

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

Regular Meeting

MINUTES

November 4, 2008

President Hajdukovich called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Board Room of the FNSBSD Administrative Center at 520 Fifth Avenue. The Young Native Fiddlers led the Pledge of Allegiance and then performed for the Board under the guidance of Maryanne Allan, coordinator.

Present:

Leslie Hajdukovich, President
Wendy Dominique, Vice President
Sue Hull, Treasurer
Patrick Lee, Clerk
Kristina Brophy, Member
Sean Rice, Member
Howard Thies, Member
Timothy A. Jones, Post Representative
Ken Sample, Student Representative

Absent:

Michael Fitzgerald, Base Representative

Staff Present:

Nancy Wagner, Superintendent
Roxa Hawkins, Assistant Superintendent – Elementary
Wayne Gerke, Assistant Superintendent – Secondary
Dave Ferree, Assistant Superintendent – Facilities Management
Mike Fisher, Chief Financial Officer
Jim Cobb, Executive Director of Technology & Information Systems
Peggy Carlson, Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Bob Hadaway, Executive Director of Special Education
Ron Gherman, Executive Director of Library Media & Instructional Technology
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 Kids Voting Poster, Writing, and Political Cartoon Contest Winners

In celebration of this year's National and State Elections, Kids Voting North Alaska, in conjunction with the FNSBSD, held a local poster, writing, and political cartoon contest for K-12 students. These contests were sponsored by Flint Hills. Peggy Carlson, interim executive director of curriculum and instruction, made the presentations.

2008 Kids Voting Poster, Writing, and Political Cartoon Contest Winners (continued)

Writing Contest Winners – 1st Place Winners

K-2nd Grade	Alyza Handley	North Pole Elementary School
6th – 8th Grade	Gabriel Cartagena	Tanana Middle School

Poster Contest Winners – 1st Place Winners

K-2nd Grade	Sydney Barker	Joy Elementary School
3rd – 5th Grade	Macey Ke	North Pole Elementary School
6th – 8th Grade	Katie Robinson	Randy Smith Middle School

Political Cartoon Winner – 1st Place

9th – 12th Grade	Thomas Edwards	West Valley High School
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AGENDA

HULL MOVED, DOMINIQUE SECONDED, TO ADOPT THE AGENDA WITH CONSENT ITEMS.

The following consent items were moved:

accepted the Title VI-B Special Education Grant in the amount of \$3,449,255, per Fiscal Note 2009-15.

accepted the Section 619 Preschool Disabled Grant in the amount of \$110,756, also per Fiscal Note 2009-15.

accepted the Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education Grant in the amount of \$301,449, per Fiscal Note 2009-16.

approved the minutes from the special meetings October 17, 20, and 27, 2008, as submitted.

approved Budget Transfer 2009-045: Elementary Math Improvement Initiative (EMII) allocations in the amount of \$146,575.

approved Budget Transfer 2009-046: Graduation Success for Middle Schools' allocations in the amount of \$154,861.

approved Budget Transfer 2009-047: Elementary Generalists' allocations in the amount of \$231,461.

approved Budget Transfer 2009-054: Graduation Success for West Valley & North Pole High Schools' allocations in the amount of \$100,000.

approved Joy Elementary School's request to raise funds to send students to Juneau, Alaska, February 4-5, 2009, to observe state government in action and expand their knowledge of Alaska, at no cost to the district.

Consent Agenda (continued)

approved Ryan Middle School's request to raise funds to send students to Washington, D.C., May 1-9, 2009, to attend Washington Workshops Foundation Seminars, at no cost to the district.

approved Barnette Magnet School's request to send students to Washington, D.C., January 16-22, 2009, to participate in the *We the People* class and attend the Presidential Inauguration, at no cost to the district.

accepted the gift of \$1,000 from North Star Construction and Leasing to Lathrop High School to purchase foam flooring for the school's gymnastics team.

approved the Personnel Action Report for the period October 16-29, 2008.

acknowledged the Personnel Information Report for the period October 16-29, 2008.

acknowledged the Board's Reading File.

acknowledged Coming Events and Meeting Announcements.

ADVISORY VOTE. 2 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 7 AYES

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS

None

OLD BUSINESS

Included in the Consent Agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Annual Audit Report

BROPHY MOVED, THIES SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE FY 07-08
FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND AUDITOR'S REPORT.

