

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

Regular Meeting

MINUTES

August 5, 2008

President Hajdukovich called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in the Board Room of the FNSBSD Administrative Center at 520 Fifth Avenue. Kristina Brophy led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present:

Leslie Hajdukovich, President  
Jennifer Schmidt, Treasurer  
Kristina Brophy, Member  
Sue Hull, Member  
Howard Thies, Member  
Timothy A. Jones, Post Representative  
Ken Sample, Student Representative

Absent:

Sharon McConnell Gillis, Vice President  
Wendy Dominique, Clerk  
Michael Fitzgerald, Base Representative

Staff Present:

Nancy Wagner, Superintendent  
Roxa Hawkins, Assistant Superintendent – Elementary  
Wayne Gerke, Assistant Superintendent – Secondary  
Mike Fisher, Chief Financial Officer  
Jim Cobb, Executive Director of Technology & Information Systems  
Kathy Hughes, Executive Director of Alternative Instruction & Accountability  
Peggy Carlson, Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction  
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  
Traci Gatewood, Director of Grants & Special Projects  
Bill Bailey, Director of Public Relations  
Sharon Tuttle, Executive Assistant to the Board

Others:

Cynthia Klepaski, Assistant Borough Attorney

**PRELIMINARY ITEMS**

**Introduction of New Staff**

Roxa Hawkins, assistant superintendent–elementary, introduced Ron Gherman, the new director of library media and instructional technology, and Peggy Carlson, the new interim executive director of curriculum and instruction. Peggy Carlson introduced Kathy Port, the new interim elementary curriculum coordinator. Louise Anderl, director of federal programs, introduced Karen Eddy, the new Alaska Native Education (ANE) program coordinator. Kathy Hughes introduced the two new education coordinators for the new Fairbanks B.E.S.T. Program – Tanya Wimer and Kristan Kelly. Bill Bailey, public relations director, introduced Robinson Duffy, the new communications coordinator. Mrs. Hajdukovich introduced Colonel Timothy A. Jones, the Board's new post representative.

## **AGENDA**

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

The following consent items were moved:

approved the minutes from the regular meetings May 20 and June 3; special meeting June 2; and work session June 3, 2008, as submitted.

awarded IFB 09-F0001 for multimedia projectors to Chariot Group, Inc. in the amount of \$120,998.

approved North Pole Middle School's request to raise funds to send students to the National Close Up Capital Experience, in Washington, D.C., November 1-9, 2008, with substitute costs paid by the district.

approved North Pole Middle School's request to raise funds to send students to the Alaska Junior Close Up in Juneau, February 22-27, 2009, with substitute costs paid by the district.

accepted Raven Football Lions' gift of \$2,000 to Ben Eielson Junior Senior High School to be used for the school's high school football program.

approved the Personnel Action Report for the period May 29 – July 30, 2008.

acknowledged the Personnel Information Report for the period May 29 – July 30, 2008.

acknowledged the Expulsion Report for the 2007-08 school year, as of July 31, 2008.

acknowledged the Board's Reading File.

acknowledged Coming Events and Meeting Announcements.

ADVISORY VOTE. 2 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 5 AYES

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS**

Steve Laroe, 222 Glacier Avenue, spoke as Fairbanks Education Association (FEA) president, and had spoken to the Board during their May 20 meeting. At that time, Mr. Laroe told the Board he was perplexed, puzzled over the Board's respect for teachers. His puzzlement still remained, even though negotiations were to continue in September. Mr. Laroe's concern arose from the Board's lobbyist report at the May 20 meeting. The Board supported and worked for the \$200 increase in the Base Student Allocation (BSA), apparently to increase the dollars for the classroom. Over and over, research has shown that quality teachers had been found to be the most important piece of the classroom environment for education. Yet, the quality teachers of the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District would begin the school year without a contract. He asked where the funds were being placed, if not in the classrooms, if not to recruit and retain the highest quality teachers for the students. Mr. Laroe noted the lobbyist report failed to make any mention of support from the Board about returning to the defined benefit retirement program for public employees, including teachers. He said the topic had been brought up for discussion to the legislative committee. Alaska's defined contribution retirement program was the worse in the nation for teachers. Mr. Laroe asked the Board how they

