocational education, gifted and talented, and bilingual/bicultural. He said initially the district set aside 50% of the value of the block funding in case it was needed for special education needs. Once into the school year, if services or additional staff were needed, the money could be made available for use in other places, but the district was responsible for the special education services. Mr. Fisher said the funds were set aside initially until it was determined how much would actually be utilized for special needs children.

Mrs. Dominique asked if most charter schools did not have intensive needs students but this charter school was willing to accept them. Mr. Fisher said most of the district's charter schools did not serve intensive needs children, as the district had districtwide programs that served intensive needs children. He said all the charter schools served special needs children.

Watershed Charter School (continued)

Mrs. Hull asked if there was a grace period for the charter school to meet the student enrollment threshold of 150 students. Mr. Fisher said there was no grace period. He said per state statute, an alternative school with 150 or more students would receive the higher funding amount. If the school had less than 150 students in the official count period in October, they would receive the reduced funding.

Mrs. Hajdukovich asked Mr. Carlson what the charter school academic board had planned to reach the enrollment number needed for the higher funding. Mr. Carlson said the academic committee had already started to get the word out to the community and with the recent article in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner a lot of interest had already been generated. He said there would be public outreach announcements. Although the charter school was not to the point of accepting students, it was building a data base of interested students. Mr. Carlson said there would be considerable public outreach to the community because a high priority with the charter school was to reach all segments of the community. He said they would be making presentations to the local nonprofits, churches, day-care organizations, and other community groups. He said the committee was very aware of the waiting lists at some of the other district alternative schools and although they would not be going over to ask for their waitlists, it did show there was interest in the community for alternative schools and programs. Mr. Carlson said the committee was quite confident about the interest in the charter school from the community.

Mr. Carlson stated the Watershed Charter School was not started by a group of teachers, but rather a group of parents looking for an alternative type of program. He said once the approval process was completed, the committee would be very busy getting the word out and making presentations to various organizations and groups in the community.

Mrs. Schmidt was not concerned about meeting the enrollment numbers, but she was concerned about the charter school having a diverse population, which had been brought up at the Board's work session. By the emails the Board had already received in support of the Watershed Charter School, she did not feel they would have a problem meeting their enrollment, but she had not seen it as being a very diverse group of people who supported it. Mrs. Schmidt noted the charter school's desire to cap the enrollment around 200. She asked Mr. Carlson if the committee would consider making it larger or have two smaller groups of 150 under the same umbrella with the same philosophy. As Mrs. Schmidt had asked at the work session, would the committee consider a magnet school if there was still tremendous interest and they were not able to secure a building. Mr. Carlson was not certain on charter school limits and not read anything about limits, but depending on the size of the facility the charter school obtained would be the deciding factor on enrollment. He said the budget was targeted for approximately 150-190 students at the current time. Mr. Carlson said the charter school would be leasing a private building from a private developer that was interested and supportive of the program enough to renovate down the road.

In regards to Mrs. Schmidt's question on diversity, Mr. Carlson said it had been a concern of the committee since the inception of the program. Diversity was a concern of all charter schools. Mr. Carlson said diversity was reaching people from all parts of the community, including socio-economic groups, cultural groups, ethnic groups, racial groups, and others. In looking at the folks that had attended the meetings, sent emails, or were politically active, Mr. Carlson was not convinced that they represented the total of body that would support the charter school. Quite often, people that were comfortable with politics were the ones that showed up and testified at borough assembly meetings and the ones that were active in PTA and often those people did not come from all socio-economic groups, but from people that had had a lot of positive success experiences in the schools and they were comfortable with testifying and writing letters. When

Watershed Charter School (continued)

speaking of diversity, especially in socio-economic diversity, there was often a limiting factor when it came to political activation. So when looking at who wrote the letters, it might not look too diverse, but it did not mean it limited the amount of people that wanted to be engaged.

Mr. Carlson said the emails he had received were from people that had read the article in the paper or heard the piece on the radio. People were looking for something different and it did not seem to have to do with something that represented a particular socio-economic group; it had to do with activity – hands-on learning and making education relevant. He said often times people spoke about the challenges their children were having in school-many were younger children. He said sometimes parents were looking for something for a highly active child and were looking for an opportunity for an educational setting in which the children could get up and about and conduct some hands-on projects that were relevant. Mr. Carlson said those types of themes were the backbone to the charter school, especially the natural and social sciences. He said those types of offerings and programs went across all types of economic and all socio-economic lines.

Mr. Carlson said it came down to making a school welcoming. There were schools in town that had a very unique approach to education, such as Barnette Magnet School, but it was the atmosphere of the school when you walked in that made it welcoming. Welcoming was when you reached out to people, communicated, and engaged them in settings where they were comfortable. Mr. Carlson noted a Board meeting was not the most comfortable setting and very limiting. He said it was up to the committee to get out and meet people on their terms so they did not see the charter school as some elitist school.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jeff Werner, 5382 Grant Teton Road, had read the article in the paper about the Watershed Charter School and he agreed with the charter school's principle, what they were doing, and the hands-on application of education – learning by doing. Mr. Werner preached and taught that philosophy in the Future Farmers of America and through agriculture education, but at the high school level. He stated Marilyn Krause had a program at the middle school, but most of the program's focus was at the high school level throughout the state.

Mr. Werner felt one nice opportunity presented through the new charter school would be preparing the young people for the next step that he had, whether they remained in Fairbanks or went somewhere else in the state. He thought it was helping to develop the framework for natural resources education in a career field that the district did not have. With pipelines, goldmines, power plants, and others, the district did not offer natural resources education.

Mr. Werner knew that within the 4-H and FFA programs he worked with there were many young people who were interested in the programs, as could be attested to the many bunnies, goats, and sheep that were entered at the fair. He wasn't certain those kids would all want to participate in the charter school, but he wanted to see them have the opportunity to explore it. Mr. Werner offered his support on behalf of the university programs that he worked with to make the charter school successful.

