

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

Regular Meeting

MINUTES

October 21, 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. North Pole High School's Contemporary A Cappella Choir led the Pledge of Allegiance and then performed for the Board under the guidance of Bruce Hanson, choir director.

Present:

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

Absent:

Sharon McConnell, Vice President

Staff Present:

Nancy Wagner, Superintendent  
Roxa Hawkins, Assistant Superintendent – Elementary  
Wayne Gerke, Assistant Superintendent – Secondary  
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  
Clarence Bolden, Executive Director of Human Resources  
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**

**2008 ASAA State Tournament Boys' Doubles Tennis State Champions**

The Board recognized the 2008 ASAA State Tournament Boys' Doubles Tennis Champions Forest Owen and Ken Sample from West Valley High School. West Valley Tennis Coach Debbie Miller made the presentations.

### **Introduction of New Staff**

Assistant Superintendent Wayne Gerke introduced Ruth Keator, the interim career and technical education coordinator, and Kim Vrabec, the new graduation success (previously dropout prevention) coordinator.

### **Retirement of Board Member**

Due to Mrs. Schmidt being delayed, her recognition was moved to the end of the meeting.

### **AGENDA**

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

The following consent items were moved:

accepted the Mentoring Programs – Mentoring for Success Grant in the amount of \$181,454 for year two, per Fiscal Note 2009-12.

accepted the Association of Interior Native Educators Sub Award in the amount of \$3,270, per Fiscal Note 2009-13.

accepted the Monthly Management Reports for September 2008.

approved the minutes from the special meetings October 3, 6, & 9, and the regular meeting October 7, 2008, as submitted.

appropriated \$293,800 to Chinook Montessori Charter School and \$175,660 to Star of the North Secondary Charter School as recommended by administration and presented in Fiscal Note 2009-14.

approved Budget Transfer 2009-033: Website Manager in the amount of \$68,890.

approved Budget Transfer 2009-034: Elementary Math Improvement Initiative (EMII) Allocations in the amount of \$259,372.

approved Budget Transfer 2009-035: Elementary Reading Improvement Initiative (ERII) Allocations in the amount of \$318,898.

accepted the gift of several Dell computers, valued at approximately \$10,000, from Matthew Laleme to Lathrop High School, to be used for the school's Engineering Academy.

accepted the gift of several Dell computers, valued at approximately \$10,000, from Genie Permenter to Lathrop High School, to be used for the school's Engineering Academy.

approved the Personnel Action Report for the period October 2-15, 2008.

acknowledged the Personnel Information Report for the period October 2-15, 2008.

acknowledged the Superintendent's Budget Transfer Report for September 2008.

acknowledged the Expulsion Report for the 2008-2009 school year, as of October 16, 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. 4 AYES

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS**

Josie Stipe, 1533 Eielson Street, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Effie Kokrine Charter School, loved the school. In the two and a half months the students had done things other schools normally didn't do. The students had tried many Native foods, which she had either helped prepare or watched being prepared. Ms. Stipe had moose soup for the first time at Effie Kokrine. She had also watched the dad of a student skin a caribou head. She had also watched one of the teachers cook the head for the students and was able to taste caribou tongue, brain, and a piece of the head. Ms. Stipe thought it was one of the best foods she had ever tried. She also had been able to make fish ice cream, which she had never tried before. She learned you had to use white fish when you made fish ice cream. Ms. Stipe said her teacher cooked up the caribou's heart and kidney for the school. It had been the teacher's first time to cook those as well. There had also been two potlatches at the school in the two and a half months of school. Ms. Stipe said she tried to make fry bread for the first time, which was a new experience for her. She had also made many friends at Effie Kokrine. When she first arrived, she wasn't that close to her friends, but now most of them were her adopted family – her second family. They all looked after each other. Ms. Stipe thanked the Board for listening to her and wished them a nice evening.

Harley Kraus, 1415 26<sup>th</sup> Ave, Apt. A, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Effie Kokrine Charter School, thought the Board should continue to support Effie Kokrine Charter School because the students loved it there. They felt safe and it was a good place to learn. Ms. Kraus said the school had many ways to look at problems so it was easier to figure out the hard problems. There were new experiences that no other school had, such as watching a bear get skinned, and butchering a moose. Students were able to take college courses, which no other school offered. The school provided tutoring. There was a comfortable learning environment. Ms. Kraus said the teachers talked with students one-on-one which was good because for her to understand something, she had to talk to the teacher one-on-one. She asked the Board to keep supporting Effie Kokrine Charter School. Ms. Kraus thanked the Board for their time.

Sydney Bailey, 4416 Stanford Drive, a student at Effie Kokrine Charter School, said the school did a lot of things the other schools didn't, such as butchering a moose and watching a bear being skinned. The students then had to write a report on it. Ms. Bailey said the students also got to make moose soup and cook and taste moose heart and liver. She said her classroom had two couches, rocking chairs, and blankets which helped the learning process. Ms. Bailey thought her classroom was very comfortable. She was use to lying down to do her homework instead of sitting in a chair.

Eric Terry, 819 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Effie Kokrine Charter School, would like the school to stay open. It was easier to learn at Effie Kokrine because of the environment in the classroom. Mr. Terry thought students did not feel put-down or left out at the school. The teachers were always there to help. They made the work a lot easier, but still challenged students. Mr. Terry said the charter school offered early college classes to get college credit and the school paid for scholarships. He thought both were wonderful ideas and those programs would not exist if the school closed down. Mr. Terry thanked the Board for their time.

Derrick Terry, 819 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a student at Effie Kokrine Charter School, said the charter school was his favorite school. The teachers were the best and treated the students with love, kindness, and respect. The students and staff at Effie Kokrine looked out for each other like a true family. Mr. Terry said students learned regular subjects like math, science, English, and others, but they also learned how to respect their elders and adults. He asked the Board if they could name another school where seventh graders earned college credit. The students at Effie Kokrine earned college credits. Mr. Terry said the teachers gave students one-on-one sessions. At other schools, teachers were too busy to help because there were too many students in the class. Mr. Terry thanked the Board for taking the time to listen.

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

Alex Joe, 1410 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, a student at Effie Kokrine Charter School, had come from Healy Lake and said if the school closed, he would have to move back to the village. Mr. Joe thought Effie Kokrine Charter School should stay open because it was the only school that he had attended where the teachers strived to make sure each and every student was comfortable, in a stress-free environment. All the teachers took time and put all their efforts into making sure all students succeeded and excelled in all the five core classes. Mr. Joe thought if it weren't for Effie Kokrine Charter School, he wouldn't still be in school. He had experienced a lot of problems in the village, including getting up early and dealing with the teachers, but at Effie Kokrine Charter School, he didn't have those problems. The main reason Mr. Joe thought the school should stay open was it was the only middle and high school that provided the opportunity to earn college credits as early as seventh grade. He said there were a number of events and activities the school participated in – last year there was a hunter's education program where students became certified. There was also a winter play where students were able to earn 3 college credits. Mr. Joe said the students had also helped set up and attended AFN. Another reason he would like the charter school to remain open was the ASAA certified basketball team. Mr. Joe thanked the Board for their time.