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS (continued)**

expected an individual who earned less than \$50,000 – starting in Fairbanks at \$37,969, to contribute enough to a 401K plan to fund their retirement. He recalled SB Senate Bill 183, dubbed the little bill that could. It moved through three of the four committees in the senate during the last days of the legislative session. The bill was designed to return the defined benefit retirement program. Mr. Laroe asked if the Board supported SB 183 and worked for its passage. He stated the Fairbanks Education Association (FEA) had supported it and worked for its passage because it worked for Alaska's ability to recruit and retain quality teachers. During the election season, people will hear many candidates say they support education; they would work to fully fund education; and they recognized the importance of educating the future work force by placing quality teachers in every classroom. Mr. Laroe asked the Board to keep in mind, quality costs. FEA was prepared to return to the table to continue the process of negotiating. The teachers need a fair contract. The teachers need a raise of more than 1.5%. Mr. Laroe asked the Board if they were prepared to come to the table to continue the process.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Included in the Consent Agenda.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **2010 Capital Improvement Plan List**

SCHMIDT MOVED, HULL SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE 2010 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN LIST, AS SUBMITTED.

Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) required that a Board approved Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) be submitted annually by September 1 in order to be considered for state funding.

Due to a family emergency, Dave Ferree, assistant superintendent – facilities management, was unable to attend the meeting. Larry Morris, project manager, was present in Mr. Ferree's absence.

## **BOARD QUESTIONS**

Mrs. Schmidt asked which parts of Barnette Magnet School's renovation were major construction and which were major maintenance. She thought most of the renovation was major construction, not maintenance. Mr. Morris agreed with Mrs. Schmidt; Barnette Magnet School was scheduled for a major renovation of most of its infrastructure.

Mrs. Schmidt also noticed the same thing about North Pole High School's career technical vocational wing renovation listed as major maintenance, but also with much needed upgrades to improve the school's ability to deliver career and technical education programs. She asked which parts were considered major maintenance; she thought the renovation of a vocational wing was more than major maintenance. Mrs. Schmidt thought it might be helpful to delineate it differently or more clearly when it was submitted to the state. Dr. Wagner said she would be sure Mr. Ferree was made aware of Mrs. Schmidt's concerns.

Mrs. Hajdukovich stated she had been approached by parents wanting to know when a specific project would be addressed. She was aware of the ranking process, but asked if parents had concerns about school equipment, updates, or projects should they speak to the school's administration. She asked how the project list was compiled and projects ranked. Dr. Wagner stated the first step for parents would be to meet with the building principal. She noted the assistant superintendents of elementary and secondary education met with principals on a regular basis, to share any needs of the buildings. When ranking the projects, the district's administrative cabinet and management team looked at the list as a group to determine the needs and safety concerns of the entire district.

## **2010 Capital Improvement Plan List (continued)**

Mrs. Schmidt asked about project #33-University Park Elementary School's traffic safety improvements and why it wasn't ranked higher on the project list. Mr. Morris stated the reason it wasn't listed higher was because they looked at the whole picture, it was not unsafe, but it was something the district wanted to look at in the future. Mrs. Schmidt also noted project #30-North Pole High School's HVAC controls and why it was not included with the vocational wing renovation. Mr. Morris stated the North Pole High School's HVAC controls were in a different location at the school than the vocational wing.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

Mrs. Hull spoke about determining and the ranking of projects. The state had clear criteria and many of the ranking decisions were based on how the projects would rank in the state's ranking system. Mrs. Hull said the priority of the projects were not only the district's priorities, but those that would receive favorable consideration at the state level. She noted Anchorage's past experience of being more proactive than Fairbanks in obtaining discretionary legislative funding for projects that might not rank high in the state's ranking system. Fairbanks had been a little more reserved about using that process, but if there were concerns at a school, the avenue of discretionary legislative dollars was available.

