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5 **Anchorage Municipal Assembly and Anchorage School Board**  
6 **Joint Meeting**

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8 **Mayor's Conference Room**  
9 **632 West Sixth Avenue**

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11 **Minutes for Joint Meeting of September 5, 2008**  
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19 **1. CALL TO ORDER**  
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21 The Joint Meeting was convened by Anchorage School Board (ASB) President Jeff Friedman at 10:12 a.m. in the  
22 Mayor's Conference Room on the 8<sup>th</sup> Floor of City Hall, Room 830, in Anchorage, Alaska.  
23

24 **2. ROLL CALL** A Quorum was achieved with Assemblymembers and School Board Members present.  
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26 **2.A ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY**

27 PRESENT: Mike Gutierrez, Elvi Gray-Jackson, Chris Birch (*arriving at 10:30 a.m.*), Sheila Selkregg  
28 (*arriving at 10:15 a.m.*), Jennifer Johnston, Harriet Drummond and Patrick Flynn.

29 ABSENT: Matt Claman, Dan Coffey, Debbie Ossiander and William Starr, each excused.  
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31 **2.B. ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD**

32 PRESENT: President Jeff Friedman, Vice President Macon Roberts, Pat Higgins, Tim Steele and John  
33 Steiner.

34 ABSENT: Crystal Kennedy and Chris Tuck, each excused.  
35

36 Also present were Anchorage School District (ASD) Superintendent Carol Comeau, Municipal Clerk Barbara  
3 Gruenstein, ASD Assistant Superintendent George Vakalis, ASD Facilities Director Ray Amsden, Municipal Energy  
3 Efficiency and Sustainability Director Randy Virgin and Deputy Municipal Manager Heather Handyside.  
39

40 **3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** ASB President Jeff Friedman led the pledge.  
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42 **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS JOINT MEETING**

43 4.A. Joint Meeting – March 21, 2008.  
44

45 Ms. Drummond moved, to approve the Joint Meeting Minutes of  
46 Ms. Johnston seconded, March 21, 2008,  
47 and the motion passed without objection,  
48 with Mr. Claman, Mr. Coffey, Ms. Ossiander and Mr. Starr, each as an excused absence.  
49

50 **5. ADDENDUM TO AGENDA** There were no additional items.  
51

52 **6. ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

53 **6.A. LEED Certification on Construction.**  
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55 ASD Assistant Superintendent George Vakalis commended the Assembly for bringing forward LEED (*Leadership in*  
56 *Energy and Environmental Design*) Certification for construction. Many LEED principals were already used for  
57 construction of ASD projects. An ASD Energy Conservation Committee reviewed ASD energy usage and many  
58 energy conservation strategies had been implemented, including LEED strategies. A 2007 trial program of nine  
59 schools used a combination of self discipline and energy conservation techniques and had achieved a savings of nine  
60 percent, including significant cost savings for electricity and natural gas. As an incentive, a percentage of the earned  
61 savings was returned to the participating school to be used by that school for program support. Participating schools  
62 included Aquarian Charter, Baxter, Creekside, Muldoon, Ptarmigan, Scenic Park, Taku, Benny Benson Middle School  
63 and Service High School. To Ms. Johnston and Ms. Drummond, Mr. Vakalis and Superintendent Comeau responded  
64 that bonding could not be secured for capital improvements for the Aquarian Charter School because charter schools  
65 were not recognized by the Municipal Bond Counsel. Their legal opinion was that a charter school did not qualify  
66 because it was not completely governed by the ASD, was partially non-profit and did not pay rent. The ASD opinion  
67 was that Aquarian Charter did qualify because the school used ASD employees, followed the ASD calendar, reported  
68 to the ASB annually, met state requirements, did not pay rent and were supported by the ASD. The Aquarian Charter  
69 School should be able to bond for upgrades and capital improvements needed for that facility. The ASD would  
70 continue to pursue that matter with the new Municipal Bond Counsel. Ms. Drummond stated that other public schools  
71 did not pay rent or have to pay bond expenses. (*Clerk's Note: Acting Chair Selkregg arrived to the meeting at 10:15*  
72 *a.m. and assumed the Chair.*)  
73

74 Mr. Steele stated that there were substantial costs for upgrades needed to bring Aquarian Charter up to Code. Ms.  
75 Drummond stated that it may require that the building be torn down and start over. Mr. Steiner stated that following  
76 LEED principals and getting the certification were two different things. Certification required recordkeeping and extra  
77 expense, which may or may not prove to be beneficial. Mr. Vakalis responded that certification involved the project