Peter Horace Wright, 1323 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Apt. 6, a student at Effie Kokrine Charter School, knew the charter school was a good school because the students got to skin a bear, butcher a moose, and participate in other cultural activities. Mr. Wright said students at other schools did not have the same opportunities. He would like the charter school to continue with their Native cultural activities and teaching about how their older siblings survived in their early years. Mr. Wright said his learning style needs were rocking chairs, stimulating colors, and nice teachers. He said the teachers helped students a lot more at Effie Kokrine than in other schools. He did not like to wake up around 8:00 a.m. and go to a school with bright lights. Mr. Wright said students earned early college credits at Effie Kokrine. He was asking the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District School Board to let Effie Kokrine Charter School continue and to support the school.

Marilyn James, 193 Palace Circle #1, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Effie Kokrine Charter School, would like the charter school to stay open and not lose its funding because there were students who came from the villages and the school knew how hard it could be for students to graduate from high school. Ms. James said the teachers at the charter school helped students graduate. They prepared the students for college and life after high school. The teachers gave students examples of what could happen to students if they did not receive their high school diploma. Students would not be able to get the stuff they wanted in life. Teachers told students if they spoke to people who had received their high school diplomas they would tell them that they could not have gotten to where they were without it. People who did not receive their high school diploma or had dropped out would say that their life could have been better – with better jobs or a better place to live if they had received their diploma. Ms. James told the Board she wanted them to keep the Charter School open so she wouldn't be one of the dropouts. She would like to be a person that got somewhere in her life. The way Effie Kokrine Charter School could help her was by staying the way it was, with informal seating, dim lighting, one-on-one time with teachers, and Alaska Native students with the same goals. Ms. James thanked the Board for listening to her reasons for keeping Effie Kokrine Charter School open and funded.

Darren John Dewilde, 956 Faultline Avenue, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Effie Kokrine Charter School, would like the district to keep the charter school open because the teachers had helped him more than the teachers he had last year. Mr. Dewilde said that his teacher last year did not allow him to ask questions during math. He also said the learning styles were better at Effie Kokrine – there were no assigned seats and school started at 10:00 am for their brains to function better. Students also did more cultural activities such as watching a bear get skinned and butchering a moose for a potlatch. Mr. Dewilde said students also got to cook lunch sometimes – they had made moose soup a couple of times. He thought it was fun when they got a week off from school for hunting. Mr. Dewilde thanked the Board for listening and supporting Effie Kokrine Charter School.

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

Sherri Huff, 4205 York Avenue, a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at Effie Kokrine Charter School, loved the school because the teachers were very nice and she had made many nice friends. She said the school felt like one big family. Ms. Huff liked that the students were able to participate in cultural activities and learn more about their cultures, unlike other schools. She said the teachers gave students challenging work and made the students feel comfortable to ask questions any time they wanted. Ms. Huff asked the Board to fund and support the Effie Kokrine Charter School.

Tristan Cruger, 73 Trinidad Drive, an Effie Kokrine Charter School student for the past two years, was from Ruby and Galena, but had grown up in Fairbanks. Mr. Cruger enjoyed going back to Galena every summer and snow machining in the winter. He said a student could drive their snow machine to Effie Kokrine Charter School if they lived close enough. Mr. Cruger said the school needed to exist for him because he was planning to graduate from the school with a lot of college credit. Every year the school offered college credit classes. Mr. Cruger hoped the school would always be around for everyone because it was a great school and it had learning styles which everyone could learn from. Mr. Cruger noted the charter school was open to all students in grades 7-12. He thought the school activities were the best, like snowshoe races, the excellent basketball program, and his favorite program – the hunter education program. The students went to the shooting range at the Alaska Department of Fish & Game. Mr. Cruger thought Effie Kokrine Charter School was the best charter school in Alaska. It was a great place for all students – Native or non-Native. Mr. Cruger thanked the Board for listening.

Shyanna Stickman, PO Box 86, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Effie Kokrine Charter School from Bettles, thought the charter school was a great school. They were able to do things at the charter school that other schools couldn't do, like butchering a moose, have potlatches, and take college classes. Students were able to go on field trips that related to cultural activities in the community. Ms. Stickman asked the Board not to make Effie Kokrine Charter School a regular public school. She said as Natives, the students felt at home at Effie Kokrine Charter School. Some of the students had come a long way from home to attend and she felt at regular public schools, students did not feel at home. Ms. Stickman stated the students of Effie Kokrine had come together to ask the Board to keep funding Effie Kokrine Charter School. She thanked the Board for taking the time to listen.

Erick Semaken, 1157 27<sup>th</sup> Street, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Effie Kokrine Charter School, thought the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District should keep funding the Effie Kokrine Charter School because he liked it. Mr. Semaken thought it was like waking up in the morning and going to his other family and second home. It was easier to get the work done because when he needed a break, he could just stop and take one. Mobility was a way that made it easier for him to be successful because it was part of his learning style. Mr. Semaken hoped the Fairbanks School District would not close the school. He thanked the Board for their time.

Carlie Carlton, 2970 North Point Court, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Effie Kokrine Charter School, liked Effie Kokrine Charter School because they got to do things they didn't get to do at other schools, such as seeing a bear being skinned, butchering a moose, or having potlatches. Ms. Carlton had never seen or attended any of those activities before, but now that she attended Effie Kokrine, she felt like she learned something new. She felt teachers didn't have time for students at other schools because there were too many students in the class. At Effie Kokrine there were fewer students so teachers had more time with the students. What Ms. Carlton liked about the charter school was that it was like one big family. She thanked the Board for listening.

Mrs. Schmidt arrived at 7:38 p.m.

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

Katherine Dillard, PO Box 750626, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Effie Kokrine Charter School, thought the charter school was a great school to attend and she did not want it to shut down. Ms. Dillard thought it was a beautiful school with many different cultures represented. She said her classroom had two couches, lots of decorations, and dim lights. She loved to go to school at Effie Kokrine and she did not want to lose it. Ms. Dillard worked hard to find the perfect school to attend. She did not want to go to Randy Smith Middle School because she wanted to stay at Effie Kokrine and learn more about her culture. Effie Kokrine Charter School made her feel happy and cheerful about her culture, as well as other cultures and Natives. Ms. Dillard hoped the Board would keep Effie Kokrine Charter School open and support their school. She loved her classroom and the entire school. The way the charter school was set up helped the students with their learning styles. Ms. Dillard thanked the Board for helping with the Effie Kokrine Charter School and supporting it.

Mandy Sullivan, 1161 Sunset Drive, an Effie Kokrine teacher and parent, was speaking on behalf of herself, as well as for one of the regular substitute teachers from Effie Kokrine Charter School. Ms. Sullivan was an eighth grade teacher, in her second year at the charter school. She was fortunate that her husband worked at the charter school and her son attended the school. It was a true family event for Ms. Sullivan, not just because she got to see her son and husband, but she also had cousins and other family members at the school. They were able to share so much more than what was found in the textbook. They were able to share their personal lives and community involvement. Ms. Sullivan read an email in support of the school from Kathy Lenniger, a regular substitute teacher at Effie Kokrine. Ms. Sullivan thanked the Board for their time.