Mrs. Hull spoke about project #16 – energy efficiency & sustainability improvements. She was very pleased to see the project. She had recently toured the Cold Climate Housing Research Center. It had been very interesting to see what they were learning related to big windows. Through all the renovations through the years, the window area in schools had been shrunk to conserve energy. They were now learning that big windows could be used to help with energy conservation. They could put a film on the windows that enabled them to keep the heat in and reflect the cold. The natural lighting reduced lighting costs. Mrs. Hull had asked about going back to large windows. As more was being learned, the district would try to adapt the buildings for the most efficient use of energy. Mrs. Hull was pleased to see and commended the district for continually looking at ways to improve its energy efficiency.

Dr. Wagner stated Mr. Ferree would be sending out a memo to all staff on ideas for saving and conserving energy. He would also be making a presentation to the Board at the next meeting.

ADVISORY VOTE. 2 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 5 AYES

### **INFORMATION AND REPORTS**

#### **Dropout Prevention Program Report**

The district's formalized dropout prevention efforts have been evaluated to determine the pros and cons of the program. Kathy Hughes, executive director of alternative instruction and research and accountability, and Wayne Gerke, assistant superintendent for secondary, presented the report.

Dr. Wagner stated the graduation rate was not included in the report because it would not be released until later.

Dr. Wagner noted the program name had been changed to reflect a more positive and proactive approach. The program name had been changed from dropout prevention to graduation success. Dr. Wagner was excited to see how the program changes would impact the success of the program.

## Dropout Prevention Program Report (continued)

Mrs. Hughes thanked Heather Rauenhorst, research and evaluation analyst, for her work on the report. The district initiated the dropout prevention program during the 200-07 school year. Last year (2007-08) was the first full year of the implementation. The ultimate goal of the program was to keep students in school.

Mrs. Hughes said the dropout prevention program proved successful in identifying students “at risk” of dropping out. The criteria for receiving program services were the risk factors of: poor attendance, failing grades, lack of proficiency on standardized assessments, and history of disciplinary infractions.

Mrs. Hughes stressed the students identified and served through the program were those with the highest risk of failure in school and therefore, their attendance rates, academic performance, and disciplinary offenses were expected to be less desirable than those who were not a part of that population. She cautioned the Board that identifying students at risk and preventing them from dropping out would not necessarily correlate with positive results in other areas.

Mrs. Hughes reported in evaluating the effectiveness of the initiative, the district examined the following outcomes:

- dropout rate
- secondary student attendance
- grade point average
- Alaska Standards Based Assessments (SBAs) and High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) results
- disciplinary actions, and
- survey responses before and after the 07-08 program

In addition, the administration compared the results of students served in one year (07-08) to those served for two years (both 06-07 and 07-08).

One of the most critical components of success in school was attendance. In the district, secondary students who attended at a rate of less than 80% were approximately 20 times more likely to drop out of school in a single year, than those with an attendance rate of 80% or higher. Mrs. Hughes noted there had not been a statistically significant change in attendance for participants in the program. However, risk factors generally increased with age, thus, even if those factors did not improve greatly during the year of intervention, the students' performance might still be greater than it would have been without the program.

Students identified for the program had significantly lower average annual GPAs than other district students. The evaluation had shown there had been no significant improvement after being served in the program.

The program targeted a population of students with extremely low proficiency rates and did not directly address the academic deficiencies. Over time, if the targeted students increased their attendance, their academic skills might be expected to increase. The evaluation showed the 2007-08 passing rate for students who had previously taken and failed one or more of the sections of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) was higher for dropout prevention program participants than others and highest for those who participated for two years.

## **Dropout Prevention Program Report (continued)**

Many students were identified as at risk due in part because of their disciplinary record. There was an average decrease of almost five out-of-school suspension or expulsion days for those students who were served in both years of the program.

The dropout prevention specialist administered surveys to over 100 students before and after they received 07-08 program services. The results of the surveys were included in the full report, along with the individual school program summaries.