Jean Ringstad, 316 Slater Drive, thought education was exciting, and every time something different was explored with a new eye, she thought it was important to look at the opportunities. Ms. Ringstad thought Mr. Carlson made a very good point when he said people came to places because they were welcomed in. She thought Fairbanks was diversity. When she had traveled to other places, she might see a couple of different groups, but Fairbanks had some of every group which she thought was fabulous.

Watershed Charter School (continued)

Ms. Ringstad thought diversity would happen regardless of whether Mr. Carlson went out and looked for it or not. She thought the key would be meeting people on their playing field and inviting them in. She had worked with Mr. Carlson at Anne Wien Elementary School and she thought he was good at going out and talking to people. He also had a solid group of people working with him.

Ms. Ringstad thought the Watershed Charter School was a great opportunity for Fairbanks. She thought education worked when it was relevant, which was the beauty of Everyday Math – which she loved. She recalled a comic she had seen in the Sunday paper where a couple had been star gazing. The couple had been commenting on the different constellations when the wife turned to husband and asked why the only thing they could remember from school was that vinegar plus baking soda equaled volcanoes. Relevance - it worked and Ms. Ringstad thought it was the key to the school.

Another aspect to the school Ms. Ringstad had just learned about was the charter school incorporating twice as much physical education into their curriculum. She recalled a student of a military family from Florida that had been in her class approximately four years ago. It had been a day in February when the mother of the student approached her and asked when the snow was going to go away and commented she couldn't wait until her children could go out and play again. Ms. Ringstad said she gasped and asked the parent what she meant. The mother said when the snow fell had been the end of her children going outside. Ms. Ringstad thought there were vast numbers of people that actually did the same thing. The physical aspect of life in Fairbanks needed to be addressed if no where else but in the schools. When Ms. Ringstad had heard about twice the amount of physical education she knew she had to come to the meeting to voice her support for the program. She hoped the Board would support the charter school effort.

BOARD COMMENTS

Colonel Fitzgerald asked about the enrollment numbers for the Watershed Charter School. Mr. Carlson said the committee was projecting approximately 190 students; the number they used for the budget. Colonel Fitzgerald asked how the committee proposed to attract students from Eielson Air Force Base and North Pole. Mr. Carlson said the charter school would be open to all borough students. They would reach out to Eielson and North Pole families, but the challenge would be that charter schools did not normally provide busing. It would be a limiting factor for people that lived out of town. Mr. Carlson said when the school was looking for a facility it would be looking for something that was centrally located so people could carpool. Mr. Carlson acknowledged the challenge students in the outlying areas would face in finding a way to school.

Mrs. Dominique thanked Mr. Carlson and the academic committee for looking at the J.P. Jones Community Center as a possible location for the charter school. With the school coming to the south side of town to look for a location gave her the opinion that they would get the diversity they were looking for. Ms. Dominique had spoken to several parents about the school and they had not heard about it. She noted not everyone read the newspaper and thought word of mouth was good. When the word was out about the school and people were talking about it and how good it was, the word would get out. Ms. Dominique had been very impressed with the charter school's presentation and work so far and she thought it would be a good school.

Ms. McConnell, having worked to get another charter school in town started, appreciated all the hard work the committee had put into the program. She had always thought the more learning opportunities provided to the students, the better success within the district. Ms. McConnell agreed with Mr. Carlson that people were looking for something different to make education more

Watershed Charter School (continued)

relevant. She supported the charter school, although she had some concerns about the issues Mr. Fisher raised earlier about the location and the short time frame for the approval and school starting. Mr. Carlson said they could make it happen.

Mrs. Schmidt supported the charter school. She thought the committee had done a lot of work and had the talent and support. If for some reason, a building could not be found and there was tremendous support for the philosophy, she thought the district needed to look at another magnet school with the same philosophy and approach.

Mrs. Schmidt said one thing that bothered her about charter schools was they were meant to be a place to explore new ideas and a different form of education, almost as a demonstration, so if something worked well, it could be replicated at other locations. She said there wasn't always a lot of replication around the country and sometimes the charter schools became their own little place, separate from everything else. She said sometimes there was not a lot of cross pollination with educators in different areas. Mrs. Schmidt noted the Fairbanks community was a unique area and not to be able to appreciate it or have hands-on exploration was a shame. She thought the charter school could be a great way for other schools, educators, and parents to look at education and for it to be successful for students. Mrs. Schmidt would support the charter school, but she wished it was bigger – she thought it would fill up very quickly.

Mrs. Hull thanked Mr. Carlson and the committee for the work they had done. She thought options were the future and she was grateful there were people who were willing to go out and develop an option that would meet the needs of children. It was all about giving children a way of learning that might better suit their learning style. Mrs. Hull thought it was a great idea and she wished the committee well with their venture.

Mrs. Hajdukovich had been very impressed with the committee's presentation on the Watershed Charter School at the work session. The questions she had in her mind had been answered very well and she did not think there were any questions she had that the committee had not already thought about and either had answers to or knew they had to address. Mrs. Hajdukovich appreciated the plan had been so well thought out. She appreciated Mr. Carlson's comments about if a facility was not secured or the numbers were not there, the charter school would not happen. Mrs. Hajdukovich supported the charter school and thought it could be a wonderful addition to the district and community.

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

Resolution 2008-06: School Bus Drivers' Appreciation Day

HULL MOVED, MCCONNELL SECONDED, TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2008-06: SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS' APPRECIATION DAY, DESIGNATED AS OCTOBER 24, 2008, AS SUBMITTED.

School Board Resolution 2008-06 designated October 24, 2008 as School Bus Drivers' Appreciation Day throughout the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

Mrs. Hull read the resolution for the public.