1 design and there were various levels of certification. The ASD and the Municipal Energy Committee crafted and the  
2 Assembly approved an ordinance that required construction of public facilities to follow LEED principals and to get  
3 certification. Not all LEED points applied to building in Alaska, but there were options to accumulate points and  
4 certification could still be achieved on a point basis for various levels. If it was determined that meeting standards  
5 would not be beneficial to a specific project, a third-party arbitrator would be used to review the matter and could waive  
6 that portion of the LEED requirement. Building Board of Examiners and Appeals would be the third-party arbitrator to  
7 make those determinations.  
8

9 Clark Middle School had followed LEED criteria and met all the requirements, but had not spent the \$50,000 for the  
10 LEED certification, which was used instead for school program needs. To Mr. Steiner, Mr. Vakalis responded that the  
11 new requirements applied to construction and renovations of all public facilities that were 5,000 square feet or larger.  
12 Energy Efficiency Director Randy Virgin responded there were incentives for private developers to comply. Using  
13 LEED standards applied to projects and renovations. Remodels that were 50% of the building would require the entire  
14 building to be remodeled and achieving the LEED Silver Certification would allow a \$40,000 refund. To Ms. Johnston,  
15 Mr. Vakalis responded the permit cost was based on the total construction cost of the project. To Mr. Roberts, Mr.  
16 Vakalis responded the certification would be for the life of the building. Mr. Roberts questioned whether the money  
17 spent on constructing to LEED standards would be recouped over the years. Mr. Virgin and Mr. Vakalis each  
18 responded YES.  
19

20 Acting Chair Selkregg stated that it made sense to have flexibility with the requirements. Mr. Steiner stated that it was  
21 important to determine that taxpayers were getting value from the certification and to make sure that following the  
22 criteria was beneficial. To Acting Chair Selkregg, ASD Facilities Director Ray Amsden responded that the Clark Middle  
23 School design team was experienced with LEED and the design followed LEED standards. Mr. Flynn reported that the  
24 Assembly had addressed the matter and the certification cost would be realized in the future. Mr. Steiner stated the  
25 Assembly's intent was to secure LEED standards and save money. To Mr. Higgins, Mr. Vakalis responded the  
26 required material costs for construction, including types of lights or roof material, would be paid back in twenty years or  
27 less.  
28

#### 29 **6.B. Energy Issue-Cost Savings.**

30  
31 Superintendent Comeau stated that the State of Alaska had offered one-time funding in the 2008 Budget for increased  
32 energy costs. It was recently announced that natural gas would increase 30% over the year and ASD costs were  
33 calculated to exceed six million. The ASD had researched the matter and, with the Regulatory Commission of  
34 Alaska's approval, had negotiated terms for an upfront cash sale of natural gas from ENSTAR Natural Gas Company  
35 for a twelve-month period, with the unused balance placed in a savings account until used. Over a twelve-month  
36 period, money accruing interest would be realized savings. To Ms. Gray-Jackson, Superintendent Comeau and Mr.  
37 Vakalis responded the state had calculated \$100 per student and other factors to reach the \$6.4 million figure. Ms.  
38 Johnston stated there would still be an energy issue and continued concern with the rapidly increasing cost of fuel.  
39 Energy and resource assessments had determined that Southcentral's main increased fuel costs would be for  
40 transportation. Superintendent Comeau responded that the state had added funds for increased energy costs to the  
41 Operating Budget at the last minute.  
42

43 The ASD and ASB were reviewing all factors to be as energy efficient as possible, but the district needed to educate  
44 kids. Mr. Friedman concurred and stated that with an increased number of students, more programs would be added  
45 and class sizes would be increasing. Bus routes could not be cut because of safety reasons. Mr. Steiner stated that  
46 adjustments would be needed to balance the budget. Addressing energy needed to come first, before enhancements.  
47 The ASD needed to explore increased fuel efficiency for fleet vehicles. Mr. Steele stated that the ASD had researched  
48 energy-saving prospects, including buying hydroelectric buses, which were expensive. To Mr. Birch, Mr. Vakalis  
49 responded the ASD had a total of 240 buses, 123 of which were owned and operated by the district. The ASD  
50 Maintenance Division had about 125 vehicles, four road graders and four or five front-end loaders. Mr. Birch stated  
51 that there were other possible efficiencies to pursue, including GPS devices in all vehicles to monitor and track speed  
52 limits and to increase fuel efficiencies. A national study had shown there was a fuel savings with bus routes  
53 eliminating left turns. Mr. Vakalis responded that all ASD buses had GPS devices and the district was addressing  
54 GPS units in the maintenance fleet. Mr. Birch stated that GPS information could be publicly available. Mr. Friedman  
55 responded the ASD would review national studies on urban schools to help determine the best operating practices. Mr.  
56 Steele stated that the ASD was addressing bus route efficiencies of both the ASD and the contract bus fleets, with  
57 consideration of eliminating some left-hand turns. Acting Chair Selkregg stated the Assembly Energy Workgroup was  
58 gathering practical information on effective energy efficiencies and she invited all ASB and ASD members to be  
59 involved.  
60