The dropout prevention program was successful in identifying and serving those students with the highest risk of failure in school – the primary indicator of the success of the program was the dropout rate of the participants, which was lower than the dropout rate for the rest of the district. Although the program was not found to correlate to any positive change in attendance rates, GPAs, or SBA proficiency rates, it did correlate to decreased out-of-school and/or expulsion days for students with past disciplinary problems and increased pass rates for students retaking the HSGQE.

Mrs. Hughes stated the preliminary results showed the longer the program could continue the more success it would have. She reminded the Board the report was only preliminary until the state released the rest of the information.

Mr. Gerke reviewed the recommendations the administration had for the dropout prevention program in light of the preliminary evaluation of the 2007-08 program.

1. Perform a records search, based on criteria that are being used by the National Dropout Prevention Center on those students who have dropped out of school to determine if there are any patterns that can be addressed early.
2. Implement more credit recovery options, such as evening sessions or the test-out option available through Advanced Academics.
3. Revise the district's attendance policy to address the correlation of absenteeism and the dropout rate.
4. Incorporate research-based programs, such as Check and Connect, into the schools.
5. Identify and systemically incorporate across the district key strategies from the 15 recommended by the National Dropout Prevention Center.
6. Continue to develop teams and cohorts in the secondary schools, like Freshman Teams or academics. Lathrop had one last year; West Valley and North Pole High Schools would have one during the upcoming year.
7. Develop career clusters and pathways in the secondary schools.
8. Review prior year dropouts using the district's graduation success indicators to validate the relevance of those indicators.

### **BOARD QUESTIONS**

Mrs. Schmidt said during the first year of the dropout prevention program there had been equal effort on both elementary and secondary schools. Last year, more effort was placed on secondary and Mrs. Schmidt asked about the program for the upcoming year. Mr. Gerke stated the dropout prevention program would continue for the upcoming year, as it had last year. He stated Mrs. Hawkins had worked with the elementary schools about where they wanted to put their resources.

## **Dropout Prevention Program Report (continued)**

Mrs. Schmidt thought only one school had noted testing results in their summaries, most of them had been anecdotal. She asked if all the schools were looking at the same data and information so they could really see what was working and what was not working. Mrs. Hughes stated one of the reasons for asking for information from each of the schools was so that schools could share their information to see what was and was not working. Once information was finalized from the state, the administration would provide the principals the data so they would have it when they put together their school plans for improvement for AYP.

Mr. Thies had not been able to find a report from West Valley High School. Mr. Gerke said West Valley High School had a program and it was just an oversight that their report was missing. Mr. Gerke said Shaun Kraska, West Valley principal, had submitted a report, and he would be sure the Board received a copy of it.

Mrs. Hajdukovich commented about the input from secondary principals on what was working and not working and how it was valuable information. But it seemed to her that by the time students had gotten to high school, it could be a tough road if they were headed in the wrong direction. She asked if at the elementary level, there would be some refining done that would help the district keep students on track. Mrs. Hawkins said the purpose at the elementary level was prevention. The focus of the program was three fold - to look at ways to increase attendance before the patterns of attendance got out of control; to develop relationships with the students and families; and provide assistance to students that were struggling academically. Mrs. Hawkins noted that although each elementary school designed their own program and each was unique, all were based on the same three focus areas.

Mr. Sample thought it was very important to put focus on dropout prevention, especially at the high school level. He knew of many situations where there had been positive changes because of programs like the dropout prevention program.

Mrs. Hajdukovich thought it was probably difficult to analyze anecdotal feedback, but asked what the administration did with the feedback. Mr. Gerke said the principals continually shared and talked about what was and was not working throughout the entire year. He said the principals had not yet had a chance to discuss the current report, but would on August 28. At that time, they would be talking about what was successful and what was not successful at each school.

Mrs. Hajdukovich asked about the problem of retaining dropout prevention specialists. She asked if there had been any indication it was a difficult position to fill or was it just life circumstances for the high turnover rate. Mr. Gerke noted it was a very difficult job, but felt the high turnover was due more to life circumstances.