The Fiscal Year 2007-2008 Financial Statement and Auditor's Report were complete. The Board's Audit Committee met with the auditors and administrative services' staff to review the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and the auditor's recommendations.

Colleen Fitzgerald, director of accounting services, and Kara Moore, partner with auditors Cook & Haugeberg CPAs, presented information on the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the district. Ms. Fitzgerald reviewed basic financial statements, budgetary schedules, revenue sources, and the statement of net assets.

Ms. Moore noted her firm had been hired to express opinions about the CAFR, review compliance with federal and state laws, consider internal control issues, and look for compliance with those internal controls. She indicated there had been a good relationship between school district management and the auditors.

Annual Audit Report (continued)

The management letter had noted one current year deficiency with Indian Education Grants Eligibility. The U.S. Department of Education provided Indian Education Grants to local education agencies providing comprehensive programs designed to meet the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of eligible Indian students. Grant funding was calculated based on the number of Indian students who were considered to be eligible according to information provided by each student's family on the ED 506 Form. Single audit sampling procedures for fiscal year 2008 identified three instances where the ED 506 Form was incomplete or incorrectly filled out by the student's family. Due to incomplete information in the files, verification of eligibility for the students was not possible. The Fairbanks North Star Borough School district has developed a corrective action plan to educate families and other stakeholders of the necessity of providing complete documentation for purposes of determining eligibility. The district was also modifying the instructions for the ED 506 Form to more clearly address Alaska's unique tribal situations.

During the federal single audit procedures for fiscal year 2007, the auditors noted documentation problems regarding eligibility determinations for the U.S. Department of Agriculture National School Lunch Program. The auditors were pleased to report that their testwork for fiscal year 2008 found that the district had implemented additional verification procedures, including modification of the program application and independent review of processed applications to ensure adequate documentation of eligibility of program participants. Program eligibility procedures were appropriately documented and assessed for each application for participation in the free and reduced lunch program.

Ms. Moore reviewed other current year audit recommendations:

Payroll Procedures – Auditors observed the internal controls for payroll processing in the payroll section of accounting services department and the maintenance of employee payroll records in the human resources department. While most internal controls were working well, a review of all controls over payroll data and an evaluation of the staffing and training needed to maintain the required controls was recommended.

Internal Controls Over Online Submissions – Internal controls over online submissions were becoming more critical as many grantor agencies were moving to online submissions for grant applications and reporting. During federal single audit compliance testwork the auditors noted an instance where information in an electronically submitted grant application prepared in accordance with grant reporting requirements contained data that did not accurately reflect the back-up documentation, due to a typing error. The audit suggested the district implement internal controls and procedures to ensure that all online submissions were complete and accurate.

Food Service Inventory – The district intended to transition from the JD Edwards to the Cybersoft Technology system to track inventory for the National School Lunch Program during summer 2009. The district planned to perform a complete physical inventory prior to the system conversion, and updates would be made to the perpetual inventory in the JD Edwards system if necessary. The audit suggested the district document the procedures used to transfer the inventory items to the Cybersoft Technology system and document internal control policies and procedures implemented for utilization of the new system.

Annual Audit Report (continued)

Grant Expenditures – The Cash Management section of the OMB Circular A-133 Compliance Supplement stipulated that program costs must be paid for by entity funds before reimbursement was requested from the federal government. During federal single audit compliance testwork the auditors noted instances where reimbursements were requested for items included in accounts payable. While amounts were not material for fiscal year 2008, the auditors recommended the district review procedures for ensuring that amounts recorded on reimbursement requests from granting agencies were not included in accounts payable at the end of the reporting period.

Other prior year recommendations:

Sensitive Employee Data – The auditors had previously recommended implementing the use of unique identifying numbers for employee files and reports generated in place of social security numbers in order to better protect sensitive personal data of district employees. Audit procedures for 2008 indicated social security numbers were still being used in many payroll and human resources forms and reporting. Although the district began in December 2007 the process of converting to unique identifying numbers for employee forms and implemented more changes at the beginning of fiscal year 2008, there was more to do.

Year-End Accounting Closing Procedures – It was previously recommended the district's review of items ordered or received near year end that required adjustment to year end account balances should include reviewing any related ongoing service or other contracts. The review was to ensure inclusion of all applicable transactions and amounts in the correct fiscal year. The auditors were pleased to report that improved procedures had been implemented.