#### 61 **6.C. Enrollment Updates.**

62  
63 Superintendent Comeau stated that the ASD had reached 100% of the projected student enrollment by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of  
64 school, which was a different trend from past projections. It was predicted that enrollment would continue to increase,  
65 because of the economy and additional families moving in from rural Alaska. Factors were the large Permanent Fund  
66 Dividend checks and the state energy rebate checks. There were already overcrowded classrooms and increased  
67 numbers of special needs and monolingual students. Additional teachers and aides would be needed. To Mr. Birch,  
68 she responded that on September 30<sup>th</sup> there were 48,247 students. The budget was projected for 47,994 students.  
69 To Mr. Birch, Superintendent Comeau responded there had been a continued declining enrollment in the past. This  
70 year was already different, with increased numbers, including an anticipated increase of military families moving to  
71 Anchorage.  
72

73 To Acting Chair Selkregg, Superintendent Comeau responded there was a continued increase of special needs  
74 students because of the services available in Anchorage. Rural Alaskan families with disabled children were expected  
75 to move to urban locations to take advantage of services. Intensive needs students had received increased state  
76 funding for the next three years from five times to nine times the student base allotment.  
77

1 The state needed to address the lack of facilities needed to accommodate or assist students with mental or behavioral  
2 issues who could not be at home or in school. Mr. Higgins stated that he was the Human Resource Director at  
3 Northstar, which was a hospital that offered medical services and a residential treatment center for children ages 4  
4 through 17 and was always full. The Alaska Native Medical Center would be building additional medical facilities for  
5 Alaskan children. Superintendent Comeau stated the ASD was required to provide educational programs to all  
6 children in state custody. Mr. Friedman stated that state representatives needed to be educated about this population  
7 of children and the predicted additional and interrelated costs. There were not enough volunteers available to help.  
8 Acting Chair Selkregg urged that the Mental Health Trust be contacted for additional resources. Superintendent  
9 Comeau stated there was a lack of professionally-trained staff that was needed to meet the needs required by law, to  
10 deal with the increased numbers of special needs students. Funding from the State would be locked in by October  
11 and it was predicted that additional special and intensive needs students would arrive after that date. Mandates  
12 required that all students be educated and she urged consideration of setting up a fund to pay for additional costs, so  
13 funds would not be taken away from the classroom. Mr. Steele stated that ASD and ASB members had lobbied  
14 heavily for funding for special needs students, including a 20% block grant that could be used for vocational education,  
15 gifted, speech and other programs. Intensive needs students were individually funded and costs had averaged  
16 \$74,000 per student last year. Mr. Steiner stated that intensive needs students were the biggest cost increase and  
17 additional funding would help. If there was not more money the funding would come out of general fund, which would  
18 deplete already-existing programs. Mr. Steele stated that as more students arrive, the city and the ASD would have  
19 less money to provide for them and the money would be taken out of other programs because their care was  
20 mandated. Superintendent Comeau stated the district had 632 intensive needs students last year.