Resolution 2008-06: School Bus Drivers' Appreciation Day

Dr. Wagner commented on the importance of bus drivers to the education of children. They were generally the first people children saw in the mornings when they were coming to school and they were the last people they saw in the afternoon before returning home. The bus drivers' attitude and having a nice word to say to the children could make a huge difference in their lives at school and at home. Dr. Wagner thought bus drivers, especially in Fairbanks, had such a challenge to face in getting the children to school safely and on time. She thought they did a marvelous job and did not think they were shown appreciation often enough. Sometimes it was forgotten how valuable bus drivers were to the education of children.

Dr. Wagner had met with bus drivers in the fall and told them they were heroes in her eyes. She could not imagine doing the job they did everyday. The resolution was a small token of appreciation for the bus drivers. Dr. Wagner said the National Bus Driver's Day in the spring would still be celebrated and this recognition was not meant to take anything away from it. The resolution was in recognition of National School Bus Safety Week October 20-24, 2008. Dr. Wagner thought it would be a good time for the district to show how much they appreciated the bus drivers and the safe transportation they provided for the children in the community.

BOARD QUESTIONS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Randy Frank, PO Box 81109, speaking as a school bus driver and not an assembly member, thanked the Board for the resolution. Mr. Frank thought it was very well written. Dr. Wagner had discussed the resolution with the bus drivers during their inservice and Mr. Frank thought it had been very well appreciated by the drivers. Mr. Frank was retired from two other professions but decided he needed to do something more, plus it helped to pay his fuel bill. A friend had suggested becoming a school bus driver; they got all the holidays and summer off. Mr. Frank said being a bus driver had given him a new respect for teachers. He only had the children for half an hour to an hour in the morning and afternoon, but teachers had them all day. Mr. Frank said people had told him that the children had a different attitude at home, a different attitude at school, and a very different attitude on the bus. He compared it to a rolling playground. Mr. Frank always said good morning to the children when they got on the bus and most said good morning back to him. He also said good night as each departed the bus in the afternoon. This was his second year of driving and he had gotten to know the children. He felt the children appreciated him and he appreciated most of them. Mr. Frank expressed his appreciation to Ms. McConnell for her service on the Board. He was looking forward to obscurity himself, as he finished up his tenure on the borough assembly.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mrs. Hull thought school bus drivers were great. She vividly remembered her school bus driver. He could wiggle his ears and they would sit behind him and watch him wiggle his ears. Mrs. Hull was glad for the resolution. She thought having good bus drivers was important and children paid attention. Mrs. Hull spoke about the shortage of school bus drivers and encouraged people to apply. Mrs. Hull thanked all the bus drivers.

Mrs. Schmidt said it was not only important that bus drivers drove safely, but they were also an important part of the district's safety initiative in the schools. Oftentimes, bus drivers alerted the school to bus stops that were sometimes problematic, as well as disruptive children. They could set the tone for behavior. If children were watching their behavior on the bus, they were coming to school with the right attitude. Mrs. Schmidt thought bus drivers were an important part of all the safety efforts.

Resolution 2008-06: School Bus Drivers' Appreciation Day (continued)

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

Resolution 2008-07: Racial Respect

DOMINIQUE MOVED, SCHMIDT SECONDED, TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2008-07: RACIAL RESPECT, AS SUBMITTED.

School Board Resolution 2008-07: Racial Respect proclaimed the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District as a Racial Slur Free Zone.

Mrs. Dominique read the resolution for the public.

Ms. Schaffhauser explained the issue of racial slurs had surfaced in a couple of different instances last year. First there was the Lathrop High School Paystreak article on racial slurs and a couple Board members had spoke at the school addressing racial slurs. There had also been some student discipline issues involving racial slurs that had come before the Board. Ms. Schaffhauser said the Board Ethnic Committee (BEC) had heard about some specific instances and had become very aware it had reached the level it had. The BEC was concerned because racial slurs had become such a common occurrence in the schools and recommended to the Board last year in their annual report to have a resolution. The resolution before the Board had a hardy recommendation from the BEC acknowledging there was a problem, acknowledging the district had policies and regulations prohibiting slurs in the district, but yet they still happened and wanted to challenge the schools to renew the vigor to which they addressed the occurrence of racial slurs among and between students.

Ms. Schaffhauser anticipated the BEC would adopt addressing racial slurs as one of their goals for the year, but they hadn't met yet for the new school year. She said they wanted to take an educational approach to slurs. In the preliminary discussions the BEC had mentioned sending pamphlets or letters home to make parents aware of the issues. Preparing a compact for parents and students to sign was another idea.

Ms. Schaffhauser mentioned some of the things the BEC would like to see continued. Continuing the REACH training and Race and Healing for staff members to provide tools, strategies, and voices for interrupting racial slurs that would be occurring in the schools. They were also actively seeking to schedule Challenge Day at two of the high schools this spring. They had contacted the Challenge Day organization and were in a queue to be scheduled. If the district was selected for the Challenge Day training, there would be an opportunity for 300 students and approximately 75 adults to learn about how they could take individual actions to overcome the hurt that would be inflicted by others by racial slurs and all kinds of put-downs. The Challenge Day program was also interested in developing leadership skills so that students could move beyond limiting actions that children engaged in. The district recognized the value of having programs like REACH and Race & Healing for students. They were always in the market for similar type programs that could work for students. Also, a Board member had suggested pursuing the development of scripts for video announcements that would address the issues of racial slurs.

Ms. Schaffhauser stated in another step to address racial slurs in the schools the BEC would be unveiling their webpage that students and parents would have access to through PowerSchool Premier. It was a forum where any issues or concerns could be addressed directly to the BEC.

Resolution 2008-07: Racial Respect (continued)

The website was available, but had not been advertised yet. It would be one of the first things the BEC would do when it reorganized after the elections.

Racial slurs were a real issue and Ms. Schaffhauser said the resolution was only the first step in finding some real solutions.

BOARD QUESTIONS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

BOARD COMMENTS

SCHMIDT MOVED, DOMINIQUE SECONDED, TO AMEND THE RESOLUTION TO INSERT "AND MAY HAVE LIFE LONG IMPACTS" TO THE EIGHTH STANZA TO READ, "WHEREAS, RACIAL SLURS HISTORICALLY AND CURRENTLY HAVE NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS AND MAY HAVE LIFE LONG IMPACTS."