Capitalization of Fixed Assets – It was suggested the district establish a policy for weekly review of equipment expenses to verify those items meeting the requirements for capitalization were correctly accounted for and accurately reflected in total fixed assets where appropriate. Audit procedures for 2008 found no exceptions to fixed asset capitalization and reporting. It was believed the new policy for weekly review of equipment expenses was working adequately.

Information Technology: Issues for Management Consideration – An independent consultant was engaged to assist in performing a biannual review of the district's technology environment. Important issues identified for management consideration where improvement could be made included:

1. The JD Edwards accounting software was becoming obsolete. The district was reviewing what should be done to make its accounting applications more current because the software in use seriously lacked the functionality the district needed. During summer 2007, the district engaged a consultant to implement Phase II and III of the district's Technology Blueprint which called for a review of the JD Edwards system and to determine the district's best long term interest to stay with the JD Edwards software or migrate to another software package. The consultant suggested options to the district, all of which involved considerable expense and staff time.

Annual Audit Report (continued)

2. Configuration of the JD Edwards accounting system did not require the use of complex password security. Currently passwords required a six non-repeating character password, which was required to be changed every 45 days. The district was concerned longer passwords would be difficult to memorize, which would lead to them being written down.
3. Financial systems data was currently potentially accessible by all who had login access to the AS400 computer hardware. To ensure the integrity of financial data it was recommended the financial systems be isolated from the wide area network and protected from unauthorized access via its own firewall. The district felt the current security system was adequate. The password security system, which allowed access to the AS400 only to those who were authorized to do so, acted as a firewall between the AS400 and the rest of the operating system.
4. It was recommended the district consider obtaining an independent review of security, including network penetration testing of the security system. The district was aware that security issues attributable to the nature and age of the computer related infrastructure existed. The district was working to upgrade to newer computers and related components in order to allow for improvement of computer security.
5. It was recommended the district develop a plan for replacement of obsolete computers, along with a plan for continual upgrading of computer workstations. Currently, over sixty percent of the district's computer workstations were outdated and did not support the security needs of the district. The district was working toward replacement of outdated computers. It began leasing new computers during the current year in order to provide one to each teacher within the district.

Inventory of Fixed Assets – For several years the auditors have recommended regular, cyclical physical inventorying of fixed assets. The district performed an inventory of computer equipment for the year ended June 30, 2006. During the year ended June 30, 2007 the district's inventory of its fixed assets purchased with grant funds was in progress at year end. At June 30, 2008, district personnel were still in the process of performing physical inventories on a site-by-site basis.

Ms. Moore thanked Ms. Fitzgerald and the administration for their assistance and had appreciated their good working relationship.

The district had once again received certificates of excellence for financial reporting from the Association of School Business Officials International and the Government Finance Officers Association on last year's report and they hoped to receive the same awards on this year's report.

BOARD QUESTIONS

Mrs. Dominique asked if the consultant had looked into using computer ID cards as part of the sign-in process to help with security. Mr. Cobb said the district had not specifically looked at the option, as each machine would require a card reader and then cards for approximately 7,000 computers. The district required the changing of passwords on a very frequent basis.

Mrs. Hull noted the audit committee had met and gone through the report thoroughly.

Annual Audit Report (continued)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

BOARD COMMENTS

None

ADVISORY VOTE. 2 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 7 AYES

Commencement of ESSA Negotiations and Selection of Chief Negotiator

Due to Mrs. Dominique's son's employment with the school district and his affiliation with the Education Support Staff Association, she recused herself from the topic.

HULL MOVED, BROPHY SECONDED, TO NAME GAYLE PIERCE, DIRECTOR OF LABOR RELATIONS, AND CLARENCE BOLDEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, AS CHIEF NEGOTIATORS FOR THE BOARD IN ITS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFF ASSOCIATION.

State statute provided that before commencing bargaining, the Board would provide opportunities for public comment on the issues to be addressed in the collective bargaining process. Therefore, the Board was providing a formal opportunity, at any regular school board meeting, for public input on classified employee salaries, benefits, and any other contractual issues prior to beginning negotiations with the Education Support Staff Association (ESSA). The public was also invited to send written comments to the School Board Office, 520 Fifth Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-4756.