#### 21 22 **6.D. ASD Recycling Update.**

23  
24 Mr. Vakalis commended the Assembly for approving the grant that supported the ASD recycling program. He reported  
25 that the ASD had hired a director who was dedicated to the recycling effort and had a background in environmental  
26 conservation management. Equipment had been ordered and the recycling program was underway in the schools. To  
27 Ms. Johnston, Mr. Vakalis responded the ASD had purchased a small pickup truck to assist with the recycling effort.  
28 The director would be monitoring the program from Girdwood to Eklutna and would use the truck to haul recyclables.  
29 Acting Chair Selkregg stated that the ASD had grasped the recycling issue quickly and was taking the lead.  
30 Superintendent Comeau stated that students were enthusiastic about the program, with East High School having the  
31 most active group. Mr. Roberts stated that he was an active recycler and was hopeful that the new school recycling  
32 program would help continue recycling efforts at home. Ms. Johnston stated that having the recycling program in the  
33 schools helped the students see the volume and the key was to reduce the waste. Acting Chair Selkregg stated a  
34 zero-waste effort was important. Ms. Drummond stated that the Turnagain Community Council supported recycling in  
35 public places, like parks, which would need bear-proof containers. Mr. Steiner stated there were many things that  
36 were not recyclable in Anchorage. Ms. Drummond stated that Smurfit-Stone, the business involved with shipping  
37 recyclables to Seattle, had indicated that as recyclable volume increased there would be additional services available.

#### 38 39 **6.E. Joint Legislative Issues (1% for Art, etcetera.)**

40  
41 Superintendent Comeau reported that Curator of Public Art Jocelyn Young was continually trying to establish a  
42 maintenance fund for the 1% for Art Program. She would be working with the Municipal Attorney to interpret state  
43 statute and municipal ordinance on the matter. The ASD was addressing the legal question of deferring a slight  
44 amount from the 1% for Art Program to be put into a maintenance fund, strictly for the public art. Ms. Johnston stated  
45 that the Bond Council had a differing opinion. Ms. Drummond supported having a small percentage of the 1% funding  
46 ascribable to maintenance. Mr. Birch stated it had been determined that maintenance costs could not be included with  
47 the dedicated funding for the 1% for Art Program, but funding could be included in the operations and maintenance  
48 budget. It was a disappointment that the public art was not being taken care of. Superintendent Comeau responded  
49 that the Kincaid Park clock had not been fixed for years, but the ASD did not own the artwork and ASD employees  
50 were not qualified or allowed to maintain the public art. Mr. Friedman stated that one problem was the jurisdiction  
51 responsibility and who had the budget. Some public art required high maintenance and lifecycle maintenance costs  
52 needed to be addressed. Mr. Steiner stated that maintenance still needed to be considered, regardless where the  
53 funds came from. Mr. Friedman stated that originally the ASD had discussed using some of the 1% money, so as not  
54 to raise the tax cap. He would support increasing operations and maintenance funding to include maintenance costs,  
55 which would be a tiny amount.

56  
57 Mr. Steele stated that the ASD did not select the art and it was outside of their control. Some 1% for Art Projects were  
58 painted walls that would need to be re-painted. Mr. Flynn stated that Artists would find it difficult to calculate lifecycle  
59 engineering or maintenance. Acting Chair Selkregg stated it was appropriate for the Arts Council to include the issue  
60 when discussing the criteria for selection of the 1% for Art. The ASD and the Assembly could offer recommendations  
61 of solutions for consideration. Mr. Steiner stated that lifecycle maintenance costs needed to be evaluated, with all art  
62 projects requiring different amounts and types of maintenance. It may take a change of statute or regulations or a  
63 budget change to include lifecycle (*maintenance*) costs for public art already installed. Ms. Drummond stated many  
64 1% for Art Projects were fragile and would be costly to repair or replace. She stated there were over 200 1% for Art  
65 pieces in Anchorage, with 175 located in schools.

66  
67 Superintendent Comeau stated that the Assembly and the ASD could lobby together on common legislative priorities.  
68 Mr. Flynn stated that the Assembly and the ASB could co-address the confidential national Youth at Risk Survey,  
69 which required active parental permission for students, grades 7-12, to participate. A collaborative lobbying effort  
70 could be for an "opt-out" standard for this survey, to eliminate the requirement for parental permission. Superintendent  
71 Comeau stated that this was an important survey and municipal and state grant applications required current data. Mr.  
72 Steele stated that the ASB continually addressed this study because the information would benefit many departments.  
73 Ms. Gray-Jackson recommended a Joint Assembly-ASB Legislative Committee Meeting to work collaboratively on the  
74 priorities. To Ms. Johnston, Superintendent Comeau responded the State of Alaska conducted the Youth at Risk  
75 Survey every two years in the spring. Ms. Johnston stated that school children got many forms and wondered how  
76 many completed forms were returned. Superintendent Comeau responded that this survey originated from the Center  
77 for Disease Control (CDC) and a certain number of completed surveys were needed to make the survey valid. Mr.  
78 Flynn stated surveys were important because there were community needs that first had to be identified to be treated

