

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

Regular Meeting

MINUTES

November 18, 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. Joy Elementary School First Graders led the Pledge of Allegiance and then performed for the Board under the guidance of Claudia Pierson and Robin Benjamin, Joy Elementary first grade teachers.

Present:

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

Absent:

Howard Thies, Member

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
Kathy Hughes, Executive Director of Alternative Instruction & Accountability
Peggy Carlson, Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Bob Hadaway, Executive Director of Special Education
Ron Gherman, Executive Director of Library Media & Instructional Technology
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

Fairbanks Community After School Future Farmers of America (FFA)

The Fairbanks Community After School FFA Chapter recently attended the 81st National FFA Convention in Indianapolis on October 22-25, 2008. Several students were recognized at the convention. Julie Wild-Curry, director of after school programs, Marilyn Krause, FFA after school program teacher, and Jeff Werner, Alaska State FFA advisor, made the presentations.

Fairbanks Community After School Future Farmers of America (FFA) (continued)

<i>Event/Category</i>	<i>Student(s)</i>	<i>Award(s)</i>
H.O. Sargent Diversity Award	Rose Jeffries	National Award Winner
National Outstanding Chapter	Entire Chapter	2 Star
Million Hour Challenge for Volunteer Hours in Diversity National Award	Entire Chapter	\$2,500
Livestock Judging Team	Rachel Kittelman Loni Weggel Courtney McCants Sarah Kester	Bronze Individual & Team Awards
Horse Evaluation Team	Kyrstin O'Daniel Jennifer Norton Jessica Elkins	Bronze Individual & Team Awards
Creed Speaking	Rayna Nelson	3 rd in 1 st Round & Bronze Award
Agriscience Fair Project in Food Biochemistry	Zachary Chaves	Bronze Award

ESP of the Month

Vicki Anacker, University Park Elementary School administrative secretary, was recognized as the Extra Special Person for November 2008. University Park Principal Kyra Aiztrauts made the presentation.

2008 Alaska Art Educator of the Year

Karen Stomberg, districtwide art coordinator, was awarded the 2008 Alaska Art Educator of the Year award from the Alaska Art Educators Association (AAEA). AAEA President Laurel Herbeck made the presentation.

Spotlight: Boys & Girls Home

Boys and Girls Home of Alaska recently opened a residential psychiatric treatment center (RPTC) in Fairbanks. The program was designed to help meet the mental health needs of youth between the ages of 7-18. Family Centered Services of Alaska, Inc. (FCSA) and Boys and Girls Home and Family Services, Inc. (BGHFS) had jointly embarked on a project to keep Alaska children who required intensive mental health treatment at home and near family in order to treat them more effectively and provide higher quality, fully integrated services.

Bob Sheehan, President and CEO of Boys and Girls Home of Alaska, John Regitano, Executive Director of Family Centered Services of Alaska, and Ernie Manzie, Director of Educational Programs, presented an overview of the program and the educational services.

The school program at the Boys and Girls Home of Alaska was provided through a contract with Family Centered Services of Alaska. Students were enrolled as members of the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. The school opened August 8, 2008, with a capacity of approximately 119 students. Currently, there were approximately 30 students enrolled.

Spotlight: Boys & Girls Home (continued)

The RPTC educational program was one of several components in the comprehensive treatment plan for each student. Students attended school five days a week for approximately seven hours a day. Included were scheduled individual and/or group therapy sessions, lunch, and breaks throughout the day scheduled by the teacher on an as-needed basis.

Upon arrival to the Boys and Girls Home, a records request was sent to previous schools and/or treatment centers. Given the fact that many of the students had often attended multiple treatment programs, group homes, or other types of treatment settings, educational records were sometimes incomplete. Administrators had found that students that came from an elementary/middle school level (grades 2-8) were easier to place in classes at the appropriate instructional level. Course selection for high school students (grades 9-12) used previous transcripts (when available) and/or placement testing. As members of the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, students were expected to follow as much as possible the sequence of classes that led to high school graduation. All students followed the guidelines for required state assessments.

Most of the course materials used with middle and high school students were published by the American Guidance Services, Inc. (AGS)/Pearson Education. The materials were used as the "core" instructional materials for virtually all courses except Alaska Studies which was a collection of resource materials that matched the standards provided in the district's curriculum. Teachers supplemented with other resources to expand and enrich the curriculum content. AGS Materials had a lower reading level than standard textbooks at a high school level, but provided students a base level of knowledge in each of the subject areas. The program also had Fairbanks North Star Borough School District approved texts in all subject areas for students who could academically handle material at that level.

At the elementary level, teachers followed the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District curriculum. Elementary math instruction relied a great deal on Saxon Math materials. Reading/language arts, social studies, and science were provided using materials from a variety of educational publishers. In addition to core academic areas, all students were offered physical education daily in the full size gymnasium. Students also had the opportunity to participate in various art activities.

Many of the students were qualified to receive special education services from the special education teacher based upon goals established in individual education plans. Occupational, physical, and speech therapy were provided on an as-needed basis.

With respect to grades and grading, the school's philosophy was to provide the opportunity for academic success and to that end they had adopted a grading policy that reflected that philosophy. Students were given one of four grades based on their academic achievement and honest effort to master the material:

A	90% - 100%	Exceptional understanding/mastery of the material
B	80% - 89%	Mastery of the material presented
C	70% - 79%	Basic understanding of the material presented
NG	69% - Below	Has not yet developed a satisfactory understanding of the material presented.