Marcus Sullivan, 1161 Sunset Drive, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Effie Kokrine Charter School, had been born in Oklahoma but moved to Alaska to enrich his culture. Mr. Sullivan felt the charter school was good for him because there were so many Native activities such as nature walks, potlatches, and he had fun. He had been able to earn two college credits by participating in a play. Mr. Sullivan had been able to capture bugs and then looked at the bugs through microscopes, plus more. Mr. Sullivan had chosen Effie Kokrine Charter School for all the different opportunities offered there.

Temple Dillard, 424 Lower Stone Road, was the brother and guardian to an Effie Kokrine student. Mr. Dillard and his sister had grown up in a village of about 80 people in rural Alaska. He had not been heavily exposed to Western culture until he left the village for high school. His sister was in seventh grade at Effie Kokrine. She has had very little exposure to any thing other than the village. To take Effie Kokrine away from her and so many others like her, would put them in a school that was far from as sensitive as Effie Kokrine was to the cultural differences. Effie enabled many of the students, many from rural areas around the state, to successfully learn how to be successful in the Western World and still retain their unique and rich cultures. Mr. Dillard felt taking Effie Kokrine away could cripple those that would be integral in retaining the Native cultures and bettering all as a people. Mr. Dillard thanked the Board for their time.

Keith Berrian, 864 East Chena Hills, a Woodriver parent, spoke about the first grade classes specifically at Woodriver Elementary School. Having reviewed the enrollment numbers, it seemed to Mr. Berrian that the first grade classes were running extremely high. He had discussed his concerns with the principal, the students, along with an email to the majority of Board members, and Dr. Wagner. Mr. Berrian was not happy with the replies he had received. He had been told there was a target of 23.5 students, but yet the classrooms at Woodriver hovered at approximately 27 students. Mr. Berrian had worked with small children for a long time, as well as being heavily involved in youth sports, and he knew that one adult could not work effectively with 26-28 students, particularly in first grade. First grade students were

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

learning, establishing their roots, and basically setting their patterns of behavior at school, and without better attention than one adult could give them, they would be left behind and setup for failure. Mr. Berrian would like to see the situation addressed. According to the paperwork he had been given, it looked like almost a third of all first grade classes in the entire district were over the target numbers; many just below the “cap” of 28 students. He thought 27 students were too many and the students, parents, and staff would be much better served if classes were reduced to approximately 20 students. In the particular case at Woodriver, Mr. Berrian stated there were two first grade classes of 27 students. The students would be much better served with three classes of 18-19 each. His son learned better in a small group environment and would see it provided for him. Mr. Berrian asked the Board to consider the issue.

Amy Nusunginya, 820 Hickman Avenue, was a parent in the district with six children whom had been through the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. Some of her children had already gone through the school system and she had a junior at Effie Kokrine Charter School. Most of Ms. Nusunginya’s children had attended North Pole Middle and North Pole High Schools, but when the family became aware of Effie Kokrine Charter School, her last two children chose to attend the charter school. Ms. Nusunginya’s children were good students. Her daughter that was currently at Effie Kokrine had been an “A” student from first through ninth grade. None of her children were problem students, but she never felt they had any measure of encouragement or support from the staff at North Pole Middle and High Schools. Ms. Nusunginya noted there were a few exceptions, a few good teachers that she really appreciated, although they were no longer there. She said being Native students they kind of disappeared into the big culture that was part of a big middle or high school. Ms. Nusunginya’s son graduated from Effie Kokrine Charter School last year with eighteen college credits. He would not have had that opportunity at North Pole High School. He was a popular student at North Pole High School and was involved in sports and a leadership position, but he chose to go to Effie Kokrine because of the affirmation of the Native culture and the individual attention students received at the charter school. Ms. Nusunginya had given both her children the choice to attend Effie Kokrine, as well as to return to North Pole High School to graduate with their class. Neither of them chose to return. Effie Kokrine was a good friend of Ms. Nusunginya’s; a mentor to her. Ms. Nusunginya felt Ms. Kokrine was a bridge between cultures in the community. She visited all the schools and worked with all the children. She taught the fascinating, valuable things about the Native culture to all the school children throughout the district. Ms. Nusunginya thought Ms. Kokrine’s school was like her – a bridge, a needed bridge in the community. The non-Native students that attended the charter school gained an appreciation for Native people and it helped to alleviate a lot of the racial tension and the prejudice that existed in the community. Ms. Nusunginya felt the Effie Kokrine Charter School was a needed bridge and she would appreciate having her daughter have the opportunity to graduate from there. As a sophomore, last year her daughter completed a college physics course, which she would have had the opportunity to do at North Pole High School. Ms. Nusunginya had attended many award ceremonies at North Pole High School and there were always scholarships presented to many students. But in all the years she had attended, she never once saw a Native student receive any scholarship. Her own daughter had left North Pole High School and went to Minto and graduated from Minto High School with a four-year scholarship. Ms. Nusunginya thought the encouragement students received at Effie Kokrine Charter School was valuable.

Steve Laroe, 226 Glacier Avenue, thanked Mrs. Schmidt for her twelve years of service on the Board. He commented on the number of his presentations she had had to endure, particularly those on the calendar. He recalled Mrs. Schmidt had been a member of the Board when the district had switched to its current calendar; which he appreciated very much. He thought Mrs. Schmidt’s Tuesday evenings would be slightly different from now on.

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

Speaking as the president of Fairbanks Education Association (FEA), Mr. Laroe appreciated the difference between the current meeting and the Board's last meeting. He was very thankful that FEA and the district had been able to sit down across the table from each other and reach a settlement, agreeable to both sides. Mr. Laroe thanked the Board and suggested work be done on the process so future negotiations would not be the same as the round that had just been completed.

Kory Berrian, 864 E. Chena Hills Drive, a Woodriver parent, was very upset with the large first grade classrooms. She thought the large classrooms were a huge disservice to the children. Ms. Berrian's first grade son had been so excited to go to school, but now he came home unhappy, not wanting to go to school. It was because he was not having a positive experience. Her son was not alone and she was certain there were others throughout the district that had the same needs that her son had. Ms. Berrian asked the Board to take a serious look at numbers and come up with a solution, not down the road, not next year, but this year. Twenty-eight students was the point where the district might add a teacher aide. She did not feel adding a teacher's aide would solve the problem; it would take adding a teacher to solve the problem. The assessments the children needed required a skilled professional and in her opinion, that was a teacher. Solving the problem would mean creating another classroom of eighteen or nineteen students. Ms. Berrian noted the school counselor had told her the maximum students per classroom should be twenty. She said Woodriver had enough students at their school to have three classes of eighteen students that would provide a better learning environment for the children. According to the paperwork the administration had provided for the meeting, there were fifteen classes that were over the target of 23.5 students, which meant there were fifteen problems in the district; not just Woodriver. Ms. Berrian urged the Board to do something for those fifteen classes.