BOARD QUESTIONS ON THE AMENDMENT

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE AMENDMENT

None

BOARD COMMENTS ON THE AMENDMENT

None

The Board voted on the amendment.

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

AMENDMENT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

SCHMIDT MOVED TO AMEND THE RESOLUTION TO REPLACE THE SEVENTH STANZA WITH "UNFORTUNATELY STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FAMILIES ARE EXPOSED TO RACIAL SLURS THROUGH THE MEDIA, SCHOOLS, AND THE COMMUNITY."

Mrs. Schmidt thought so much of what people were hearing was not promoted by the schools, it was being brought to school and the schools were trying to address it.

The amendment died due to a lack of a second.

Mrs. Dominique was happy to see something in the district that addressed this crucial time in the district because there had been a lot of racial slurs. It was putting a little closure on the issue. She said just because students heard racial slurs did not mean they could repeat them. She thanked the BEC and administration for the resolution.

Mrs. Hull liked the district being clear that racial slurs were not acceptable behavior regardless of who said it. She was grateful for the resolution.

Resolution 2008-07: Racial Respect (continued)

The Board voted on the main motion, as amended.

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

HULL MOVED, MCCONNELL SECONDED, TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO
EXTEND THE MEETING UNTIL 10:30 P.M.

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

Science Curriculum Revision Update

Science writers spent the summer revising the K-12 Science Curriculum. The first draft had been disseminated and comments received. Peggy Carlson, interim executive director of curriculum and instruction, gave a verbal update on the science curriculum revision process.

The science revision process began in the fall of 2007, with the research course, Current Trends in Science Education. Seventeen K-12 teachers and a community member participated, researching and discussing current science topics and exploring community connections in science. Each participant selected and researched a topic focused on a current science issue. The research summaries were published in a document, Current Trends in Science Education, and each summary included a recommendation for the science writers.

Last spring, teachers applied for science writer positions. Writers were selected based on experience and principal recommendation, with an eye towards a balance in grade levels and geographic representation within the district. The newly selected writers then attended a Board work session in May. The goal of the work session was to provide direction for the writers as they began the revision process.

Science writers met throughout the summer to develop a first draft for teachers and community members to review. The first draft was based on input from the Current Trends document, members of the Board, teachers, and community members.

The first draft was published August 13, 2008. The following day, during a districtwide common planning time, secondary science teachers met and provided input. Elementary teachers did not have the opportunity to meet as a group, but were invited to provide input through email.

The first draft was posted on the district web site for review and the link to the draft, as well as hard copies, were sent to all district staff, the Board Curriculum Advisory Committee, Central Council PTA, and community members who had requested the opportunity to provide comment during the process. The Board Curriculum Advisory Committee also met in September and provided additional feedback for the writers and would be meeting again on October 8, to continue review and discussion. Secondary teachers met again, by specific course focus, during the Sept. 26th districtwide inservice to provide further input.

Science Curriculum Revision Update (continued)

One major change under discussion was the

- Required High School Courses – currently, students were required to take three years of science, divided into life and physical science categories, and then chunked into semesters of life science, physics, chemistry, and earth science. At the time of adoption, science assessments were in the near future, but specific content to be assessed was unknown, so the writers wanted to ensure all students had an overview of the major content areas. Because of the specific requirements, this had the potential of causing problems for students who chose an AP course track and didn't necessarily encourage students to take year long courses. The first draft, currently out for review, still required three years of science, but encouraged a year long course of a physical science, a year long course of a biological science, and one year of additional science. This would provide more options for all students; those who may choose a college focus or those who may choose a vocational focus.
- Another major change was the Earth Science course. The writers would like to strongly recommend earth science as a core 9th grade course. Realizing the current course had a reputation as an "easy geology-based" course, it has been revised into a physical science-related course, *Earth and Space Science*, designed to provide a foundation for all future science classes. The course integrated the physical sciences within the context of practical knowledge about the topics important to all northerners: geology and minerals, weather and climate change issues, oceanography, and astronomy. It provided an opportunity for incoming freshmen to adapt to the demands of a high school science curriculum and hone their math, reading, writing, and analytical skills in science before taking more abstract classes. Although not required, it was highly recommended.

Science writers had reviewed comments received from teachers and community members, the Board Curriculum Advisory Committee, and from meetings with secondary science teachers, and were currently revising the second draft. The second draft would be available for review in mid-October. The curriculum department was working with Sue Hills, a Board Curriculum Advisory Committee member, to develop a list of key UAF professors who would be invited to provide input on the document. They were also keeping the Education Work Group of the local Climate Change Task Force informed of their progress and they had also provided valuable feedback.

The process of developing a strong curriculum document involved balancing many factors: national and state standards, teacher, UAF, and community input, highly qualified status, and available facilities. The review committee appreciated and valued input already received and invited further feedback on the second draft, which would be published mid-October, to ensure the development of a strong science curriculum for all students.

BOARD QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Mrs. Hull thanked Mrs. Carlson and the committee for their on the report. Work on the curriculum was very important and she encouraged everyone to look over the science curriculum drafts and submit input. The committee took the comments seriously. Input from a variety of groups helped to improve the curriculum. Mrs. Hull had been emailing Bob Coghill, who used to serve on the Board, and he had volunteered to serve on the curriculum committee in Juneau because he loved curriculum. He had chaired the district's curriculum committee when he was on the School Board. He was excited to get back into curriculum.

Mrs. Schmidt announced the upcoming Board Curriculum Advisory Committee meeting for tomorrow. She thought the science curriculum would be very relevant when it was completed.

2007-08 Assessment Results Report

The report presented district level results of the Alaska Standards Based Assessments, Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam, and TerraNova tests taken by Fairbanks North Star Borough School District students during the 2007-08 school year.