Spotlight: Boys & Girls Home (continued)

Teachers, at their discretion, could also attach to any grade:

+	Indicates extra effort and/or deeper understanding of the material
-	Indicates lack of effort and/or surface understanding of material

In addition, any student that had an individual education plan (IEP) would receive the designation of (#) next to their grade. That symbol indicated the material had been significantly modified based upon the IEP.

When a student transferred out of the program, the staff was available to the receiving school for continued discussions regarding each student's education program during the time he or she was enrolled, and recommendations for placement in future school settings.

BOARD QUESTIONS

Mrs. Dominique asked if the enrollment numbers were expected to increase. Mr. Sheehan thought it would take approximately a year for the enrollment to reach full capacity.

Mrs. Hull thanked Mr. Regitano, Mr. Sheehan, and Mr. Manzie for their work on the project and asked them to extend her thanks to the entire staff. She asked for clarification on the correct name of the program – Boys and Girls Home of Alaska.

Colonel Fitzgerald thought the program had the right resources and was on the right track, but asked how success would be defined. Mr. Sheehan thought it was a great question, but difficult to answer. Success was sometimes found in making sure the students were not in prison at the age of 18 or confined to a mental facility. The program's goal was to teach students to make it in life. There wasn't a definitive way to measure success. They tracked students to determine if they could live in society and be successful.

Mr. Rice asked if the program had a plan to track the students after they left the program. Mr. Regitano said tracking students was already being done. Most of the students needed individualized support after they left the program. The definition of success was very different for each student.

AGENDA

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

The following consent items were moved:

accepted the United Way of the Tanana Valley Substance Abuse Prevention Fund grant in the amount of \$3,000, per Fiscal Note 2009-17.

accepted the Title I, Part D, Subpart I, Delinquent grant award in the amount of \$27,610, per Fiscal Note 2009-18.

accepted the Youth in Detention grant in the amount of \$112,923, per Fiscal Note 2009-19.

accepted the *No Child Left Behind* Consolidated Application grant in the amount of \$4,909,039, per Fiscal Notes 2009-20 through 2009-29.

accepted the Monthly Management Reports for October 2008.

Consent Agenda (continued)

approved the minutes from the special meeting November 3 and the work session November 4, 2008, as submitted.

approved Budget Transfer 2009-058: Library Media in the amount of \$191,392.

approved Budget Transfer 2009-061: Elementary Graduation Success Tutor allocations in the amount of \$139,376.

awarded IFB 09-F0013 to furnish and install library security gates to 3M Company, in the amount of \$40,354.

approved Tanana Middle School's request to send students to Washington, D.C. and New York City, February 22-28, 2009 to learn about various historical events, with substitute costs paid by the district.

accepted the gift of \$2,500 from the National Future Farmers of America Foundation, Inc. to the district, to be used for the purchase of materials to assemble learning kits for district FFA clubs.

accepted the gift of bows, arrow curtains, bow racks, arrows, targets, and a tool kit, valued at \$3,000 from the National Archery in the Schools Program to West Valley High School to be used for the school's archery program.

approved the Personnel Action Report for the period October 30 – November 12, 2008.

acknowledged the Personnel Information Report for the period October 30 – November 12, 2008.

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

acknowledged the Expulsion Report for the 2008-2009 school year, as of November 13, 2008.

acknowledged the Board's Reading File.

acknowledged Coming Events and Meeting Announcements.

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS

Oliver Jaksons, 1809 Endecott Ave, a long time North Pole resident and parent of students at both North Pole Middle and High Schools, voiced concerns over the recent alleged bomb threat incident. Although he was before the Board as an individual parent, he felt he was speaking on behalf of many other parents. Mr. Jaksons commended the district staff involved in the incident; he had sent an email to North Pole Middle Principal Rich Smith and his staff the following day thanking them for their assistance. Mr. Jaksons also thanked the military representatives for their handlers and working dogs; he felt they had been the real heroes. He was a previous combat MOS veteran and current federal government employee. Mr. Jaksons asked the Board for an immediate review and evaluation of the policies and procedures regarding evacuation plans. There was a difference between the evacuation plans for a fire, a shooting threat, and a bomb threat. Mr. Jaksons did not think the district and community needed mass casualties. Today's society was unpredictable, anything could happen; unfortunately, it happened everyday. He had been told about how individuals used situations to draw individuals out of a building, but there could always be a secure area.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NONAGENDA ITEMS (continued)

Mr. Jaksons thought everyone could work together on better evacuation plans for specific situations. In regards to the recent North Pole Middle bomb threat incident, he said parents were devastated. Mr. Jaksons had stood three and a half hours in the police line himself. He strongly believed the entire community would have come together to safely evacuate the students. He was aware of the many logistical issues involved, but it could be done. Mr. Jaksons thought the policies and procedures should be addressed immediately. He noted the victims in the Oklahoma bombing did not have a chance. But the district and community had the chance to learn from the North Pole Middle event. Mr. Jaksons urged the Board to reevaluate the policies and procedures; it should be a top priority.

OLD BUSINESS

Included in the Consent Agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Exempt Employees Step Movement and Salary Table Increase

The Board has approved a salary table for exempt employees with established steps. Steps were not automatic and could only be authorized by Board action. The superintendent was recommending that steps for 2008-09 be authorized and that the salary table be increased by a combination of \$1,000 and 2% per each grade/step.