The current contract between ESSA and the district expired on June 30, 2009. In order to begin negotiations with ESSA, the Board needed to name a chief negotiator. Gayle Pierce, the district's director of labor relations, was recommended to serve as the Board's chief negotiator, with Clarence Bolden, executive director of human resources, as alternate.

BOARD QUESTIONS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Fred Landru, 2118 Cushman, as ESSA president, he was happy to see the Board take the step of naming a chief negotiator. ESSA would be forming their negotiating team soon.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Rice asked about the negotiation process. Dr. Wagner said a training session on negotiations would be held in the near future.

Mrs. Hajdukovich stated the Board was looking forward to positive negotiations.

ADVISORY VOTE. 2 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES (Dominique Recused)

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

School Climate & Connectedness Survey

At the administration's request, the Alaska Association of School Boards (AASB) conducted a School Climate & Connectedness Survey last spring. The survey was given to students and staff. André Layral from AASB gave a PowerPoint presentation.

Students were surveyed about different facets of school climate and connectedness. School climate referred to factors that contributed to atmosphere and attitudes in a school. Positive school climate was associated with:

- ❖ well managed classrooms and common areas
- ❖ high and clearly stated expectations
- ❖ feeling safe at school
- ❖ staff that consistently acknowledged all students and fairly addressed their behavior

Connectedness referred to students' school experiences and their perceptions and feelings about school. Seven qualities were said to influence students' positive attachment to school:

- ❖ having a sense of belonging and being part of a school
- ❖ liking school
- ❖ perceiving that teachers were supportive and caring
- ❖ having good friends within school
- ❖ being engaged in their own current and future academic progress
- ❖ believing that discipline was fair and effective
- ❖ participating in extracurricular activities

Staffs were surveyed about different facets of school climate, their perspectives about student experiences, as well as the conditions for teaching and working within the school. Research had shown a positive relationship between school climate and connectedness, student academic performance, and reductions in risky behaviors of students.

Mr. Layral reported 3,597 middle school and high school students had participated in the survey, along with 396 staff members – 225 of them teachers. Statewide, there were 242 schools across 33 districts in Alaska that had participated. A total of 30,270 students statewide in 5th-12th grades had participated.

The survey was a snapshot in time. It had to be balanced against other information the schools had about students. The information obtained worked best when linked with other school improvement efforts. Surveying yearly could reveal progress.

Mr. Layral presented an overview of the survey:

- Considerable variability between district schools that took the survey
- Student ratings of school climate and connectedness were significantly higher among:
 - students who had someone available to help them with homework outside of school
 - students who had an adult who knew how they spent their free time
- Students who reported missing school without permission gave significantly lower ratings of school climate and connectedness than peers who did not.
- 6.7% of students reported they had given up on school, while 80.6% disagreed.

School Climate & Connectedness Survey (continued)

- 59.7% of students reported they were encouraged to work to the best of their abilities at their school.
- 74.7% of students reported adults in the community encouraged them to take school seriously.
- 55.8% of students reported having at least one adult at their school that they felt comfortable talking to about things that were bothering them.
- 40.1% of students reported there was a teacher or some other adult who would miss them when they were absent.
- 46.5% of students reported there were lots of chances for students in their school to talk with teachers one-to-one.
- On 36 of the 65 survey items there was a significant statistical difference between males and females.
- Overall the district scored 3.54 out of 5 for school climate – with 18% strongly agreeing, 68% agree some/disagree some, and 14% disagree strongly.
- Overall the district scored 3.17 out of 5 for connectedness – with 5 % strongly agreeing, 60% agree some/disagree some, and 34% disagree strongly.

Mr. Layral explained how climate and connectedness related to student achievement. There had been significant improvement in reading, writing, and math scores from 2006 to 2007 across participating schools. Schools who had reported increases in overall school climate and connectedness from 2006 to 2007 also had improvements in their reading, writing, and math portions of the Student Based Assessment (SBA) from 2006 to 2007.

When adolescents felt cared for by people at their school and felt like a part of their school, they were less likely to use substances, engage in violence, or initiate sexual activity at an early age. Sharing results of the survey with staff provided a handy structure for encouraging conversation and dialogue. The process of sharing results provided opportunities for staff to identify areas of weakness, focus on strengths, and determine next steps.

