

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

Work Session

MINUTES

December 9, 2008

President Hajdukovich called the work session to order at 6:05 p.m. in the library of the Ryan Middle School at 951 Airport Way to discuss Ryan Program Planning.

Present:

Leslie Hajdukovich, President
Wendy Dominique, Vice President
Patrick Lee, Clerk
Kristina Brophy, Member
Sean Rice, Member
Howard Thies, Member

Absent:

Sue Hull, Treasurer
Howard Thies, Member
Michael Fitzgerald, Base Representative
Timothy A. Jones, Post Representative
Ken Sample, Student Representative

Staff Present:

Nancy Wagner, Superintendent
Wayne Gerke, Assistant Superintendent – Secondary
Roxa Hawkins, Assistant Superintendent – Elementary
Mike Fisher, Chief Financial Officer
Bill Bailey, Public Relations Director
Sharon Tuttle, Executive Assistant to the School Board

Ryan Program Planning

Ryan 2.0 – Re-Imagining Ryan’s Educational Program

Ryan Middle School is the district’s most heavily used building. Built in 1967, many areas of this 200,000 sq. ft. building are inadequate for program delivery and the administrative office area is designed poorly.

As part of the secondary review process, the renovation of Ryan was supported by the planning committee. The design team consists of:

Holly Debenham	Ann Piek	Dave Ferree
Tracie Gray	MK Romberg	Larry Morris
Becky Howk	Heather Stewart	Peggy Carlson
Bruce Merritt	Bill Bailey	Peter Brown
Tony Naber	Wayne Gerke	Mike Muir

The BrainSpaces group, led by Peter Brown and Mike Muir, had facilitated planning committee meetings and during the design process the committee participated in a book study, reviewed fundamentals in support of middle grade education and background information on Ryan, discussed perceived strengths and challenges, explored a preferred future for students and how best to prepare for it.

The committee also explored best practices, great examples, and characteristics of effective middle schools. They viewed videos of real examples showing how the ideas were put into action, discussed establishing common themes and developing guiding principles.

Reasons for the renovation of Ryan included:

- anticipated need for the next 40 years
- preparing students for the 21st Century
- an upgraded Ryan will best serve students and the community
- program delivery via best practices will best meet student needs
- confidence that an upgrade will contribute toward the success of students aged 12-14, continuing through high school, work, and life in general

The National Middle School Association had identified 14 school practices and cultural characteristics that, when consistently integrated and fully implemented, create successful schools for young adolescents:

- High Expectations
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Relevant, Challenging, Exploratory Curriculum
- Multiple Learning and Teaching Approaches
- Health, Wellness, and Safety
- Guidance and Support
- Knowledgeable Educators
- Courageous, Collaborative Leadership
- Active Learning
- Organizational Structures
- Adult Advocate
- Shared Vision
- Safe Environment
- School Initiated Partnerships

The planning committee work has provided an opportunity to look forward to the next 40 years, organizing and defining concepts for Ryan, including these common themes:

- School Organization
- Teaching and Learning Teams
- Community Relationships
- Multiple Styles for Teaching and Learning
- Professional Development
- Resources
- Continuous Improvement

The next steps in the planning process include:

- developing a vision
- communicating the vision and results of design team work
- creating time for the next steps
- staff work begins where design team's work ends
- book study as starting point
- developing implementation strategies

An important part of the process is working with staff to address hopes and fears associated with change, which produces emotion. Staff input will be solicited, their concerns validated, and information about benchmarks for implementation shared along the way. Current staff are hopeful about a meaningful change, productive process, real middle grade concept, and the positive impact on students, in addition to other program specific hopes. Staff have expressed fear about the possibility of a lack of meaningful change, heavy work load, possible negative impact on school and staff, and unproductive community or parental support.

The group participated in a guided tour of Ryan Middle School, and the meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Submitted by Sharon Tuttle, executive assistant to the Board.