DOMINIQUE MOVED, HULL SECONDED, TO AUTHORIZE EXEMPT EMPLOYEE STEP MOVEMENT FOR ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES AND INCREASE THE SALARY TABLE AS RECOMMENDED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2008, PER FISCAL NOTE 2009-30.

There were seventy exempt employees in the exempt group. Dr. Wagner was proposing step increases for those employed with the district prior to July 1, 2008, along with a salary increase of \$1,000 plus a 2% increase on each cell of the salary schedule. She felt the exempt employees should be treated on terms very similar and consistent to the rest of the negotiated groups. Exempt employees did not have a negotiated contract. Dr. Wagner stated the requested increases would cost approximately \$338,000 plus benefits from the operating fund and approximately \$50,000 plus benefits from grants. The increase would help the exempt employees not lose ground and will help keep the district competitive as it continued to attract the most qualified people. Dr. Wagner stated the exempt employees served as the backbone of the organization. They had essential skills and knowledge that were needed to support the vision and mission of the district. Dr. Wagner strongly recommended the Board approve the salary increases for exempt employees.

BOARD QUESTIONS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

BOARD COMMENTS

Mrs. Hull commended the staff and felt there was no better way to invest than in the staff. She thanked the exempt staff. Their work had been terrific and she appreciated their support. The increases were inline with what was given to other staff and they certainly deserved it.

Mr. Rice wanted to be certain the increases were comparable to the increases for teachers.

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

Suspend Policy 264: Cancel January 6, 2009 Meeting

BROPHY MOVED, DOMINIQUE SECONDED, TO SUSPEND THE RULES, POLICY 264: TYPES OF MEETINGS, AND CANCEL THE JANUARY 6, 2009 REGULAR MEETING.

Dr. Wagner recommended the meeting be cancelled.

Mrs. Hajdukovich stated she and Dr. Wagner had looked at the Board's calendar and felt cancelling the January 6 meeting would not be detrimental to conducting the Board's business.

BOARD QUESTIONS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

BOARD COMMENTS

None

ADVISORY VOTE. 3 AYES

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. 6 AYES

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

2008 Class Size Report

Kathy Hughes, executive director of alternative instruction and accountability, presented the 2008 Class Size Report. Mrs. Hughes acknowledged Heather Rauenhorst, from her staff, who authored the report, and Janet Toohey, from the information systems department, for her assistance in providing the data.

The purpose of the annual class size report was to provide information on the number of students in individual classrooms and the average class sizes in the schools and district. Class sizes were important for making staffing adjustments as enrollments fluctuated within schools and across the district. The district made every attempt to keep class sizes as low as funding would allow.

The class size averages in the report were based on enrollment data extracted from the district's student records system for October 1, 2008. It was important to note that the report represented a snapshot in time; the information was "frozen" to allow the district to report it. The information changed whenever students enrolled, withdrew, or had a schedule change.

The report did not present total enrollment figures, but rather the average class size for regular education classrooms. Average class sizes did not include students enrolled in preschool programs, self-contained special education classes, charter schools, or alternative programs.

Class size data for 2008 showed:

- 7,343 students in grades K-6, with an average class size of 23.5 students
- 1,995 students in the 7th & 8th grades, with an average class size of 21.5 students
- 4,191 students in 9th-12th grades, with an average class size of 22.0 students

The report included historical data, as well as detailed enrollment information at the school level. Individual school averages varied, ranging from 20.5 to 25.1. The current class size average of 23.5 students was slightly higher than the past five years but lower than the target of 24.5. It was important to note the size of individual classes might vary from the average.

2008 Class Size Report (continued)

Class sizes for kindergarten represented both morning and afternoon classes. The grade levels with the lowest and highest average class sizes were, respectfully, kindergarten with 22.4 and first grade with 25.4 students per class.

The class size report was a presentation of data that was not accompanied by administrative recommendations. Class size targets were determined during the budget process.

BOARD QUESTIONS

Mrs. Hull asked for the target sizes for grades K-3rd. Mr. Fisher stated the targets were:

- Kindergarten – 25:1
- Primary (Grades 1-3) – 23.5:1
- Intermediate (Grades 4-6) – 25.5:1

Overall the target for all elementary was 24.5 students.

Mrs. Hull noted the absence of recommendations and asked if the administration planned to make any. Dr. Wagner stated the recommendation would be if the Board was interested in reviewing the targets the district had been using for a number of years, it should happen during the budget process.

Mrs. Hull wondered if the administration, in looking at the report, had any specific recommendations related to class size. As had been stated before, it would be helpful for the administration to provide recommendations based on the reports. Dr. Wagner said the administration's recommendation was to review the target sizes during the budget process. The administration felt the targets had been a good guide for the district over the past years. The targets were a guide and if the Board wanted to review them, it could be done during the budget process.

Mrs. Hull asked what generally happened to class sizes historically during the year. Mrs. Hughes explained that generally elementary classes increased and high school classes tended to decrease – barring any major community events.

Mrs. Dominique said she would rather make her recommendations to the administration at the current time so they could be included in the budget. She would like to see the class size for kindergarten lowered. With the advanced level of children today and the testimony the Board had heard from teachers, she thought the class size should be lowered by a few students.