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

Mrs. Hull was pleased with the results of the report and thanked the administration for the report and recommendations. Regarding the comments earlier about elementary versus secondary, in her personal experience, with her children having attended Hunter Elementary over the past 20+ years, she consistently saw teachers and support staff that were focused on students. She had seen a loss of contact at the middle school level and thought middle school was a key time when students could lose their footing. Middle school time had some institutional issues that made it a difficult time. It was hard to make the family contacts due to only having the students for two years; teachers had large classrooms; not to mention it was a difficult time for students in growth and development. Mrs. Hull thought middle school was a real key to helping students stay in school.

## Dropout Prevention Program Report (continued)

Mrs. Hull thought the recommendations were great. She had attended the National Dropout Prevention Conference in the past and it was good to see the district focusing on some of the same issues that were raised there.

She was happy to see credit recovery near the top of the list, as she thought it was a key component. She thought there were some promising practices. Mrs. Hull spoke about the importance of informing students and families of their credit recovery options. She had attended a conference where it was debated whether or not to make people aware of the credit recovery option because they didn't want kids to flunk out of their classes thinking they could easily recover the credit. But they learned that when families found out there were options when students were falling behind, students were able to recover their credits. It was important to let people know options available to them.

Mrs. Hull liked the change in the name of the dropout prevention to graduation success. She thought it was the way the district needed to be talking about it and the way they needed to be thinking about it.

Mrs. Hull pointed out a comment in the school summaries from Lathrop Principal Karen Gaborik. "It is recommended that Lathrop re-structure its current dropout prevention plan from a counseling model to an intensive academic intervention/tutoring model" because research showed that failure to earn credits is one of the primary components contributing to high school dropout. Mrs. Hull thought that statement was very true. Sometimes students just need someone to encourage them, a type of counseling support and that was good, but from the conference she had learned that many times, what worked best was to have the teachers connecting with the students rather than an outside person. The teacher could help the student get through the class, they needed the academic support, not just the encouragement. Mrs. Hull was pleased to see that Lathrop was going to focus more on identifying students early and getting them academic intervention, not just counseling support.

Mrs. Hull thanked everyone involved in the program over the past couple of years for all their hard work.

Mrs. Schmidt also liked the name change to graduation success. Related to elementary schools, she had always been concerned about student mobility and how to reduce the number of schools many students attend. She felt continuity was important. In the past, she had mentioned the possibility of having some form of looping transportation that would allow students to stay at one school, even if their parents move three times in one year.

Mrs. Schmidt recalled in years prior, there had been a real emphasis on looping at the elementary level, which was good if students liked their teacher and connected well with them. She also mentioned team teaching. She hoped that elementary schools were still looking at different ways to make the most of their staffing. A lot of teaming came from job shares. She thought perhaps a staggered year team teaching model could be innovative. Mrs. Schmidt thought with so many students going through so many other transitions in their life, if they had the opportunity to have the same teacher they had the year before, at least for part of a day would be very beneficial. It might also help the parents not have to learn a new person to communicate with. Mrs. Schmidt encouraged the administration to support innovative ways of making the transitions easier for elementary students in particular.

Mrs. Schmidt had noted the many comments about pullouts, at both the elementary and secondary levels. She thought if attendance was a problem getting pulled out to speak to the dropout prevention specialist didn't really help the student keep up with their work.



## **Dropout Prevention Program Report**

The school already had several pullouts and Mrs. Schmidt thought the less the graduation success program could depend on pullouts, the better. Although she thought many of the students needed some support and connection with community resources, the one thing she thought the district could do better than probably anyone else, was teach and provide academic information and support.

Mrs. Schmidt would not be surprised that in a year or two, rather than having what had been called dropout prevention specialists, what she thought was really needed were identified teachers and more hours that students would have contact with them, maybe after school or in the evening.