Dr. Lawrence James Ellison, 465 Steele Creek Road, Pastor of St. John Baptist Church, saluted all the Board members for the time and energy they gave to the education of children. Dr. Ellison also thanked Mrs. Schmidt for her dedication and time serving the community on the Board. Dr. Ellison thought what the Board had heard during earlier testimony was important and he hoped the comments from the young people regarding Effie Kokrine Charter School had been an eye opener. The Board had heard the bad news about the overcrowding in first grade, but there was good news even in that and Dr. Ellison thought the Board might not have recognized it. If the Board listened to those that spoke about Effie Kokrine Charter School they probably were able to ascertain that the young people liked to learn. They enjoyed the environment they were in and the culture they were with – exchanging cultures and experiences. Those that spoke on the overcrowding weren't saying they didn't like their school or environment, but that some people learned differently – which anyone that had anything to do with education would know. Dr. Ellison had attended a magnet school through his entire academic career – which was not a traditional school. He went on to obtain his Ph.D. and it gave him the excitement of learning that had not stopped, even to this day. He was fifty-four years old and started piano lessons last year. Dr. Ellison reiterated that young people all learned differently and the Board should give them the opportunity to do that. He had two children graduate from Howard Luke, which was what Effie Kokrine School was currently. His children had come home excited every single day, up until the time they graduated. Dr. Ellison saw that same excitement in the Effie Kokrine students. He noted two of the students whom had testified were members of his church. They had asked him for prayer regarding the school staying open. The students gave him encouragement almost every time they spoke to him, not about God or the Bible, but about math, science, moose hunting – all the things that young people were amazed about that wouldn't necessarily been seen in a traditional school. Dr. Ellison asked the Board to think about the overcrowding and then think about Effie Kokrine's learning environment and perhaps a compromise could be reached where everyone could find a way to be educated and enjoy it all the way through. Dr. Ellison thanked the Board for their time.



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

Ray Dewilde, 956 Faultline Avenue, a parent in the district, spoke about Effie Kokrine Charter School. Mr. Dewilde had four sons, with three currently in school. He had always been open to volunteering or helping at this sons' school, but in the past, he had never been able to find something he could really give himself to. Mr. Dewilde had attended parent teacher conferences and met with his sons' teachers, but he hadn't really gotten involved. He did have one son that was currently attending Effie Kokrine Charter School where he had been welcomed by the teachers; they were happy to have him there. Mr. Dewilde's cultural background and extensive outdoor experience were appreciated. At Effie Kokrine, he had the opportunity to take his son and classmates out moose hunting for a potlatch, along with butchering it and helping with the potlatch. Mr. Dewilde had never been to a school where he had been welcomed when he was bloody (smile) or had the opportunity to take the students out to do something he was good at and believed in doing. He really appreciated the opportunity to utilize his skills. Mr. Dewilde was from the village but had attended public schools in Fairbanks. At eighteen, he was failing in school and ready to dropout. He was an intelligent person, but couldn't get his act together in public school. At that time, Mr. Dewilde went to Howard Luke Academy, which had a much more relaxed atmosphere and he was able to complete two semesters worth of work in one semester because he had joined the military. After Howard Luke, Mr. Dewilde completed his military service, went to college, was raising his sons, and afforded the opportunity to be productive. Mr. Dewilde felt Effie Kokrine Charter School, or a similar school really needed to exist. It was a good place where he could help his son and his teachers. Mr. Dewilde thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak.

Beverly Kokrine, 1716 Roosevelt Street, a teacher and parent in the district, had two children that currently attended Effie Kokrine Charter School. When the charter school opened three years ago, her oldest child had also attended. Ms. Kokrine felt Effie Kokrine Charter School had been a wonderful school for her children. She had been reflecting on what made Effie Kokrine so different and so positive – it offered a different environment, it was smaller, the children knew each other, and the teachers truly cared. When visiting classrooms, the teacher's were friendly, they greeted you, they talked to the students and parents, and they returned calls. As a teacher in another school, Ms. Kokrine had twenty-eight students and it got very busy in kindergarten. As a parent, when she visited Effie Kokrine, she was able to visit with her children's teacher because their class was smaller. Effie Kokrine Charter School teachers had come to Ms. Kokrine's house, they had attended her children's birthday dinners, something she and her children had not experienced in other schools. Ms. Kokrine' felt the charter school definitely bridged the gap between high school and college. Last year, her son had been able to take college courses at UAF where he was able to get to know the professors, the school, and other people at the university that were helping him this year. Effie Kokrine Charter School was the only school in the State of Alaska that offered college credits through the Early College Program. Ms. Kokrine noted the charter school did not have the enrollment numbers needed, but the school was working hard to increase their enrollment. She had written articles, talked to people, sent emails, and was willing to talk to any perspective parents or students about the charter school. The transition from high school to college was easier for the charter school students through the Early College Program. Ms. Kokrine had two sons that played basketball and had really enjoyed the basketball season. Her sons had never traveled before, but through the basketball team had got to travel. It was an entirely new and unique experience meeting new students and parents involved in the basketball community. Ms. Kokrine thanked the Board for keeping the school open last year when the school did not have sufficient enrollment. She asked the Board to please consider keeping Effie Kokrine open and asked for their assistance with ideas for increasing enrollment and securing funding. Ms. Kokrine was a member of the charter school's board. The charter was designed for grades seven through twelve and they had thought about making it six through twelve but weren't certain on how to go about that. Ms. Kokrine thanked the Board for their time.

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

Carolyn Leonard, 1307 Chena Ridge Road, a Woodriver teacher, was currently teaching third grade but had taught first grade last year. A couple of weeks ago, Ms. Leonard had brought up her concerns regarding the high first grade classes at a staff meeting at the school. She knew how dedicated and organized the teachers were and how much they cared about doing a great job for their students. Ms. Leonard knew individual attention and establishing a good relationship with students was what made their education successful. Everything else grew from that foundation and it could only come from spending individual time with students. When there were more students than the teacher could spend time with, they couldn't do their job effectively. It was not the teachers' fault and it was not the students' fault, it was the numbers. Ms. Leonard hoped the Board would address the need across the district. She thought the district was great with dedicated teachers and parents who would spend time in the classroom when and if they had time. It was imperative to give the children a really good start – that was how they would meet their academic goals by third grade. Kindergarten and first grade were crucial for the success of students. The curriculum was thick, but the children were sponges and could do amazing stuff, but teachers had to have the time to spend with them. Ms. Leonard thanked the Board for their time.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Included in the Consent Agenda.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Resolution 2008-08: Honoring Alaska Native and American Indian Heritage Month**

In keeping with national and state designations, the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District proposed to honor Alaska Native and American Indian heritage by proclaiming through resolution, November 2008, as Alaska Native and American Indian Heritage Month.

DOMINIQUE MOVED, THIES SECONDED, TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2008-08: ALASKA NATIVE AND AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH, PROCLAIMING THROUGH RESOLUTION, NOVEMBER 2008, AS ALASKA NATIVE AND AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH.