Mr. Lee asked for additional historical information regarding the number of students and classes. He noted the historical data for the average class size, but wanted to see the same historical data for the number of students and classes. He was interested to see if there had been any influx of enrollment or an increase or decrease in the number of classes.

Mr. Rice asked if the buildings could accommodate additional classrooms if the class sizes were reduced. He noted the high numbers still at Badger Elementary, even after its sixth graders were moved to North Pole Middle School. Mrs. Hughes wasn't certain about building capacity, but felt it went back to Mr. Lee's question about the number of classes as opposed to class size. A school might have fewer classes with the movement of a grade to a different building, but the report was an average class size for regular class rooms across the district. The intent of the report was to note the average class size; it did not look at building capacities, total enrollment numbers, or special programs. Including all that information would require a different report. Moving the classes may or may not have had any effect on the total number of students in a particular classroom.

2008 Class Size Report (continued)

Dr. Wagner stated when the district previously looked at the overcrowded conditions at North Pole and Badger Elementary Schools both the schools were above capacity. By moving the sixth graders to North Pole Middle this year, it gave the two schools more room for growth in grades K-5. Both schools had a larger enrollment than had been projected, so it was a good thing the sixth graders were moved. Dr. Wagner noted Ticasuk Brown Elementary School's enrollment was okay and had not required moving the sixth graders to North Pole Middle.

Mr. Lee stated he liked the data; the report was well prepared.

Mrs. Hajdukovich asked about the current year versus last year. She recalled that last year had been a really good year for class size and knowing it would not be that way in the current year. She asked the administration to explain the reason behind the big change. Dr. Wagner explained the district's enrollment had come in lower than projected last year, but the district had already staffed the schools for the higher enrollment, hence the smaller class sizes. This year the enrollment was closer to projections.

Mr. Fisher agreed with Dr. Wagner. He noted if a large number of students were moved from one school, like the sixth graders from Badger to North Pole Middle, the teachers were moved with them. The targets had not been changed in many years. In years where the enrollment came in lower than projected, the class sizes were lower; in years where the enrollment was near or over projections, class sizes would be near the target numbers.

Colonel Jones asked about the change in class sizes. It seemed to follow the size of the classes would move every year – if there was a large kindergarten class, it would be expected to see a large first grade class the following year, etc. That progression did not seem to be reflected in some of the data in the report. It looked that virtually every year the enrollment had gone down. Every year the average class size had decreased except for 2007-08 and asked for an explanation for the increase in 2007-08. Mrs. Hughes explained it was difficult to project first grade because kindergarten was not mandatory and there were other options, outside the district for students and parents. The rollup from kindergarten to first grade was different than other grades, so it was difficult to predict for first grade. There was no way to predict how many kindergarteners or potential kindergarteners did not attend the district's kindergarten.

Mr. Fisher added that in the projection formulas the district tried to accurately project the number of rollup students from grade to grade.

Mrs. Hull asked what the district did to check with and follow up with the other kindergarten programs in the community to see if they planned to enroll for first grade with the district. Mrs. Hughes said she was not aware of any type of follow up with other programs. She said some people chose not to participate in any form of kindergarten. The district did conduct spring kindergarten registration so there was some indication of students coming into the district from other programs.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

BOARD COMMENTS

Mrs. Dominique thanked the administration for the report. She recognized the difficulty in projecting enrollment.

Mr. Sample felt the report had been done very well. He had taken the report around to all his classes to compare the actual sizes of the classes to the data in the report and it was very accurate.

2008 Class Size Report (continued)

Mr. Rice thanked the administration for the report.

Mrs. Hull thanked the administration for the report; she looked forward to the class size report every year, but she had some concerns about the report. When she looked at the report, elementary was higher in every grade for the current year. She was particularly concerned about first grade which had gone up 3.7 students, approximately 4 students on the average. Second and third grades were both up by two students on average. Mrs. Hull had looked back at the 2004 Class Size Report because there was more historical data in the older reports; she would like to see more history included in the reports. In looking back, in the first through third grades, the current year was the highest in a dozen years for two of them and the highest in ten years for the other. Mrs. Hull thought the significantly higher classes this year was one of the reasons the Board had heard from teachers this year.

In comparing the average class size for kindergarten through third grades from 2006 to 2007, Mrs. Hull pointed out there had not been a significant difference. In looking at the historical data in the early grades, the low enrollment would not have been the reason for the jump in the early years; it wasn't that last year was an especially good year, if the data was looked at historically. For some reason there was an increase.

Mrs. Hull strongly believed the early years were so important. She was pleased with what had been happening in kindergarten, but there was still work to be done. If you looked back through the years, beginning in 2000, the class size had decreased significantly over the past five years from a high of 27.3 students. But if you looked prior to 2000, in kindergarten, before the flex schedule, the numbers were 20.8, 21.1, 22.4, and 21.8. When the district went to the flex kindergarten program, the class size increased.

While at the AASB conference the big districts had met to discuss a number of topics. Class size had come up and other districts had spoke about how they had lowered their class sizes. Their kindergarten and first grades class sizes were significantly lower than Fairbanks.

Mrs. Hull had reviewed Anchorage's class size report for 2007. The staffing divisors were 20.5 in kindergarten, 21 in first grade, and the targeted ratio was 18.1 in kindergarten and first grades with the class size reduction positions. What Mrs. Hull had gathered from the report was Anchorage's budgeted targets were 20.5 and 21 and targeted 18:1 using their class size reduction positions from what she guessed to be from Title IIB. She thought the Board needed to review the class size numbers to reduce kindergarten further and to also look at first through third grades.