1 effectively. Mr. Steiner stated that there was community concern that kids may interpret the behavior described in the  
2 surveys as acceptable, which could be harmful. Mr. Friedman stated that opponents perceived surveys as suggestive  
3 but, from his point of view, students were well aware of the issues. The "opt-out" (of parental permission) would  
4 increase the percentage of completed surveys returned. Mr. Steiner stated that the scientific studies that dealt with  
5 surveys having effects on students' conduct should be reviewed.  
6

7 Acting Chair Selkregg stated that there were serious problems with Alaskan children at risk from suicide, abuse and  
8 failing in school. There were very few tools to measure the needs or to get resources to take care of them. Ms.  
9 Steiner stated that the Alaska Municipal League (AML) could also be a component. The Association of Alaska School  
10 Boards had a resolution on this topic and the Assembly Legislative Committee and the ASD Legislative Committee  
11 would meet to discuss Youth at Risk and other priority issues. Ms. Johnston stated that she would address the matter  
12 at the AML Meeting. Mr. Friedman stated that changing the law to allow bonding for charter schools needed to be  
13 addressed. Acting Chair Selkregg stated that ASD special needs students needed to be addressed.  
14

15 **7. COMMENTS**

16  
17 Acting Chair Selkregg stated that bonds approved by voters for improvements to Chester Valley had been used  
18 elsewhere, including Clark Middle School. Now there were subsequent impacts to the design of the school. If schools  
19 were not built the way they were intended there would be long term costs. Superintendent Comeau stated the ASD  
20 remained committed to the community, but estimated costs of the project were over budget and the scope needed to  
21 be reduced, which was a normal part of the process. The slight reduction would not harm the integrity of education  
22 programs in any way. The design needed to be finished, included in the budget process and then the bids would go  
23 out. It would be a viable project that would last fifty years. To Ms. Drummond, Superintendent Comeau responded  
24 that Chester Valley had three hundred students. The master plan was an expandable design that would accommodate  
25 additional students. Mr. Gutierrez stated that he had received calls from constituents who thought the project was to  
26 begin immediately and that it was behind schedule. In May he had addressed the matter and had been told that the  
27 budget included a cushion and there was no concern. That was not the case. Acting Chair Selkregg stated the  
28 Assembly had been told that the project was to be scaled back, but that it would still work. Mr. Friedman stated the  
29 changes included reducing a parking lot, having smaller windows and losing a special education room, but there would  
30 be larger kindergarten rooms. Superintendent Comeau stated that a common misunderstanding was that Chester  
31 Valley would get all new furniture or equipment, which was the difference between new construction and a renovation.  
32 Mr. Steele stated that the ASD always worked through the process to create the ideal design, which was always cut  
33 back. The community would feel a lot different when the new school was completed. Sand Lake was also  
34 experiencing the same situation. There were continual issues of escalating labor and materials costs. It was a real  
35 concern because the longer the wait, the more it would cost.  
36

37 Ms. Drummond reported that construction at the intersection of Sand Lake and Strawberry Road was nearly complete,  
38 but that Jewel Lake Road construction was still underway and there was terrible traffic congestion.  
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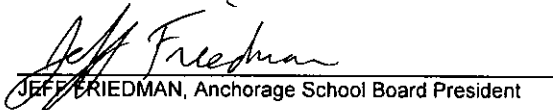
40 **8. SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING JOINT MEETING(S)**

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42 Ms. Drummond requested that a Quarterly Joint Meeting Schedule be followed. Ms. Gray-Jackson stated that  
43 quarterly meetings were required by Municipal Charter. Acting Chair Selkregg announced the next Joint Meeting  
44 would be held on November 21<sup>st</sup> at noon, in the Mayor's Conference Room, which would follow a report from the Youth  
45 Gang Task Force. Future Joint Meetings would alternate between the ASD Administration Building and City Hall.  
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47 **9. ADJOURNMENT**


48  
49 Acting Chair Selkregg adjourned the Joint Meeting at noon.  
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57 SHEILA SELKREGG, Acting Assembly Chair

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61 JEFF FRIEDMAN, Anchorage School Board President

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ATTEST:

  
BARBARA GRUENSTEIN, Municipal Clerk  
Date Minutes Approved: November 21, 2008  
MC/BG

(Approved Meeting Minutes can be viewed online on the Municipal Web Site, [www.muni.org](http://www.muni.org) - Assembly - Minutes - year - month / day  
or copies are available from the Municipal Clerk's Office, 632 West 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 250, Anchorage, Alaska, (907)343-4505)