Elizabeth Schaffhauser, director of employment and educational opportunity, explained the resolution, once approved, would be sent to all schools and principals, along with a memo from herself and Karen Eddy, the Alaska Native Education coordinator, suggesting ideas by which they could acknowledge American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month in the schools. Those ideas included inviting Alaska Native speakers to share their stories with students, inviting Alaska Native leaders to speak with students about the importance of education, explain books and writings by Alaska Native authors (a list of appropriate books and writings had been distributed to librarians), inviting Native leaders to read from Alaska writings, displaying Alaska Native ways of life throughout the school, scheduling Alaska Native song and dance performances, asking cultural clubs to arrange and promote activities, asking teachers to weave Alaska Native themes and people into classroom projects and activities, and creating bulletin boards displaying the history and culture of Alaska Natives. The list also included inviting representatives from FNA, Tanana Chiefs, Doyon, and Doyon Foundation to speak to students on what they did so students could become familiar with their work, inviting young Native college students to Alaska Native and American Indian middle and high school students about the importance of higher education, scheduling Native leaders to read parts of the various books written by Alaska Native authors to students, and for the higher grade levels – presentations on the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and the economical impact of Alaska Native Regional Corporations on the state's economy. Ms. Schaffhauser said the memo would also include a resource list of people that Ms. Eddy had put together.

**Resolution 2008-08: Honoring Alaska Native and American Indian Heritage Month (continued)**

Mrs. Dominique read the resolution for the public record.

Ms. Schaffhauser noted the Young Native Fiddlers would be performing for the Board at one of their November board meetings.

Mrs. Hull arrived at 8:12 p.m.

BOARD QUESTIONS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

BOARD COMMENTS

Mrs. Schmidt knew the curriculum writers had referred to the Alaska Native Science Curriculum that was written over the summer, but she did not believe the Board Curriculum Advisory Committee had seen it and thought they would enjoy seeing it.

Mrs. Hajdukovich thought the resolution was wonderful and a great start to the month of November. Mrs. Hajdukovich noted that Board Vice President McConnell was not in attendance for her last board meeting because she was in Anchorage attending the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention.

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

**Resolution 2008-09: Historic Election**

The Board Ethnic Committee (BEC) recommended the Historic Election Resolution for Board approval in light of the issues of race and gender present in the current presidential election.

HULL MOVED, BROPHY SECONDED, TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2008-09: HISTORIC ELECTION, RESOLVING THAT SCHOOL STAFF BE AWARE OF AND RESPONSIVE TO POTENTIALLY DISPARAGING REMARKS RELATED TO RACE AND GENDER DURING THIS PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

Mrs. Hull read the resolution for the public record.

Dr. Wagner stated the administration supported the resolution; it was very timely.

Ms. Schaffhauser explained the Board Ethnic Committee had brought up the topic and idea of a resolution based on the actual experience of a committee member at one of the district's schools. The committee member had witnessed in her child's classroom, a student who was of African American heritage make the statement that she had heard that if Barack Obama was elected as President he might be killed because he was Black and some people were not going to like that. The committee member had recognized the teacher's discomfort at the statement and thought it was important that the subject be put out as an issue so people could be prepared. With so many district staff members having gone through the district's cultural and race and healing trainings, there were people in the district that were skilled to address the issues and be aware of it as election day approached.

## **Resolution 2008-09: Historic Election (continued)**

### **BOARD QUESTIONS**

Mrs. Dominique asked how the district would know if teachers were prepared for making the situation a learning experience. She had heard and seen some emails having to do with the “N” word in relation to the presidency. Ms. Schaffhauser hoped that by focusing attention on the issue so staffs were prepared and there could be discussions with colleagues on how to be prepared. Those staff who had the appropriate training could share the vocabulary and the points to make in addressing it.

Mrs. Hajdukovich asked about the distribution of the resolution. Ms. Schaffhauser said the intended recipients would be everyone in the district and it would be distributed through the principals electronically so they could disperse it to their entire staff. Mrs. Hajdukovich asked if the resolution, along with others could be put on the district’s website. Dr. Wagner said it was standard practice to send Board resolutions to the schools. At this time, although the resolutions were posted in the agendas and noted in the minutes, the resolutions were not posted on the website, but they certainly could be.

Mrs. Schmidt suggested schools could include the resolution in their newsletters, so parents would be aware of the issue.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

Mrs. Hull thought the resolution was good but the district should be aware of and concerned about any disparaging remarks that were expressed all the time, not just during the election. She hoped district staff members were prepared and watchful for those things and she believed they were. Mrs. Hull wanted to reassure the public that the Board did not think it should only be an awareness during the election. It was an ongoing concern for the district and the Board expected staff to be prepared and address it year-round.

Mrs. Dominique thought it was a good resolution but she wanted to be reassured that all teachers and all staff would get the information they needed to present it to the students so the students could understand they had the right to vote and to vote for whomever they wanted. No one could tell them who they could or could not vote for. Those that might feel uncomfortable talking about the subject needed to have someone or someplace to go to get the information.

Mrs. Brophy was enrolled in the race and healing training and the issue had been up in her class – specifically dealing with students who made inappropriate comments and how they would respond. Mrs. Brophy agreed with Mrs. Dominique that if staff did not know the immediate answer, they needed to know where to go to get the right answer to address the issue.

Colonel Fitzgerald was disturbed about the fact of a student saying Mr. Obama might be shot. He thought more should be done than just sitting down and talking with the student. At Eielson, a threat assessment was done on anyone saying anything about shooting someone. Ms. Schaffhauser clarified and explained the student did not make the initial remark, she just reported a statement she had heard; not that it was made by a student, she had heard it in the context of the presidential election. Colonel Fitzgerald thought the resolution should have language stating that threats would be dealt with appropriately.

Mrs. Hajdukovich confirmed with Dr. Wagner that the district had policies in place to appropriately address threatening remarks. Dr. Wagner stated absolutely; those types of remarks were taken very seriously. If a student made a threat, they would be dealt with appropriately. Dr. Wagner reiterated that was not the situation in this case; the student was simply reporting what she had heard somewhere.

## **Resolution 2008-09: Historic Election (continued)**

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

### **AASB Board of Nominations**

The Board endorsed the nominations of Fairbanks School Board Members Sue Hull and Kristina Brophy as nominees to the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) Board of Directors for 2008-2011.

THIES MOVED, SCHMIDT SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE ENDORSEMENTS OF THE NOMINATIONS OF SUE HULL AND KRISTINA BROPHY AS NOMINEES TO THE ASSOCIATION OF ALASKA SCHOOL BOARDS (AASB) BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2008-2011.

### BOARD QUESTIONS

None

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

### BOARD COMMENTS

Mrs. Hajdukovich noted the Board was in full support of both nominations. Mrs. Hull had served on the AASB Board for the past three years. Mrs. Hull had submitted her nomination/application again and Mrs. Brophy was also going to submit hers. Mrs. Hajdukovich noted there was an interview process they would go through at the AASB Conference in November, but the Board had to first take formal action endorsing their nominations.

Mrs. Hull thanked Mrs. Brophy for submitting her name and noted they were not in competition with each other; there could be two members from Fairbanks on the AASB Board. Mrs. Hull thought it was important that Fairbanks be represented at the association level.

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

### **2008-2010 Priorities**

The Board reviewed draft priorities for 2008-2010 at the October 7 meeting and the revised document was presented to the Board for final revision and adoption.