Dr. Wagner said when the AYP report had been presented at the last Board meeting, the district had not known the graduation and dropout rates at that time. Those figures were part of the AYP report. The assessment report covered more than just what was used for AYP.

Dr. Wagner now had the information and shared it with the Board. Last year the district's dropout rate was 7% and this year it was 5%. Dropping the rate by 2% was significant and remarkable. Each of the schools had been able to decrease their dropout rates by at least 1%. Dr. Wagner announced the district's graduation rate had also improved. The district had met AYP with graduation rate this year because there had been an improvement, although she did not think the district was where it needed to be.

Kathy Hughes, executive director of alternative instruction and accountability, acknowledged the assistance of others within her department and thanked them for their work on the report – Heather Rauenhorst, Ellis Ott, and Bernice Creek. All of whom helped pull together information for the report.

Mrs. Hughes reviewed the 2007-08 Student Assessment Results report with the Board:

Students who attended school in the district participated in the State's assessment program. The report presented district level results of the Standards Based Assessments (SBAs), High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE), and TerraNova tests taken by district students during the 2007-08 school year.

- The results were based on "raw scores" – all students who tested. This was different from the AYP report. The AYP report was based on Full Academic Year (FYA) students and was actually a subset of the Assessment report.
- No science information was included in the report –
 - The state data for science proficiency rates was not available in time to include in the report.
 - There was no longitudinal data for science.
 - Science information would only cover grades 4, 8, and 10.
 - The district planned on providing an addendum (probably in memo form) to the Board and administration with the science information – as well as to the curriculum department and Board Curriculum Advisory Committee (BCAC) as well.

2007-08 Assessment Results Report (continued)

The report was divided into three parts – one for each of the types of assessments.

The SBAs (Standards Based Assessments)

- Standards Based Assessments were intended to measure how well students had learned a specific body of knowledge and skills – and to determine how well they were doing relative to a pre-determined performance level (commonly known as a “cut score”).
- The tests were in reading, writing, and math and were developed specifically for Alaska’s students.
- Students in grade 3-10 were required to participate.
- Results were used to determine if students were making academic progress and whether or not schools were making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).
- Proficiency rates were compared for 2006, 2007, and 2008. Results indicated a decrease from spring 2007 in the percent of elementary, middle, and high school students who scored proficient or advanced in writing. An increase was noted in the percent of middle school students scoring proficient or advanced in math.
- The report showed the movement of matched students who took the SBAs in both 2007 and 2008. Analysis of the changes in proficiency levels of matched students who took the SBAs both years indicated:
 - In all 3 subject areas, the majority of students (77-82%) who had been proficient or advanced the prior year remained at that level or increased in 2007-08.
 - Of the students who had been below or far below proficient in 2006-07, nearly half (48%) increased at least one proficiency level in reading.
- The report summarized the results by gender. A higher percentage of females than males scored proficient or above at every grade level in reading and writing and, at every grade level, except for 10th grade, in math.
- Results by ethnic group were also reported:

Reading

- The largest gap was in the 8th and 10th grades with 26 percentage points between the lowest performing groups (Alaska Native/American Indian in 8th, Asian/Pacific Islander in 10th) and the highest performing groups (Asian/Pacific Islander in 8th, Multi-Ethnic in 10th).
- The smallest gap was in the 5th grade with 83% of Alaska Native/American Indian students at or above proficient, compared to 90% of White students.

2007-08 Assessment Results Report (continued)

Writing

- The largest gap was in the 8th grade with 32 percentage points between the lowest performing group (Alaska Native/American Indian) and highest performing group (Asian/Pacific Islander).
- The smallest gap was in the 5th grade with 70% of Alaska Native/American Indian and African American students at or above proficient, compared to 80% of Caucasian and Multi-Ethnic students.

Math

- The largest gap was in the 9th grade with 52 percentage points between the lowest performing group (African American) and the highest performing group (Asian/Pacific Islander).
 - The smallest gap was in the 5th grade with 75% of Alaska Native/American Indian students at or above proficient, compared to 87% of Multi-Ethnic students.
- The report compared the district and state results. Results from the SBAs administered in spring 2008 indicated the percent of students proficient or above was greater in the district than in the state as a whole in all three subject areas:
 - 86% of students in grades 3-10 were proficient or above in reading.
 - Exceeding the percent of students in the state as a whole by 4.4 percentage points.
 - 77% of students in grades 3-10 were proficient or above in writing.
 - Exceeding the percent of students in the state as a whole by 3.1 percentage points.
 - 75% of students in grades 3-10 were proficient or above in math.
 - Exceeding the percent of students in the state as a whole by 4.9 percentage points.

The HSGQE (High School Graduation Qualifying Exam)

- Beginning in sophomore year, students took the HSGQE.
- The results were reported in terms of percent passing on the HSGQE.
- Results of the HSGQE were one of the factors used to determine whether or not a student received a high school diploma.
- Students must have passed all three sections (reading, writing, and math) and completed course graduation requirements to obtain a diploma.
- Once a student had passed one of the sections of the HSGQE, he/she did not have to take that section again – students who had not passed one or more sections had the opportunity to retake those sections twice a year (fall and spring) until proficiency was reached in all three subject areas as demonstrated by a passing score.

2007-08 Assessment Results Report (continued)

- The pass rates for last spring indicated:
 - 89% of 10th grade students passed the reading section.
 - 78% of 10th grade students passed the writing section.
 - 80% of 10th grade students passed the math section.
- In comparing the 2007 and 2008 pass rates, the percent of 10th grade students who passed the HSGQE in spring 2008 was less than the percent that passed in spring 2007.
- Results by gender: The percent of female 10th graders who passed the HSGQE exceeded the percent of male 10th graders who passed in all three areas – the greatest gap (18 percentage points) was in writing.
- The percent of 10th grade students passing the HSGQE varied by ethnicity.
 - The pass rate for reading was highest for Multi-Ethnic students (100%) and the lowest for Hispanic students (79%).
 - The pass rate for writing was highest for White Students (81%) and the lowest for Hispanic students (71%).
 - The pass rate for math was highest for White and Asian/Pacific Islander students (84%) and the lowest for African American students (63%).