Mrs. Hull thought it would also be a good idea to check with the area preschools to get a better idea of the possible number of potential kindergarteners and first graders. She also had a list of four to five items that had been part of the older reports but were no longer included in the new reports, such as Mr. Lee had mentioned the historical data for the number of classes and the number of students. She would email the list to the administration. She requested the information be gathered and routinely included in future reports.

Mrs. Hull also had a chart from Anchorage that she would pass along. It was a scatter chart that showed in four categories how many classes were in the category. She thought it was interesting to see the number of classes in each of the categories because it gave a better picture than the overall average.

Mrs. Hull felt class size was very important to the students and staff and it was where the district should be putting its money.

2008 Class Size Report (continued)

Dr. Wagner said the administration had asked the elementary principals to consider the option of full-day kindergarten. She thought it was something the Board should think about as well. If the district went to a full-day kindergarten, the student ratio would have to be 20:1. Dr. Wagner thought the Board and administration should give full-day kindergarten serious consideration during the budget process.

Mrs. Hull noted that with the flex kindergarten program, the numbers were smaller in the morning and afternoon, but for two and a half hours the entire group was together. Even if the district kept the flex kindergarten program, consideration had to be given to that middle part of the day when both groups were together. Mrs. Hull did not oppose going to a full-day kindergarten and thought kindergarten enrollment would increase with a full-day program because of those students that were not enrolled due to transportation issues.

Mrs. Hull said additional revenue would not be generated with a full-day program, as the flex program would generate the same funding has a full-day program. She thought Kenai and Anchorage had an aide, even with the lower numbers.

Mrs. Hajdukovich thanked the administration for the report. She recalled the challenge of getting the class size data last year because of PowerSchool Premier being new and she recognized many hurdles had been overcome to produce the report.

Mrs. Hajdukovich announced the upcoming budget parameters work session on December 1, where Board members could put forth their concerns and ideas.

Mrs. Hull thought if the Board knew the cost of reducing class sizes at the kindergarten through third grades, it would be helpful in the budgeting process.

Mrs. Hajdukovich thought class size was a topic of concern for all districts throughout the State. Board members and administrators statewide were always trying to keep a lid on class size. Everything cost money. If the district reduced class size, a tough decision would need to be made somewhere else. Mrs. Hajdukovich believed everyone wanted smaller classes, but it came with a cost. She wondered with the talk of dropout rates and graduation success, what might happen if there was a significant change in the district's class size.

Secondary Scheduling Ideas

Wayne Gerke, assistant superintendent of secondary, reviewed various scheduling options that took into consideration current Best Practices for Secondary Reform.

With the secondary review process having been underway for sometime, Dr. Wagner explained several goals had been developed through input from the public forums, research, and administrators, along with some action steps to reach those goals. A few of the action steps had been implemented over the school year. Goal Three of the Secondary Education Reform Recommendations was to "*Provide a variety of ways that students could meet their goals*" and the action plan was to review the idea of a common schedule at the high school level. Mr. Gerke would be reviewing the reasons for schedule changes and a couple of schedule options.

Mr. Gerke explained the district had looked at a lot of research and high school models over the course of their review and revamping of secondary schools. The model that had best fit the needs of the district was from *Breaking Ranks: Strategies for Leading High School Reform*. It was based on the work for the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The model differed from other models because it was broad based and it did not depend on one set of activities.

Secondary Scheduling Ideas (continued)

The model was based on seven cornerstone strategies to improve student performance.

1. Establish the essential learnings a student was required to master in order to graduate, and adjust the curriculum and teaching strategies to realize that goal.
2. Increase the quantity and improve the quality of interactions between students, teachers, and other school personnel by reducing the number of students for which any adult or group of adults was responsible.
3. Implement a comprehensive advisory program that ensured that each student had frequent and meaningful opportunities to plan and assess his or her academic and social progress with a faculty member.
4. Ensure that teachers used a variety of instructional strategies and assessments to accommodate individual learning styles.
5. Implement schedules flexible enough to accommodate teaching strategies consistent with the ways students learned more effectively and that allowed for effective teacher teaming and lesson planning.
6. Institute structural leadership changes that allowed for meaningful involvement in decision making by students, teachers, family members, and the community and that supported effective communication within these groups.
7. Align the schoolwide comprehensive, ongoing professional development program and the individual Personal Learning Plans of staff members with the content knowledge and instructional strategies required to prepare students for graduation.

The strategies were designed to give schools possible entry points to pursue changes and together, the seven cornerstones, would form the foundation for improving the performance of each student.

Breaking Ranks broke down the cornerstones into three clusters:

- Collaborative Leadership and Professional Learning Communities
- Personalization and the School Environment
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

They had also developed thirty-one recommendations for lasting school reform, but there was no way all of them could be implemented in a short amount of time. An essential part of the reform from Breaking Ranks were the three areas that needed to change for real reform to take place – instruction needed to change; the culture of the school needed to change; and the structure of the school needed to change.

The question had been raised a lot asking why the need for change. Mr. Gerke stated it was clear the graduation rate had to improve, the dropout rate had to decrease; and schools needed to be more relevant and rigorous for students while also helping to ensure students had a positive relationship with their school. He reminded everyone that student achievement and success were the goals.