THIES MOVED, SCHMIDT SECONDED, TO ADOPT THE 2008-2010 BOARD PRIORITIES.

Dr. Wagner explained the comments from Board members from the October 7 meeting had been incorporated. The administration had added a statement on the primary performance goal to improve overall performance for all schools and the indicator of seeing an increase in national percentiles in all subject areas on norm referenced assessments. Under Ongoing Commitments the administration had added one – provide educational options to families and students. The last change was adding examples of projects under the implementation of secondary review recommendations – 4+2 plans for all eighth graders, smaller learning communities, and engineering academy.

### BOARD QUESTIONS

None

## **2008-2010 Priorities (continued)**

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

### BOARD COMMENTS

Mrs. Hull was pleased with the additions, especially the one regarding improving the overall performance of all students. She thanked the staff for the new wording.

Mrs. Schmidt thought the goal of improving the overall performance of all students should be listed as the district's top goal.

SCHMIDT MOVED, DOMINIQUE SECONDED, TO MOVE GOAL D TO GOAL A, WITH THE REMAINING GOALS FOLLOWING IN SUCCESSION.

### BOARD QUESTIONS ON AMENDMENT

None

### PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AMENDMENT

None

### BOARD COMMENTS ON AMENDMENT

None

The Board voted on the amendment.

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

AMENDMENT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

### BOARD COMMENTS ON MAIN MOTION (continued)

Mrs. Hajdukovich liked the format of the priorities; it had worked well for the district for the past several years.

Dr. Wagner noted the administration used the priorities to guide all their work. They developed action plans and strategies around how to reach each of the primary performance goals. The administration kept the ongoing commitments before them in all their decisions.

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

The Board took a break at 8:37 p.m. The Board reconvened at 8:50 p.m.

## **INFORMATION AND REPORTS**

### **Administration's Annual Report for SY 2008-09 Policy Review and Evaluation**

Ms. Schaffhauser made a brief presentation on policies the administration was considering for review and revision for the school year.

Revisions to School Board Policy 286 during the 2007-08 school year established a policy review cycle in which policies of the School Board would be scheduled for a regular review. Administrative Regulation 286 identified *Chapter 10: Students* as the first chapter of policy to undergo the systematic review. The administration had begun its review of Chapter 10 and the Policy Review Committee reviewed it at the committee's September meeting.

## Administration's Annual Report for SY 2008-09 Policy Review and Evaluation (continued)

Major titles of Chapter 10 included:

- Discrimination
- Admission
- Attendance
- Student Rights and Responsibilities, including behavior standards
- Student Disciplinary Actions
- Student Welfare
- Miscellaneous
- Student Records

The current plan was to review the policies adopted over twenty years ago for current validity. Policies based on statute would be researched for current statutory language. Policies referring to programs would be researched for program viability. Specifically, *Policy 1065: Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect* and *Policy 1067: Criminal Investigations* would be reviewed for current practices and needs.

### BOARD QUESTIONS

Mrs. Hajdukovich asked about other avenues that policies could come before the Board. Ms. Schaffhauser explained a member of the public, any member of management team, or any Board member could request a policy revision.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

### BOARD COMMENTS

Mrs. Schmidt asked how or who would determine which policies would be reviewed first. Ms. Schaffhauser said realistically, some of the smaller policies would be done first. Some policies such as reporting child neglect or criminal investigations would require more work and would be seen later in the school year.

Mrs. Hajdukovich thanked Ms. Schaffhauser and the administration for their work on the report.

### **2007-08 Discipline Report**

Kathy Hughes, executive director of alternative instruction and accountability, thanked Heather Rauenhorst, the district's research & evaluation analyst, for preparing the report.

Mrs. Hughes reported the district's goal was to educate every student in a safe school environment. Disciplinary actions were intended to create a safer school climate for all students and staff.

The report provided statistical information on out-of-school disciplinary actions in the district during the 2007-08 school year. Ninety-four percent of those actions were out-of-school suspensions and six percent were expulsions. The report did not include in-school disciplinary actions.

The number of students involved and the number of disciplinary actions were both reported, since a single student might have had multiple suspensions. The report included data specific to gender and ethnic groups, as well as suspensions and expulsions reported over the past five years.

## 2007-08 Discipline Report (continued)

A summary of the discipline data for 2007-08:

- 95% of district students received no out-of-school disciplinary actions.
- Less than half a percent of the students in the district were expelled.
- 76 elementary students were involved in 111 instances of out-of-school suspensions. This represented 1% of the district's total elementary population.
- 200 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were involved in 317 instances of out-of-school suspensions. This represented 10% of the total middle school population.
- 387 high school students were involved in 559 instances of out-of-school suspensions. This represented 9% of the district's total high school population.

The report included the reasons for out-of-school suspensions, the number and percent of each disciplinary offense that resulted in an out-of-school suspension during the 2007-08 school year, and data for the previous year for comparison purposes. In 2006-07, the district used an internal coding system that had to be converted to the State's coding system in 2007-08.

As required under the *No Child Left Behind* legislation, the State of Alaska used discipline data from each school district to annually designate schools as *safe*, *at-risk*, or *persistently dangerous*. Discipline data from each school was applied to a formula that used the total number of days students were suspended for violence or weapon infractions divided by the total student population. All schools in the district were designated **safe** last year, as they have been for each and every year in which the designation had been in existence.

Assistant Superintendents Roxa Hawkins and Wayne Gerke presented the administration's recommendations based on the information obtained from the 2007-08 discipline report.

1. Conduct an in-depth analysis of the incidents resulting in suspensions to determine if there was specific gender or ethnicity trends. Then look for ways to address those specific trends.
2. Utilize curricula that helped address good decision-making skills and social skills development.
3. Continue to look for ways to work with small groups of students.
4. Develop individual plans for elementary students who were suspended out of school.
5. Expand the number of schools utilizing the Safe and Civil Schools' model to improve school climate and connectedness.
6. Continue to fund the graduation success coaches, behavior aides, prevention intervention program, and in-school intervention programs.

### BOARD QUESTIONS

Mrs. Dominique asked if the district had been in contact or planned to contact the mentor groups in the community to work with the repeat offenders. Mr. Gerke said the district had a grant – Mentoring for Success – where the district worked with Big Brothers, Big Sisters. There was also a group of African American men that visited schools to speak with students and staff.



## **2007-08 Discipline Report (continued)**

Mrs. Dominique asked if the district was making parents aware of the groups and programs. Mr. Gerke said he wasn't certain how the information was being distributed, but he would look into it to be sure it was getting out.

Dr. Wagner noted there were also some students involved in a leadership program through the Boy Scouts.

Mrs. Schmidt asked about the elementary out-of-school suspensions and who might be involved with the student when they returned to school. Mrs. Hawkins said usually when a student was suspended out of school they had a re-entry meeting between them, the principal, and their parents. They also had a behavior contract that addressed ways to encourage the student's behavior to change or what the school was going to put in place with either proactive social skills development with the counselor, behavior aide, or the graduation success coach. They would also work with the family and students regarding the dynamics for school success.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

### BOARD COMMENTS

Insubordination had really stood out to Mrs. Schmidt. She thought often times children were mirroring what they saw on television or on the streets. She thought the district needed to be clear on their expectations of acceptable and non-acceptable behavior.