The TerraNova

- The TerraNova tests were nationally normed standardized tests that covered skills in reading, language, math, social studies, science, and spelling. Norm-referenced assessments were designed to compare test takers to each other and to highlight achievement differences between and among groups of students.
- The TerraNova was administered to 5th and 7th graders in February 2008.
- Results were reported in terms of national percentile ranks and were used to compare the skill levels of district students to the skill levels of students throughout the nation.
- Results indicated district students scored higher than the national average in every subtest except 5th grade spelling.
- When comparing the 2007 and 2008 results for grades 5 & 7 in reading, language, mathematics composite scores as well as science, social studies, and spelling results showed:
 - Students fell below the national average in only one subtest over the 2 years – in 2008 – in spelling. All other areas were above the 50th percentile.

2007-08 Assessment Results Report (continued)

APPENDIX

The report included an appendix of Alaska Standards Based Assessment Data Tables for the 2007-08 school year.

- The data tables were retrieved from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.
- The data had been suppressed in instances to protect student confidentiality when the numbers could lead to individual identification of students – in those cases, “20 % or less” or “90% or more” was noted.

Recommendations

Dr. Wagner provided information on how the district used the results of the student assessments. Examples included: district priorities, district and school improvement plans, staff development, and teacher level decision making in terms of instruction.

Dr. Wagner reviewed her recommendations from the report:

1. Develop and implement specific strategies to accomplish the primary performance goals.
2. Develop and implement specific strategies for the development and use of formative assessment to improve writing skills for all students.
3. Offer professional development opportunities for teachers to address the areas that needed improvement.

BOARD QUESTIONS

Mrs. Dominique asked what things were in place to address the large drop in the HSGQE scores of African Americans in reading for 2008. Dr. Wagner said the administration would be looking at the data to determine what could have caused the drop and what could be done to improve the scores. Mrs. Dominique asked if the administration would be bringing that information before the Board in the future. Dr. Wagner noted it could sometimes be difficult to pinpoint the reasons for the decrease but the administration would be reviewing all the data and would bring the results to the Board in the future.

Mrs. Hull was concerned about the TerraNova scores and she would like more data over a longer span of time, perhaps ten years, and if not ten, at least five years. She wanted to see trends over time, if possible. Mrs. Hughes said she would get the data Mrs. Hull requested.

Mrs. Brophy, in a follow-up to Mrs. Dominique's question, asked if the HSGQE had changed and if so, would it have affected the scores. Mrs. Hughes stated the test had not changed between the 2007 and 2008 years. Mrs. Brophy asked if there had been changes to the exam previously to 2007. Mrs. Hughes stated there had been changes to the exam since its inception, along with a change in cut scores, but nothing that would affected the last two years.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

2007-08 Assessment Results Report (continued)

BOARD COMMENTS

Mrs. Schmidt voiced her concern for Alaska Native students and their writing. When looking back at when students started not doing as well in writing, it seemed to start in 3rd grade. She thought more needed to be done earlier to help students. In regards to the gender gap, Mrs. Schmidt noted boys were not doing well and she was concerned parents did not realize how far boys were behind. She emphasized the need to educate parents about the gender gap and get the word out to parents.

Mrs. Hull was concerned with the district's performance overall, especially after the district had seen just great improvements in the math scores last year. She was particularly concerned about the TerraNovas. Mrs. Hull felt the comparison on a nationally normed test was important. She wanted to know what the district was doing to step up performance to deal with the decline. The decrease was minimal, but pretty consistent across the board in 5th and 7th grades. She noted if the scores were averaged, the district was at about 52% for 5th grade and a little higher for 7th grade. She would like to know how the district planned to increase those numbers.

Mrs. Hajdukovich was also concerned about the gender piece. She agreed with Mrs. Schmidt that parents had to recognize the gap, but more important to her was how the instruction was being delivered. She found it very alarming there was no grade level or topic where boys were doing better, except for 10th grade math. Mrs. Hajdukovich shared Mrs. Hull's feeling about not seeing the results she had hoped to see in the report. She was hopeful the administration and Board could work towards addressing the issues the report had highlighted.

SCHMIDT MOVED, MCCONNELL SECONDED, TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO
EXTEND THE MEETING UNTIL 11:00 P.M.

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

2008-2010 Draft Priorities

The administration had developed recommendations for the 2008-2010 Priorities for Board discussion. The three proposed primary performance goals aimed to increase the graduation rate and improve math and writing skills. The four initiatives pertained to technology, secondary education, a possible bond election, and improving writing skills.

Dr. Wagner noted the district's vision and mission statements had not changed. They were the foundation of everything the district did and kept the district focusing on students and student achievement.

Vision: Excellence and Equity for All

Mission: To provide an excellent and equitable education in a safe, supportive environment so all students could become productive members of a diverse and changing society.

Core Values

- Student learning is at the center of everything we do.
- High achievement evolves from high expectations and educational opportunities.
- Quality education requires highly motivated, skilled, supportive teachers, administrators, and support staff.
- Active partnerships with the family and community support successful student learning.
- Respect for the diversity and dignity of individuals and groups is essential.

Primary Performance Goals

A. Increase the graduation rate to exceed the state requirement for meeting Adequate Yearly Progress.

Indicator: The district's graduation rate, as computed by the state, will increase and exceed the state requirement.

B. Improve the performance of African American students, Alaska Native/ American Indian students, and Students with Disabilities (SWD) in math.

Indicator: African American students, Alaska Native/ American Indian students, and Students with Disabilities (SWD) will score at proficiency levels to meet or exceed the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) of 66.09% on the state Standards Based Assessment.

C. Improve writing skills of Alaska Native/ American Indian students, Students with Disabilities (SWD), Limited English Proficient students (LEP), and Economically Disadvantaged students.