The three areas needed for change – instruction, culture, and structure were highly interconnected. While headway was being made on changing the culture, the district continued to work on improving instruction. It was now necessary to look at changing the structure of the high schools.

Secondary Scheduling Ideas (continued)

Out of the thirty-one recommendations put forth in *Breaking Ranks*, the district was in the process of implementing ten of them in the high schools. Many of the recommendations would require the district to make some structural changes. The ten recommendations the district was working on with the revamping were:

1. A high school would regard itself as a community in which members of the staff collaborated to develop and implement the school's learning goals.
2. Teachers would provide leadership essential to the success of reform, collaborating with others in the education community to redefine the role of the teacher, and to identify sources of support for that redefined role.
3. Every school would be a learning community for the entire community.
4. High schools would build partnerships with institutions of higher learning to provide teachers and administrators at both levels with ideas and opportunities to enhance the education, performance, and evaluation of educators.
5. High schools would create small units in which anonymity was banished.
6. Each student would have a Personal Plan for Progress that would be reviewed often to ensure that the high school took individual needs into consideration and allowed students, within reasonable parameters, to design their own methods of learning in an effort to meet high standards. (4+2 Plans)
7. Every high school student would have a Personal Adult Advocate assigned to him or her to personalize the educational experience.
8. High schools would develop flexible scheduling and student grouping patterns that allowed better use of time in order to meet the individual needs of students and to ensure academic success.
9. Each high school would present alternatives to tracking and to ability grouping.
10. The high school would reorganize the traditional department structure in order to integrate the school's curriculum to the extent possible and emphasize depth over breadth of coverage.

Based on the district's need to examine the structure of the schools, Mike Neubig, a scheduling consultant with the Association of Career Technical Education (ACTE), spent two days in Fairbanks working with secondary principals and staff to help develop a common schedule for the high schools and middle schools.

Each school brought in a team of five people. The administration did not have a preconceived plan for what the schedule would look like, but the goal was to increase the graduation rate, decrease the dropout rate, increase opportunities for students, and maximize the district's resources.

Secondary Scheduling Ideas (continued)

The following common priorities were identified from leadership teams from all Fairbanks middle and high schools in attendance.

Middle School Priorities

- Teaming/common planning time
- Flexibility – Regrouping/periods of time
- Rotation – Different periods at different times
- Increase in exploratory offerings
- Personalization/advisory time

High School Scheduling Priorities

- Teaming with common planning time
- Flexible scheduling including time for “extended periods” (blocks)
- Expanding elective and other course offerings
- Reduce failure – more opportunity for academic intervention – structures to help failing students
- Time for meaningful personalization with students (advisory)

Priorities added by the district’s administrative personnel

- The ability to share resources by identifying a common period in which distance delivery courses could occur.
- The ability to have a more unified schedule so that district resources could be shared to expand student course offerings.

Some of the issues and difficulties achieving these priorities were identified as:

- Schools being on different schedules on different days of the week made it impossible to match up periods
- Staff using extended passing time for tutoring, personalization, and student down time
- Lack of current elective offerings
- Limits of six-period day
- Number of students repeating courses after failure
- Lack of sufficient planning time for teacher teams
- Inability of curricular departments to have time for collaboration
- Lack of ability to provide student intervention during the day
- The inability to offer career pathways due to limitations of current schedule

A couple of schedule options were reviewed – one with seven class periods with one individual planning every day and one collaborative planning every other day with forty-eight minute single classes and ninety-six minute blocks and students would be able to take seven courses per year; and the other one with six class periods with all classes meeting on Mondays and Fridays along with a teacher professional learning community on Tuesdays and an advisory time for students on Wednesdays.

Mr. Gerke also noted he had received several other schedule suggestions. The principals would be discussing the different options at their next meeting.

Secondary Scheduling Ideas (continued)

BOARD QUESTIONS

Mrs. Dominique thanked Traci Pulido for her email regarding input on changing the schedule. Mrs. Dominique asked if students from other high schools would be able to take career classes at Hutchison. Mr. Gerke said it would depend on if the district changed their philosophy. Hutchison was a stand alone school. Mr. Gerke noted all schools would have career paths so students would not have to travel to Hutchison for classes. Mrs. Dominique thought there needed to be more of a variation of career programs offered.

Mrs. Brophy asked about soliciting student input regarding the schedule changes. Mr. Gerke stated there were student representatives on the committees and student input was welcome at any time.

Mrs. Brophy asked about the impact of the five-minute passing period and tardies. Mr. Gerke said that there had been many discussions on the issue and Mr. Neubig had noted that with all his extensive experience with schools across the country, he had never seen such long passing periods as the district had.

Dr. Wagner noted the schedule options were starting points and there was room for adjustment.

Colonel Fitzgerald asked if the goal was to have every school on the same schedule, once a schedule was developed. Mr. Gerke stated it would be the ultimate goal, but realizing that some schools had specific concerns and issues. Colonel Fitzgerald thought principals should have as much leeway on the schedules as possible to allow for each school's unique situation.

Mr. Sample asked when the changes would be implemented. Mr. Gerke said for the 2009-2010 school year. Mr. Sample asked how students would be involved in the process. Mr. Gerke said the principals would determine how to best utilize their students with focus groups.