BOARD QUESTIONS

Mrs. Hull thanked Mr. Layral; she appreciated the work he had done. She asked which districts Fairbanks had been compared with. Mr. Layral stated Fairbanks was compared with like sized districts like Anchorage and Juneau. The statewide statistics pertained to all the participating districts in the state.

Mr. Lee asked how the information had been implemented into other schools to create some sort of change. Mr. Layral said the data, like most data, told a story. In the schools where the data had been embraced, it involved the leadership of the school and a commitment to the students in creating meaningful opportunities to help solve school problems. It was important to create useful roles where students could feel a part of the school. Some schools were looking at utilizing interventions to address students who were struggling to create a connection. Some schools were working on the overall climate. Some were implementing an evidence based approach to teaching social and emotional learning targeted to specific grade levels or in specific ways at the different grades. Mr. Layral said there was not a one size fits all approach. He suggested looking at what the district was already doing and how it was contributing to the climate, what was missing, and how could the district be more intentional. Mr. Layral thought that started at the individual sites. The principals were very interested in the data.

Mr. Sample asked how the surveys were implemented in the schools and why there was such a large disparity in participation among schools. Mr. Sample had not recalled taking the survey.

School Climate & Connectedness Survey (continued)

Mr. Gerke stated all the schools were given the opportunity and timeframe for administering the surveys. Some schools had other things happening and were not able to fully implement it. It had been site dependent upon administrators.

Mr. Sample asked about the correlation between peer climate and the leadership and involvement. He thought the more students were involved in school, the better they would feel about their climate. Mr. Layral agreed. He thought there was a connection and suggested the schools have conversations with their students, staff, and families.

Mrs. Brophy clarified that 34% of the students did not feel a sense of connectedness. Mr. Layral stated that was correct; approximately one-third of the students did not experience school or have attitudes or positive feelings about feeling connected or a sense of belonging. He thought the individual scales were more accurate. Mrs. Brophy was curious if there were actually 34% of the students not feeling connected, how it correlated with dropping out. Mr. Layral had not seen the district's other data and could not answer with certainty. But in most places where students reported not feeling a sense of connectedness, they were often struggling, missed school, and had behaviors problems. He thought the district's dropout prevention program was attentive to those concerns.

Mrs. Brophy noted more parents than students reported students feeling safe in the schools. Mr. Layral thought that parents who reported their child felt safe at school often based that opinion on what their child had told them.

Some of the same questions on the student survey were asked on the parent opinion poll and the district had been able to compare the answers. There had been some significant gaps. Mr. Layral thought the perception of adults was going to be different than the perceptions of students. Some of those differences were easily explained, while others warranted more research.

Mr. Rice asked if the surveys had been given to groups of students that would answer truthfully. Mr. Layral said the surveys were intended for every student in the schools. He said they generally looked at approximately 60% response for weighted data. In the schools where participation was low, Mr. Layral couldn't tell which students participated. But in areas where there was 91% participation Mr. Layral felt the data was fairly accurate. Mr. Layral said the survey was not for a given group, but open to all students.

Mrs. Hajdukovich saw the value in administering the surveys over multiple years. She asked if AASB provided a clearing house of ideas, suggestions or recommendations for each of the topics. Mr. Layral thought the larger districts had programs in place to address concerns and used AASB as a resource. The smaller districts relied more on AASB to be the resource. Mr. Layral was working with one district on a large grant to help with social and emotional learning. AASB could be the expert that supported their efforts or they could work from a far.

Mr. Lee asked Mr. Layral if the survey had a good number to determine a good baseline regarding the percentage of participants. Mr. Layral thought the district data was within an acceptable range.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

School Climate & Connectedness Survey (continued)

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Thies asked if the results of the survey were where Mr. Layral anticipated they would be. Mr. Layral said the district's results were about where the rest of the state was.

Mrs. Brophy appreciated the survey and thought the information was very valuable. She hoped something would actually be done with the data.

Mrs. Hull was concerned about the drug and alcohol results in comparison with the state. She would like to know more about that at a future date. She was interested in how Fairbanks compared with other urban districts.

Dr. Wagner stated the district planned to use the data to make improvements. The district would be administering the survey every other year and would work hard to make changes in the areas of concern.