Indicator: A higher percentage will be proficient and advanced and/or will meet or exceed the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) of 77.18% in Language Arts on the state Standards Based Assessment.

Ongoing Commitments

- Focus instruction and resources on areas of need, such as career and technical education, math and writing improvement, and the gender achievement gap.
- Support class sizes that are conducive to learning.
- Invest in quality professional development to meet district goals of respecting multicultural perspectives and implementing technology.
- Use data-supported decision making and annual school planning.
- Provide graduation success strategies, challenging courses, and instruction which is both inspirational and innovative.
- Engage families to promote student success.

2008-2010 Draft Priorities (continued)

- Increase communication with and support for students and families of diverse cultures.
- Use technologies, including PowerSchool Premier, to enhance learning, monitor student progress, involve parents, and maintain efficient district operations.
- Enhance school safety and student wellness.
- Recruit, hire, and retain a diverse workforce with the talents and abilities to fulfill the district's mission.
- Maintain excellent school facilities and manage capital improvement projects.

Initiatives to Improve Student Performance

1. Implement Recommendations from the Secondary Review Process.
2. Implement Phase II of the Technology Blueprint, including beginning the Action Steps required for each of the fourteen goals.
3. Prepare for a fall 2009 bond election for school capital needs.
4. Develop a plan for using formative assessment to improve writing skills.

BOARD QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Mrs. Schmidt asked Dr. Wagner about the 4+2 plans specifically. Mrs. Schmidt suggested noting it right under the secondary review process and perhaps a couple of other major projects the district was working on or would be implementing. Dr. Wagner thought Mrs. Schmidt's idea was a good one and could easily be accommodated.

Mrs. Hull would like to see a primary performance goal that related to all students in the area of academic performance – to improve scores on the TerraNovas and raise overall academic performance. She thought the TerraNova tests, a nationally normed comparison, were important and she had less confidence in the SBAs. Mrs. Hull thought there should be a performance goal that related to improving the performance of all students, not just specific groups.

Mrs. Hajdukovich thought the district was doing a good job in offering parents and students educational choices. She thought it would be good to have it stated as an Ongoing Commitment. Mrs. Hajdukovich was pleased to see addressing and focusing on the gender gap as an Ongoing Commitment.

Colonel Fitzgerald like the goals, but asked how the district would know if the goals were being met throughout the year, prior to students taking the assessment tests. He thought it was important to know before the tests whether students were meeting the goals. Dr. Wagner absolutely agreed and one of the initiatives was to develop a plan for using formative assessment to improve writing skills. It was important to know along the way how students were doing. That is why the administration was already planning to do it in writing. Also, as part of the secondary education review, the administration was discussing the development of a common assessment perhaps for the quarter

2008-2010 Draft Priorities (continued)

or semester in areas such as Algebra I. Colonel Fitzgerald voiced concern that the formative assessments might not address the different ethnic groups and the district might want to look at something that could provide that information.

Mrs. Dominique thought it might be better for the administration to go back six years for comparison and trend data, rather than ten years.

Dr. Wagner stated the administration would incorporate the Board's suggestions and the 2008-10 Priorities would come before the Board as an action item at their next meeting for adoption.

BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT'S QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS/ COMMITTEE REPORTS

Colonel Fitzgerald thanked the Lathrop Jazz Ensemble for their performance; as a prior choir member, he could appreciate the effort that went into great performances. He also thanked the teachers for the great work they did in educating the children in the community. He had appreciated their comments.

Mrs. Hull was concerned about the class size comments that were made during public testimony. Although she realized the formal class size report came later in the year, Mrs. Hull thought the Board needed a preliminary class size report at their next meeting because class size was so important. Mrs. Hull stressed the importance of having students in good situations and not having teachers feel they could not deliver their instruction because of the size of their class.

Mrs. Hull thanked all the teachers who had been in attendance earlier in the meeting. It was a difficult situation for everyone to have a breakdown in the negotiations and not have a signed contract. She thought it was important to get more information out to the public about both the district and teachers' positions. She hoped as more information was shared, the negotiations could be resolved quickly. In regards to information getting out, Mrs. Hull had some points she hoped would be shared – one of which was the 0%-0%-0% position and how it compared to previous starting positions, as it was her understanding it had been a traditional starting point, but she wasn't certain teachers were aware of that.

Mrs. Hull valued what teachers did and she was sure all Board members wished they could pay them much more than they made, but there were always considerations in the budget. The Board was responsible for making certain class sizes were low and able to pay the district's fuel bills. The district had received an increase from the state and it was certainly the Board's intent to pay the teachers well and give them a responsible raise. In regards to the issue of adjusting the salary schedule in order to raise the salary of teachers at the beginning of the scale, Mrs. Hull thought people might not be aware how it might impact an overall percentage increase on the scale. The district needed to be able to attract and retain teachers at the beginning of the scale, as well as pay the teachers well at the high end.

Mrs. Hull appreciated the teachers that had been in attendance and their respectfulness. Her heart went out them in making ends meet in challenging times. She wanted them to know she was committed to working with the Board's team and FEA to reach a contract everyone would be happy with. If after the arbitrator looked at the district's offer, the offer was not reasonable, the district should certainly go back and look at it again and start over. Mrs. Hull pledged her best efforts to it.

Mrs. Schmidt also wanted to see class size information. She thought it was unusual for the district to have 4-5 classrooms at high numbers. She congratulated Mr. Sample on being a National Scholar Semi-Finalist. She asked if the district conducted any childcare outreaches in the spring to find out about upcoming enrollees so the district was not surprised.

**BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT'S QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS/
COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)**

Mrs. Schmidt had hoped the contract would have been settled before she ended her tenure on the Board. She commented on Ms. Dyer's testimony regarding the venomous comments and did not think any of those comments had come from anyone on the Board or anyone in the district. She regretted the comments, especially some of the comments posted on the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner's website. She appreciated having a respectful process.