### **Class Size Update**

Dr. Wagner presented an update on class sizes. The information she presented was the most current the district had, which had been received yesterday and verified earlier in the day. She provided Board members with a more current listing than in the agenda.

The list reflected class sizes greater than 23 in primary grades across the district as of October 20, 2008. The chart in the agenda had been compiled from information received from the schools on October 8, 2008. The new chart also included columns to reflect combined and multi-age classrooms.

The numbers represented a "target" not a "cap." This meant that individual classrooms might have a few less or a few more than the identified targets. The question that arose was: "what did the class size have to be to warrant an additional teacher or teaching assistant?" Board Policy 960.3 1 stated:

*Elementary classes, excluding band, chorus, and physical education, should not exceed 25 students.*

*If a class exceeds 25 students, a teacher aide may be provided to the class.*

*If a class equals' or exceeds 32 students, a teacher aide shall be assigned full-time to that class.*

Administrative Regulation 960.3 stated: The unit principal shall be responsible for notifying the Associate Superintendent; with copies to the Director of Personnel, when class size exceeds limits established in Policy 960.3.

## **Class Size Update (continued)**

The district's practice had been to add aide support when a classroom had a class size of 20% above the target class size number. For first through third grades that number would be 28. When intensive resource (IR) students were included in classrooms, they were accompanied by a teacher aide.

Dr. Wagner reviewed the classes with class sizes greater than 23 in the primary classrooms. The class sizes at 28 were in kindergarten. Those classes already had teacher aides assigned when all 28 students were present.

Dr. Wagner said the district was watching the class size for classrooms that currently had 26 and 27 students. If additional students moved in and enrollment in those classrooms increased, teacher aides would be added as appropriate.

The formal class size report would be presented at the Board's November 18 meeting.

### **BOARD QUESTIONS**

Mrs. Hull noted the regular class size report included intensive needs students and asked why the information was not included with this information. Dr. Wagner said that intensive needs students were not included because they were accompanied to class by an aide.

Mrs. Hull noted the Badger Road Elementary School's high enrollment across the board and asked if there were specific reasons for it. Dr. Wagner explained that although Badger Road's sixth grade had been moved to North Pole Middle, the lower grades had increased due to the strong growth in the North Pole area. Mrs. Hawkins noted the principals had been surprised at the high numbers too. Mrs. Hull asked if space in the building limited the ability to add another teacher. Mrs. Hawkins said no; each school could find another room if a teacher was added, although they did attempt to stay away from using inside rooms without windows as classrooms.

Colonel Jones asked how target sizes were determined. Mike Fisher, chief financial officer, said the target numbers were determined during the budget process. They were used to help determine the budget. Colonel Jones suggested the district should relook at the basis of the numbers; it would be a nice starting point.

Mrs. Dominique agreed with Colonel Jones that perhaps the target numbers should be revisited. She asked if the administration had thought about revisiting the number. Dr. Wagner stated the target numbers could certainly be reviewed. Mr. Fisher said the Board could look at decreasing the target numbers, but cautioned there were major costs associated with reduced class sizes.

Mrs. Dominique asked if additional students equated to additional funding. Mr. Fisher said yes – additional students, additional funding, and additional teachers.

Mrs. Hajdukovich asked about the decision process for adding a classroom aide. Dr. Wagner explained one factor was the actual physical size of the classroom – some classrooms were smaller than others. According to the district's regulations, if the principal and teacher felt there was a need, they contacted the assistant superintendents. The administration then reviewed the situation, looking at all similar classrooms across the district to be equitable. If the administration identified a need, they authorized the hiring of a teaching assistant for the classroom.

Mrs. Hajdukovich said often times the teacher aide was not a certified teacher and asked about the process of adding a new teacher in the middle of the semester. Dr. Wagner stated it was very difficult to add a teacher at this late stage of the year. It disrupted students who might have

## **Class Size Update (continued)**

bonded with their teacher or other students, not to mention the process of determining which families would move to the new classroom. Dr. Wagner thought classroom aides were a valuable asset and provided great assistance in the classrooms. She noted the district benefited from the fact that several of the classroom aides were certified teachers – although the position did not require it, nor were they paid at the teacher rate. The addition of an additional adult would allow the larger classes to breakout into smaller groups.

Mrs. Hawkins added that typically elementary classrooms tended to grow through the year and secondary classrooms tended to decrease. She explained that when the decision to add a new class was made, the school could ask for volunteers to move to the new class or hold a lottery. Short of adding a new teacher, another option was adding an additional learning center where a teacher or aide worked on reading or other subjects in small groups without breaking up the classroom.

Mrs. Dominique mentioned the close proximity of Woodriver and University Park Elementary Schools and the difference in classroom populations. Mrs. Hawkins said it was a tradeoff – some years University Park had high numbers and other years it was Woodriver. Classrooms were rebalanced at the beginning of the year and Woodriver lost some staffing because their overall numbers were down. It was a difficult process; especially to predict the number of new students each year. One teacher had mentioned half of the students in her class this year were new – which was very difficult to predict. Over the past four years, Woodriver had been below projections. There was a lot of new housing in the area which could account for some of the higher numbers.

Mrs. Dominique asked if the district was working with the borough in regards to the housing influx, etc., to be a little better prepared. Mr. Fisher stated the borough had called asking for the district's information. He said with Fairbanks being so transient, the district did not do 2-5 year projections. Mr. Fisher noted that between the military, deployments, and new construction, it was very difficult to predict. There was a history of each grade level; but traditionally there is a larger influx of first graders than kindergartners because there were kindergartners that were not in the district's system. There wasn't a straight roll from kindergarten to first grade because the district knew there would be more first graders than it had in kindergarten. Mrs. Dominique thought there could be another influx of new students when the brigade returned.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Kory Berrian, 864 E. Chena Hills Drive, a Woodriver parent, as she had testified to earlier, was very upset with the large first grade classrooms. She cautioned the Board about the intensive resource students who came with an aide – the aides were dedicated to those specific students. Ms. Berrian had taught preschool with intensive resource students and knew how much work and attention was involved and required. Each student was different, but just because there was another aide in the classroom with the special needs student the Board should not think that it brought the ratio down to 14:1 – it was not happening. Ms. Berrian believed children today were different than children several years ago, and she thought it was good to re-evaluate the 23.5 class size target. She encouraged the Board to relook at the numbers – something had to be done.

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

Mrs. Schmidt noted the budget review committee raised questions about the class sizes each year. She thought the district would love to lower the target to seventeen-twenty, but with the budget the district had, 23.5 was about the lowest they could get it. The target was lower than many other districts. It was an average, which meant some classes were not average size and Mrs. Schmidt recognized it was a difficult situation. She thought it would be good for the district to review the target numbers during the budget process, but it would mean something else would need to be reduced.