Mrs. Hajdukovich mentioned Dr. Blume, speaker at the AASB conference, had spoke about the importance of connectedness. She thought the data was invaluable, but the challenge would be to how best use it to help students.

Mr. Layral said Dr. Blume had found that when school climates increased, so did academics and healthy kids.

Mr. Lee asked where the accountability fell with the implementation of any changes. Mrs. Hajdukovich said it was the responsibility of both the Board and administration.

Results of Parent Opinion Polls 2007-08 School Year

In the spring of 2008, the administration conducted its biennial parent opinion poll in order to find out what parents liked best about each school and what parents indicated was in need of improvement. Wayne Gerke, assistant superintendent of secondary, presented the report.

The parent opinion poll used to be called the climate survey. The poll had been done in conjunction with the climate and connectedness survey and some of the same questions were asked on both surveys. The poll was available to parents through PowerSchool Premier and/or on paper.

The opinion polled results provided the district with the opportunity to learn what parents liked best about each school and what parents indicated was in need of improvement. The results showed:

- 3,064 opinion polls were completed
- The response rate at secondary schools was approximately 10% higher than during the last administration of the survey (Spring 2006).
- The response rate at the elementary schools was about 5% lower than during the last administration of the survey (Spring 2006).
- Overall, more of the parents of students in elementary schools agreed with positive statements than the parents of students in secondary schools.
- At the high school level, 75% of parents agreed that the school their child attended was adequately preparing students to continue their education after high school, compared to 60% who agreed that the school adequately provided the necessary skills for students entering the work force after high school.
- The majority of parents of students at both elementary and secondary schools agreed that the schools did a good job teaching academics and that the schools have high quality, professional teachers.

Results of Parent Opinion Polls 2007-08 School Year (continued)

Mr. Gerke and Mrs. Hawkins had made recommendations based on the information obtained from the 2007-2008 Parent Opinion Poll, which was available to all parents of students in grades K-12, and the School Climate and Connectedness Survey, which was given to secondary students and staff.

1. Meet with each principal to compare the parent opinion polls previously given in the 2005-2006 school year with the current one to note any significant changes.
2. Conduct focus group discussions to discuss areas which might not be rated as high as other areas.
3. Work with the schools to develop strategies and implement programs that would help address areas which were indicated to be a challenge.
4. Use the School Climate and Connectedness Survey results, along with the Parent Opinion Poll results, to help guide discussions and decisions during the Secondary Revamping process.

BOARD QUESTIONS

Mr. Sample noted the parent response was low except for Denali and asked what they had done to get such a great response. Mrs. Hawkins stated there were contests amongst the classes to see which class could get the most responses. She noted the principals would be discussing what had been done to increase participation so it could be shared with other schools.

Mr. Rice asked if students would be included in the focus groups. Mr. Gerke said the district had planned to involve students in the groups.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

BOARD COMMENTS

Mrs. Hull had noted the decline from elementary to high school in the opinion poll, which was not a surprise to anyone. There was great confidence at the elementary level but then there were greater concerns at the middle and high school levels. Mrs. Hull thought it was another reason to focus on the secondary improvement initiative to see if ways could be found to better connect people so they had higher levels of satisfaction for parents and students.

Colonel Jones agreed with Mrs. Hull; it had been striking to see the results. He was especially concerned about the awareness of the drug prevention program. There appeared to be an issue with communication with parents being confident there was a program in the district. Colonel Jones was confident the schools were addressing the problem, but not confident the parents were aware of it.

Mr. Rice suggested putting information about the drug and alcohol prevention programs on PowerSchool Premier for parents and students. More parents might see it there.

Mrs. Hajdukovich appreciated the report and the recommendations. She thanked the administration for their work on the report.

BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT'S QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS/ COMMITTEE REPORTS

Dr. Wagner reported the Kids Voting Results. The winners in the Kids Voting were John McCain/Sarah Palin for President; Mark Begich for U.S. Senate; Don Young for U.S. Congress; Cynthia Henry for State Senate Seat E; Mike Kelly for House District 7; Will Finley for House District 8; Scott Kawasaki for House District 9; Jay Ramras for House District 10; John Coghill for House District 11; and John Harris for House District 12.

Mr. Rice thanked everyone for their vote. He was looking forward to serving on the Board.