Mrs. Schmidt would like to know where Ms. Smith got the figure of approximately 30% of the newly hired teachers under Tier III with the defined contribution retirement plan had already left teaching in the state, so more information could be obtained. She said it was a tremendous investment for teachers to get into teaching and a huge investment for the state as well. If teachers were not staying because of the current retirement package, the situation needed to be addressed. She hoped people would raise the question with legislators.

Mrs. Schmidt had a conversation with a parent about decreasing excused periods. The parent had an interesting idea, for students, like the jazz band students who performed earlier, and who started school at 6:30 a.m. and were taking six classes, perhaps they could be allowed an excused class where they could go to the library to get some work done. The parent had also suggested that perhaps excused periods should be offered only to students or juniors taking an AP course. The district wanted to challenge students and an excused period could be an incentive to take AP courses. Mrs. Schmidt did not like the idea of students leaving the grounds if they had a free period and would rather see them go the library or some other area where they would be supervised rather than leave campus.

Mrs. Hull had heard concerns from some teachers who were in a unique position regarding their certification. They had been encountering difficulty in getting responses from Juneau in order to continue teaching and it was impacting their salaries. The issue was important and she asked the administration for a report on the situation at the Board's next meeting.

Ms. McConnell was also concerned about class size and would like a report at the next meeting. She thanked the teachers for sharing their comments with the Board. Ms. McConnell assured them the Board was not just giving lip service. The Board really listened to what the teachers were saying. Ms. McConnell hoped the assessment report would be shared with different ethnic groups and committees in the community so they could help partner with the district in improving the scores. Ms. McConnell had enjoyed serving the community and thanked the Board members and the staff for making her tenure on the Board very enjoyable.

HULL MOVED, DOMINIQUE SECONDED, TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO
EXTEND THE MEETING UNTIL 11:15 P.M.

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

Mrs. Dominique thanked Ms. McConnell for her time on the Board; she had enjoyed working with her. Mrs. Dominique also shared concern with other Board members about class sizes. She too would like to see a report, but with specific information about the growth in the Woodriver area. She recalled a borough population report that had noted the quick growth in the Woodriver and North Pole areas.

**BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT'S QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS/
COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)**

Mrs. Dominique wanted teachers to know they were valued. Some of the teachers her sons had were still teaching. She hoped that when they received the explanation memo from Mr. Fisher that they looked at the information provided with a clear mind. She asked them to look at it versus what they had been told by the union. Mrs. Dominique had really taken exception to the comments about giving lip service. It was not lip service and the Board was trying to do the best they could for teachers. She asked teachers to look at both sides clearly. Mrs. Dominique appreciated all the comments from the public and had thoroughly enjoyed Lathrop's jazz band.

Mrs. Brophy always appreciated Mrs. Dominique's direct comments. Mrs. Brophy had also appreciated all the comments from the teachers. She had read every email she had received and listened very carefully to all the comments. There were always two sides to every story and she had thought about debating and making counterpoints. But when it came down to it, on how to convince the teachers the Board cared and valued them, for her, it came down to the comments of Mr. Brown. He had been a very clear example of the passion and commitment of the teachers throughout the district. She and the Board appreciated the teachers in the district.

Mrs. Hajdukovich appreciated all the teachers that had come before the Board; she recognized it was very difficult. She hoped the teachers knew the Board was always open to comments, even the critical ones. In response to Ms. Graves' comments on the different economics between the districts and their different steps and how they were all different, the district was constantly comparing the different salary steps and schedules; and it was difficult to make direct comparisons. Each district was different, their economy was different and all had different points to consider.

Mrs. Hajdukovich felt it had been pretty clear from the beginning of the negotiations that the initial offer of 0%-0%-0% had been interpreted in a very negative way. If she could go back and change it, she would. It wasn't something the Board felt was a sign of how the teachers performed or how the Board valued them. Rather it was a starting point and had been a starting point for many years. This year the offense taken had been great and it had not been a reflection on how the Board felt about the teachers. Mrs. Hajdukovich was very disappointed it had been taken as negatively as it had.

Mrs. Hajdukovich was also interested in Ms. Smith's comments about the large number of teachers leaving teaching due to the new defined contribution retirement system. Also, Mr. Dow had mentioned the difficulty in recruiting specialists. Mrs. Hajdukovich thought the extra column being added in the proposed salary schedule would include some of the specialists he mentioned.

Mrs. Hajdukovich asked teachers to please look at what was being offered. The Board was committed to bringing up the beginning salaries. She hoped it would help to attract good teachers at the entry level. Mrs. Hajdukovich had appreciated hearing from the teachers and wanted them to know their concerns had been heard.

Mrs. Hajdukovich thanked Ms. McConnell for her service on the Board. She wished her well in her new endeavors. Ms. McConnell would be missed greatly.

Dr. Wagner also expressed her appreciation to Ms. McConnell. She recalled how Ms. McConnell had taken her around and introduced her to all the Native leaders. Ms. McConnell had been a great Board member and would be missed.

**BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT'S QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS/
COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)**

Dr. Wagner shared the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) Top Five Priorities:

1. Graduation Rate
2. Early Childhood
3. Incentives to attract and retain quality teachers and to not retain inadequate teachers.
4. Outreach to Alaska Native tribal entities and other organizations to close the achievement gap.
5. Student safety and mental health.

She noted the common priorities the DEED and district shared (underlined above).

Dr. Wagner had several announcements:

- ☒ September 26 districtwide inservice had gone very well.
- ☒ Upcoming College & Career Fair – October 8 at the Carlson Center
- ☒ REACH Training would be starting soon
- ☒ HSGQE retakes would be October 14, 15, and 16
- ☒ End of the first quarter was October 17
- ☒ Parent/Teacher Conferences were October 30 & 31
- ☒ Official 20 day count was September 29-October 24

Dr. Wagner thanked Officer Malloy for her great presentation on the Weed & Seed Program. The community was very fortunate to have such a valuable program.

The meeting adjourned at 11:04 p.m.

Submitted by Sharon Tuttle, executive assistant to the Board.