Mr. Lee asked how the suggested schedule differed from the current schedule and how it would affect the district. Mr. Gerke explained Lathrop and West Valley High Schools were on a rotating four-period day and Hutchison and North Pole High Schools were on a schedule very similar to the one suggested. Mr. Gerke noted the one significant change to the main schedule under consideration was the Professional Learning Community time on Tuesdays when students would still come to school at the normal time, but classes would start later in the morning to allow teachers that time to collaborate with colleagues – that opportunity would be a huge change for the schools.

Dr. Wagner said another significant change with the new schedule was the advisory time with students. With wanting to get students more connected and more involved in decisions, the time could be used for class meetings, student input, in addition to setting their goals.

Mr. Sample asked about the reasons for changing from four to six periods a day. Mr. Gerke said with a schedule with all six periods on Mondays and Fridays, it was a good opportunity for staff members to connect with all their students on the first and last day of the week. It had been found to be very beneficial at Hutchison and North Pole High Schools where it was currently being done.

Mrs. Hajdukovich asked how students and staff would adjust to the shorter class and passing periods of one of the schedule options. She recalled when she attended West Valley there were six period days, with five-minute passing periods. Mr. Gerke agreed it would be an adjustment. Forty-eight minute classes were very short in comparison to current schedules.

Secondary Scheduling Ideas (continued)

When Mr. Gerke was at Tanana Middle School as the assistant principal, they had changed the schedule where all the classes met in a day for 45-48 minutes each and it seemed like students just arrived and it was time to leave. Mr. Gerke said that was one reason the administration was leaning away from the seven periods a day option and looking at the six period option.

Mrs. Hull asked for clarification on the two scheduling options. Mr. Gerke said for there to be common staff planning time every day, there needed to be a seven-period day, with forty-eight minute classes to accommodate a common planning time and individual prep times for teachers. If seven periods a day was not a viable option, then there would be no way to have common planning time and individual prep time for teachers every day. The other option was having six periods with all six periods meeting on Mondays and Fridays.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Steve Laroe, 226 Glacier Avenue, speaking on behalf of himself, thought thirty-one changes was a lot of change. Mr. Laroe was concerned about redefining the role of a teacher. He didn't know if it could be done by the beginning of the next school year, because there had to be teacher buy-in to the new definition of a teacher, which was not listed. Mr. Laroe hoped in any future reports someone would define SLC and PLC before they were used in the report. He had surmised that SLC stood for Small Learning Communities and PLC meant Professional Learning Communities, but he wasn't certain how they fit in the schedule. If there were Professional Learning Communities on Tuesday mornings, Mr. Laroe was curious what would be done with five-hundred students in the building without hiring more staff. He wasn't certain how that would work; he had a lot to learn about the suggested schedules.

Mr. Laroe's real concern was with the lack of emphasis on the importance of education. He thought that was the area where there needed to be change. A lot of time and energy was being placed on school staff to make changes that made school more fun in order for students to stay and graduate. Mr. Laroe asked how many students in Fairbanks would be willing to walk three miles, four times a day, to go to school – was education that important to them. He asked how many students who graduated from Fairbanks would sit down and sew their high school diploma into their clothing as they traveled back to their own country because they were so proud of what they had achieved in the United States, because they couldn't have done it in their own country. That was the importance of education that needed to change. That was the change that had to happen. How important was education to the students who went to school. Mr. Laroe was curious about all the things that were going to happen. He thanked the Board for their time.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Sample was concerned about getting the students' opinions. He was at Monroe for three years and each year the schedule changed and he had heard all the complaints from students. He thought in general, students were resistant to change and would tend to only see the negative in the changes. It was important for students to see how the changes would be beneficial. Mr. Sample felt the most important aspect was to get students involved in the process so they would buy into it.

Mrs. Dominique agreed with Mr. Sample. Students would reach up and aspire when they were involved. The more the students were involved the better.

Mrs. Brophy had a lengthy conversation with her curriculum advisory representative about structural changes within the schools and how to emphasize and encourage the connectedness of students. Mrs. Brophy thought Mr. Laroe's comments about the value of education and whether students valued education were interconnected. Everyone had a responsibility to

Secondary Scheduling Ideas (continued)

encourage that value of education, as parents, educators, Board members, and administrators. It was not an individual responsibility, but everyone's responsibility. Mrs. Brophy thought everyone was trying to do their part. She wouldn't be on the Board if she did not value and try to emphasize the importance of education.

Mr. Rice was concerned about having support staff supervise students for seventy minutes on Tuesdays for the Professional Learning Communities. He recalled there were six periods when he was in school and it had changed to four periods. He agreed with the importance and need to get student input in the process.

Mrs. Hull agreed with Mr. Sample's comments about a natural resistance to change. She thought it was good to go through the exercise and talk about how a schedule change could improve education. Mr. Laroe had mentioned thirty-one changes and she was pleased the administration was not attempting all thirty-one changes. From what she had heard during the presentation, the administration was working on ten of the thirty-one *Breaking Ranks* recommendations. She thought the ten recommendations had been strategically selected and thought realistically there may be five where progress would be made by the end of the year. Mrs. Hull thought it was important to look at options and the district could not be afraid of change if they wanted to improve the dropout rate. Change had to be for the right reasons and not for fun. What Mrs. Hull had read in the report was rigor, relevance, and relationships. If there was focus on the changes that were believed to improve those three things, it should positively impact the dropout rate.