Mrs. Schmidt encouraged the administration to determine how many of the students there were obviously at risk of not reaching graduation, how many went to summer school; where they successful; had they been encouraged to attend; and/or were they supported in going. Summer school was a great way for students to make up credits.

Mrs. Schmidt was glad what the district had been doing was working for some students, but she would like to see more emphasis on academics at the middle and high school levels. Mr. Gerke had listed off a lot of options which the district provided, but Mrs. Schmidt's only concern was the district might do better honing in on four to five options, rather than so many. She thought the district should be targeting the strategies that work best. Mrs. Schmidt thanked everyone for all their efforts. It was a tough issue and program, but it was worth the work.

Mr. Sample recognized dropout prevention was one of the toughest aspects of the education process, but he thought one of the main things to focus on was the academic aspect of the program.

Mrs. Hajdukovich encouraged the administration to continue to evaluate the program. It was a huge topic that interwoven with many other topics involving the education system. Mrs. Hajdukovich thought that by being honest on what was and was not working was important. It is possible more time needed to be given in certain areas to see results, as some areas take more than a couple of years to see a difference. Mrs. Hajdukovich appreciated the recommendations and thanked everyone for all their work with the program and on the report.

Dr. Wagner appreciated the Board's support on the dropout prevention/graduation success program. She pointed out the plan was to focus both on prevention and intervention. In thinking about prevention, at the elementary level, that means developing good patterns of attendance and making sure they receive the academic support they need. As students grow older, their risk factors increased. Looking at results from interventions, it was compounded by factor they are a year older and their risk factors have increased because of it.

Dr. Wagner thanked Heather Rauenhorst for her work on the report. It was a difficult subject to decipher information.

### **BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT'S QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS/ COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Mrs. Brophy had recently had the pleasure to attend the Army Education Summit in Texas along with Assistant Superintendent Wayne Gerke. The summit provided an opportunity for military leaders and school communities and liaisons to talk about the issues military students were facing. She had come away from the summit feeling Fairbanks was doing the right things. There was always room for improvement, but overall, the district was doing a good job. Mrs. Brophy thought with the upcoming deployment, the district had to really focus on what the students would be facing.

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

Mrs. Schmidt congratulated the Intercession graduates that graduated at the end of June. She appreciated the administration, the students, and the parents for all their work with the Intercession program.

In relation to the dropout prevention program, Mrs. Schmidt thought concentrating on math would really pay off for the students in a couple of years. She hoped it would help reduce the dropout rate.

The Board had held a work session in May on the science curriculum review. Going through some documents she had, Mrs. Schmidt had come across a document that the school district and the Alaska Native Educators had put together on Alaska Native traditions in science education. She hoped the information would be incorporated into the science curriculum.

Mrs. Schmidt had received a call from a parent about the attendance policies. The school had sent out some information on the attendance policies and the parent was having trouble understanding them. Mrs. Schmidt did not think the changes in the attendance policies were well understood by parents. The parent had asked if it made a difference if the absence was excused or unexcused and if it was necessary for the parent to come into the school with the student to excuse them at the high school. Mrs. Schmidt had told them it did make a difference because they would not be able to make up the work or receive equivalent work unless it was excused. Mrs. Schmidt thought the administration still needed to emphasize the new attendance policies, perhaps explaining them or discussing them at the open houses. Principals needed to explain the ramifications of the attendance policies.

Mrs. Schmidt spoke about an ordinance the Borough Assembly was considering relating to the audit committee and the auditing process at the borough level. The borough had an audit committee and the school board treasurer participated in that committee. The district's accounting manager and chief financial officer also attended the meetings. Mrs. Schmidt said the district also had their own auditing committee comprised of the school board treasurer, the district chief financial officer, and the accounting manager. It was a small committee. The new national laws had raised the standards. The audit committee would be meeting to discuss the changes and could possibly bring recommendations forward on whether the audit committee should be expanded and better outline how often they would meet. Mrs. Schmidt stated the proposed borough ordinance stipulated that the audit committee would meet three times a year and roughly when they would meet before the audit process.