## **Class Size Update (continued)**

Mrs. Dominique agreed with Mrs. Schmidt but thought with the children today being so tech savvy and advanced, the district really needed to look at class sizes with a 21<sup>st</sup> century view. It might mean seeking additional funding from the legislature. Mrs. Dominique thought it would be doing the students and district a disservice if they did not at least try to reduce the numbers in some way. With the dropout problem in the secondary schools and now if children in elementary school were not wanting to go to school – something had to be done and it needed to start with the ones starting school. Mrs. Dominique was willing to work towards addressing the problem.

Mrs. Hull was passionate about class sizes. The district prided itself on its low class sizes. She was appreciative that the numbers were lower than they were a few years ago and thanked the administration for the reduction in class sizes, particularly in the kindergarten classes. Mrs. Hull was interested in seeing a comparison with other large districts in Alaska. She had been hearing that they had been moving their targets lower and lower. With the extended day kindergarten, the children were divided into two groups, but for two and a half hours a day the entire group was together. Mrs. Hull was very concerned about kindergarten classes of twenty-eight children. When they were all together, that was a lot of little bodies. With such a large group there were many demands on the teacher.

To put the issue in perspective, Mrs. Hull noted the classes were not large classes compared to some schools, some had larger. But there were some states that had caps on the early grades – up to third grade. Some states capped class size at eighteen for kindergarten and twenty-one for third grade. Mrs. Hull thought having twenty-five as the target for kindergarten was not something that should be viewed as low.

Mrs. Hull thought the official class size report should include the intensive needs students that were included in the classes. Even though they came with an aide, she thought it was important to look at the information. She also thought the class size targets should be reviewed during the budget. Mrs. Hull recalled some Woodriver teachers speaking about not counting the preschool students in determining kindergarten enrollment. She thought the district needed to look at how they anticipated enrollment so they could be prepared with additional staff quickly, if needed.

Mrs. Hull agreed it was expensive to move the target numbers, but assigning teachers was another matter. It would not be such a big hit to the budget. Having teachers ready to be assigned could be a possibility. The early years were very important – it had to be the priority. She thought it impacted learning almost more than anything else. The district invested a lot of money and resources in support programs, that might be wonderful, but if class size was not where it needed to be and teachers were feeling like they were not able to give students what they needed, then the district needed to go back and say it was foundational and class sizes might need to be reduced. Mrs. Hull felt it was the top priority. She said if people in the community were asked what mattered most – she thought class size would come out close to the top. The district needed to be very careful and aware.

Mrs. Hull had some real concerns about the size of Badger Road's classes across the early grades, along with Ticasuk Brown, Pearl Creek, and Woodriver. At the schools where a pattern was evident she hoped the district would look at a way to assign teachers as early as possible.

Mrs. Brophy agreed with Colonel Jones and the need to review the target numbers. As a parent, she had been appreciative when her son's classes were low. He had done better in smaller classes. The more children in a class, the more chaos there was. Mrs. Brophy supported reviewing the target numbers.

## **Class Size Update (continued)**

Dr. Wagner explained that through the Title II Grant for class size reduction, the district had teacher reserves for the beginning of the year. This year, there had been five and the district had hired five teachers within the first couple days of school. Some of those teachers were for kindergarten classrooms. The district also had nine reserve teacher positions in the budget and the majority of those positions went to elementary to reduce class sizes. The district used their resources available to reduce class sizes at the beginning of the school year.

## **Retirement of Board Member**

Jennifer Schmidt was recognized for her many years of service on the School Board. Mrs. Schmidt was first elected to the Board in 1996 and during her four terms, served as Board President for two years, vice president for one year, and treasurer for two years. In addition, through her tenure, Mrs. Schmidt had chaired the curriculum advisory, policy review, budget, and ethnic advisory committees. She also served on the district and borough's audit committees.

HULL MOVED, DOMINIQUE SECONDED, TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO  
EXTEND THE MEETING UNTIL 10:15 P.M.

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

Mrs. Hajdukovich presented a brief overview of Mrs. Schmidt's tenure on the Board and vast community involvement. Board members recalled fond memories of Mrs. Schmidt's service on the Board and to the community. Through her tenure on the Board, she had been part of changes and programs that would continue to better the students, district, and community for many years to come. The Board presented her with a goldpanner pen set, flowers, and a Barbara Lavelle print. Mrs. Schmidt and her insight and contributions to the Board would be greatly missed.

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

Colonel Jones thanked Mrs. Schmidt for her service on the Board; she had made a difference for future generations.

Colonel Fitzgerald thanked Mrs. Schmidt for her service. He felt she was the "E.F. Hutton" of the district – when Mrs. Schmidt spoke – people listened.

Mrs. Hull shared a story of Mrs. Schmidt's first election. She thanked her for her service and for always making sure that whatever was done on the Board was in the best interest of the students. Mrs. Hull would miss Mrs. Schmidt's insight.

Mr. Thies applauded Mrs. Schmidt's service on the Board and dedication to the community.

DOMINIQUE MOVED, HULL 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

Mrs. Dominique shared a funny story about Mrs. Schmidt when Mrs. Dominique was first elected to the Board. Even though they had not always agreed on everything, Mrs. Dominique appreciated Mrs. Schmidt's contributions to the Board and students. Mrs. Schmidt was a great asset to the community and Mrs. Dominique had thoroughly enjoyed working with her.

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

Mrs. Brophy noted Mrs. Schmidt's commitment to education and the students of the district. She appreciated and respected Mrs. Schmidt's input and comments. It was evident Mrs. Schmidt always looked out for what was best for the students.

Mrs. Hajdukovich thanked Mrs. Schmidt for all her service. She had appreciated Mrs. Schmidt's assistance on many issues. Mrs. Schmidt experience and history on the Board would be missed.

Mrs. Hajdukovich encouraged people to apply for the Board Curriculum Advisory Committee (BCAC) and Board Ethnic Committee (BEC). Serving on the committees was a good way to get involved.

Mrs. Hajdukovich thanked Mr. Sonny Lindner of Johnson River Enterprises for his generous donation at the last meeting. Mr. Lindner had donated a solar panel grid, valued at \$25,000, to Two Rivers Elementary School.

Dr. Wagner agreed with all the comments regarding Mrs. Schmidt and agreed her experience and knowledge would be missed. Dr. Wagner had been really impressed with the superintendent search and how well done it had been, when Mrs. Schmidt was Board president. She hoped Mrs. Schmidt would continue to be involved in the district.

Dr. Wagner thanked and recognized the staff at Ladd Elementary and Tanana Middle Schools regarding the recent lockdowns while law enforcement officials were apprehending a suspect. The staff pulled together and worked to ensure the safety of students. Connect Ed, the new communication tool, had worked great in dispersing pertinent information and keeping parents informed.

Dr. Wagner noted the first quarter had just been completed. She encouraged parents and students to be sure students attended school. There was a strong correlation between attendance and graduation success.

Dr. Wagner had several announcements:

- Red Ribbon Week
- School Bus Appreciation Day on Friday, October 24
- Parent/Teacher Conferences on October 30 & 31
- November Read-a-Thon in honor of National Literacy Month

Mrs. Schmidt thanked the community for the opportunity to serve on the Board. She would miss everyone.

The meeting adjourned at 10:21 p.m.

Submitted by Sharon Tuttle, executive assistant to the Board.