Mrs. Brophy welcomed new Board Members Patrick Lee and Sean Rice.

Mrs. Dominique welcomed the new Board members and thanked the Young Native Fiddlers. She extended her congratulations to Mr. Obama on winning the election. Mrs. Dominique also congratulated the Kids Voting Contest winners.

Mrs. Hull thanked the Young Native Fiddlers; she had thoroughly enjoyed their performance. Mrs. Hull hoped the Board would receive a report on parent teacher conferences. She knew one high school had not sent out conference reminders and hoped there would be reminders sent in the future. Mrs. Hull also asked for information related to long term leave of absences for teachers and how the district dealt with substitute issues when teachers were gone for a period of time for health or other concerns.

Mr. Thies welcomed Mr. Lee and Mr. Rice. Mr. Thies noted that the area Rotary clubs would be donating dictionaries to all third grade students in December and he thanked Mrs. Hawkins for her help in coordinating the donation.

Mrs. Hajdukovich thanked Mr. Lee and Mr. Rice for running for the Board. She looked forward to working with them.

Dr. Wagner welcomed Mr. Rice and Mr. Lee. She also enjoyed the Young Native Fiddlers and noted their performance was timely with November being Alaska Native and American Indian Heritage Month. The schools had many activities planned to celebrate the month and Dr. Wagner encouraged Board members to visit the schools to enjoy some of the festivities.

The official count period had just been completed. Dr. Wagner asked Mike Fisher, chief financial officer, to give the Board a quick update on the count. Mr. Fisher said the official count period had ended just about a week ago and the final numbers and next year's projections were due by the end of the week to the State Board of Education. The administration had spent the last week reviewing the data and cleaning it up, adjusting for part time students, over and under age students, and students who had transferred in and out during the count period. Mr. Fisher stated the official count, subject to minor changes was 14,145 students, which was 42 above last year's actual count, but it was about 82 students under projections. There had been schools under projections and some over projections, but the big variance had been in the correspondence program, which was no surprise. The correspondence program was 180 below projections, but it reflected a conscientious effort to purge the old program of students in courses that were outstanding and weren't making satisfactory progress. It was not a reflection on the program. The administration was very pleased with the B.E.S.T. program and the direction it was headed. Mr. Fisher thought there had been approximately 100 new students from outside the district enroll in the B.E.S.T. program.

Mr. Fisher said it was important to note the number of students requiring intensive special education services was up considerably, which might mean more funding, but it also meant increased staffing and support to provide the necessary services. There were approximately 6-8 teachers, 25 classroom aides, and a number of special contract services above what had been originally budgeted to provide the services. Mr. Fisher said the Board would be seeing budget adjustment requests in the future, once it all settled out.

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

Mrs. Hull asked if the increase in intensive needs students was unusual. She wondered if the increase was due to rural students coming to Fairbanks. Carl Rose, from AASB, had mentioned to her that he had seen it in other areas. Mr. Fisher said it was a higher increase than normal, but he did not feel it was from the rural areas. The preliminary data had shown there were some students from rural areas, but not nearly the numbers Anchorage had.

Bob Hadaway, executive director of special education, said the numbers were increasing; partly because of rural areas, but mostly because of Fairbanks' transient population.

Mrs. Dominique asked about identifying the specific needs of students. Mr. Hadaway said that the district did identify students by needs. Within the intensive needs group there were different categories and varied depending on the needs of the student.

Dr. Wagner had several announcements:

- November was also Family Literacy Month; there would be a Read-a-Thon in the schools.
- Parent Teacher Conferences had gone well – attendance information would be coming to the Board.
- West Valley High School received recognition in the August edition of the Alliance for Healthier Generations Success Stories Newsletter.
- BP Teacher of the Year Chris Villano had been selected as a finalist for the Alaska Teacher of the Year
- The Fairbanks Community Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Celebration Committee sponsored two \$1,000 scholarships and all graduating seniors pursuing higher education were invited to apply. Applications were available through school counselors and on the district's website. The application deadline was December 1.
- NAACP Youth Summit on Friday, Youth Breakfast on Saturday.

Mrs. Hajdukovich mentioned most of the Board would be traveling to Anchorage for the AASB conference, along with Dr. Wagner.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Submitted by Sharon Tuttle, executive assistant to the Board.