Mrs. Hull thought involvement was key with both students and parents. She thought the issue warranted a special email to every parent with the changes being considered and inviting them to participate and give their input. Even if they didn't come to the meetings, the schools would have reached out to the parents and at least they would know about the proposed changes. Everyone needed to feel a part of the change. Mrs. Hull had attended a Lathrop PTA meeting earlier in the evening where there had been a lively meeting on the small learning communities; there had been some good questions and conversations on the issue.

Mrs. Hull recalled the community was supportive of teachers having common planning time with the middle school concept, but in the last couple of years before the change, many were reporting it was not happening because there were still projects occurring at the same time and other conflicts. She recalled it being a very lively discussion topic with the Central Council PTA along with a large meeting of district middle school parents at Ryan. There was a sense in the community that the planning time was not being used in the manner it should have been used. She thought the district should be cautious of any residual feelings from that time. Mrs. Hull thought common planning time was important and needed, but it had to be used appropriately.

Mrs. Hull thought the class period change-up was good with some classes shorter and some longer. It broke up the monotony of the day. Mrs. Hull recalled it had been hard for her to get use to the rotating schedule at Lathrop, but for kids, they liked change. She did not think they would be afraid of one eighty minute class and then a forty-eight minute class. Mrs. Hull thought it was a good idea and it allowed teachers to change up their instruction as well. She was eager to see what would come out of the focus groups and reiterated the need not to be afraid of change.

Mr. Lee stated he was usually for change, but he wanted to be sure the parameters were well defined with realistic implementation goals. He reinforced the importance of staff and student input.

Secondary Scheduling Ideas (continued)

Colonel Fitzgerald thought collaboration was good, but thought the more people involved, the more difficult the process would be. He made several suggestions for a successful process: there had to be a clear concise objective; a clear concise decision making process; and a determination on who would have the authority for final recommendations and decisions.

Mrs. Hajdukovich agreed with the need to involve stakeholders. She thanked the administration for all their work.

BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT'S QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS/ COMMITTEE REPORTS

Dr. Wagner commented about the recent incident at North Pole Middle School and reinforced that student safety was the top priority. She understood Mr. Jaksons' concerns and thanked him for his comments. Dr. Wagner also thanked the police and fire departments, as well as school and district administrators. The district had a well thought-out emergency plan, but that did not mean it couldn't be reviewed. After any incident, there was always a debriefing. Each incident was evaluated individually.

Dr. Wagner had several other announcements:

- It was Alaska Native and American Indian Heritage Month with many school and community activities.
- Encouraged students to apply for Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarships.
- Parent/Teacher Conferences data had been compiled – 17,802 total conferences had been held. Complete conference data was available if the Board was interested.
- A district team had attended the recent Statewide Education Summit in Anchorage. It had been a wonderful opportunity to discuss issues faced in education and the community.

Dr. Wagner thanked the district art teachers for the art in the Board Room and throughout the Administrative Center.

HULL MOVED, BROPHY 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. Hull would like to see the complete conference data. She reported the Legislative Committee had met with the Board the previous evening and the Board would be meeting with the Interior Delegation on December 4.

Mrs. Dominique thanked Mr. Jaksons for his comments. There had been extensive conversations about the North Pole Middle School incident and the emergency procedures. Mrs. Dominique was pleased to see the exempt employees receive a raise and recognized their long hours. At the recent AASB conference, there had been a great guest speaker that had made a presentation on incorporating math into technology and curriculum without it costing districts any money. She thought it would be great if he could make the presentation to the district.

Mrs. Dominique spoke about student comments regarding the Presidential Election. Although she could not tell parents what they should or should not say to their children, but when students brought inappropriate comments to the schools, it was wrong. President-Elect Obama was elected by the people of the United States and he would be President. There was nothing wrong with having an African American President.

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

Mrs. Brophy appreciated Mr. Jaksons' comments about the North Pole Middle School incident and she was looking forward to looking into the situation more. Mrs. Brophy thanked the Joy First Graders for their performance and extended her congratulations to Vicki Anacker and Karen Stromberg.

Mrs. Brophy mentioned the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner's article on Mrs. Hajdukovich and Mrs. Schmidt's Board service. She was happy to hear the Challenge Days had been scheduled and volunteered to help.

Colonel Fitzgerald thought it was awesome that a small community in the State of Alaska had fielded a nationally recognized Future Farmers of America (FFA) team. He thanked Mr. Jaksons for staying to the end of the meeting so he could hear the Board's comments. Colonel Fitzgerald thought the staff had done an outstanding job dealing with the North Pole crisis. He had also been impressed with the communication tool – ConnectEd – it had sold itself. From his observation, there had been several coinciding events – the bomb threat at the school, the bank robbery, and another bomb threat in Fairbanks. He was thankful they all worked out without casualties, but he wondered what would have happened, had something gone wrong. Colonel Fitzgerald asked what the district would have done and how they would have communicated with other emergency agencies to be sure they were all working together. It was important that all emergency agencies and the district worked together.

Mrs. Hajdukovich commented on the national speakers at the AASB conference – they were outstanding. She agreed it would be outstanding if they could get one of them to Fairbanks. She thought the conference had been very valuable and it was interesting to hear about what was happening in other districts around the state.

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 p.m.

Submitted by Sharon Tuttle, executive assistant to the Board.