Mrs. Schmidt said she had not been able to attend the last audit meeting, nor would she be able to attend the next meeting. She said if the Board members had any comments, she would be glad to get those comments to the audit committee.

Mrs. Schmidt mentioned a phone conversation she had recently with Dr. Ann Shortt, former superintendent, and she wanted to share with everyone that Dr. Shortt was doing well and enjoying her retirement in Virginia.

Mrs. Hull wanted to address some things Mr. Laroe had mentioned. She thought it was important for the Board to publicly express their interest in having the negotiations move forward, as well as the Board's support for a quick resolution to the negotiations in a positive manner. Mrs. Hull said Board members over the years often had their own children in the school system, long before they ran for the Board. As parents and Board members, they saw first hand all the time and effort teachers put into educating the community's children. Mrs. Hull, in speaking for herself, believed the Board was supportive of teachers and wanting to have them receive the compensation that they deserve.

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

In regards to pursuing support for looking at the retirement system and improving the retirement system, she supported the idea and thought the Board should discuss the issue. The Board had not done it last year as there were some other heavy items on the agenda, such as the recommendations of the Joint Legislative Education Task Force. The new retirement system was new and everyone was looking at the unfunded liability and exactly how it worked. Mrs. Hull had been learning more about the retirement issue and had had many conversations with people in the Division of Retirement and Benefits. She thought it was something that needed to be looked at. Mrs. Hull thought there were ways to improve the retirement system to give people more assurances about their retirement years without increasing the unfunded liability. If she continued as the legislative chair, Mrs. Hull would like to recommend to the Board that they look at the issue.

Mrs. Hull was looking forward to another year of school. This year would be their daughter's last year of school, so she was a little melodically about it. Mrs. Hull wished everyone a happy school year.

Colonel Jones was excited to be part of the board and represent Army families.

Mrs. Hajdukovich announced the Board's Ethnic Committee's upcoming meeting on Thursday, August 7. She was excited about the school year and welcomed all the staff and students back to school.

Dr. Wagner agreed the start of the school year was exciting. The district would be receiving their AYP results later in the week. She thought the district had made some progress.

Dr. Wagner stated that throughout the year, people would hear the terms rigor, relevance, and relationships, as the district focused on relationships. There were many new programs for the upcoming year, including the new Fairbanks B.E.S.T. program. Mrs. Hughes reported there were currently over 20 students enrolled in the new program.

Dr. Wagner reported the management team had held a retreat which provided two days of professional development. They had focused on customer service. They had identified who their customers were. Charlie Dexter had helped facilitate the event and he had mentioned in an earlier article about upside down organizational charts. At the top of the district's organizational chart should be the students. Dr. Wagner was pleased the district had already had the students at the top of their organizational chart, as everyone in the district served students.

Dr. Wagner announced the district had adopted the FISH Philosophy and would be applying it to trying to improve support and serve teachers, who in turn would improve their support and better serve students and create a very positive learning environment. Principals and teachers would be encouraged to adopt the FISH Philosophy. The FISH Philosophy had shown them that it was all about relationships being the best way to provide customer service, no matter what business you were in. Dr. Wagner explained the four principals of the program – Be There, Make Their Day, Choose Your Attitude, and Play. She felt when people reached out to others and told them they mattered, they could make a difference. Significant relationships would result in significant learning.

Dr. Wagner announced the fair was starting and the district had a booth with lots of back-to-school information. The first day of school for students would be Wednesday, August 20. Management team members would be visiting the schools during the first day to add to support to the schools.

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

Dr. Wagner reminded everyone that North Pole area 6<sup>th</sup> graders would be attending North Pole Middle School this year. In the past, it had been an option, but this year, it was mandatory. North Pole Middle School had made many preparations for the new students. Dr. Wagner planned on riding the bus with some of the students to North Pole Middle School on the first day of school.

Dr. Wagner was looking forward to a good year and wished everyone a great start!

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Submitted by Sharon Tuttle, executive assistant to the Board.