

Regular Meeting, Valdez City Schools Board, February 22, 2010

A short public meeting was followed by executive sessions granting an early graduation waiver to a student, discussing the potential contract agreement with the teachers, and formulating the superintendent's evaluation from the board.

Reports included one from student representative Quinn Verfaillie about Cross - country regionals (Hannah Norris and Casey Walker being our top two skiers), Basketball regionals (first weekend in March), a talent show scheduled for mid April, and Music Regionals to be held in Valdez the third weekend in April. (The public is invited to the final concert and is also asked to help with various tasks, from adjudicating to being a runner. Please call Ann Norris VHS or Pam Verfaillie HHES to volunteer.)

The superintendent announced that 13 teachers are at the ASTI conference at present, learning more about how to use computer technology in education. He himself has been serving on a state virtual schools committee, which at one time or another has involved over 50 educators in the state. They continue to meet on issues such as whether this would be a separate school or an extension of all schools (probably the later), synchronous or non-synchronous (probably both), how to get the required bandwidth all over the state, where to get the money, which courses to offer (for sure high school courses but maybe other), how to utilize existing teachers from the districts, and what the time line would be.

He announced that Melissa Reese, teacher at VHS, was designated the Vocational Teacher of the Year and that Susan Keeney (HHES) is this year's State ASTI Teacher. Rod Morrison (GJHS) was chosen to serve as the Region III rep to the State Principals Association.

Dr. Bowie just returned from the national superintendents meeting, which was very worthwhile. For instance, drastic changes coming up in No Child Left Behind were discussed. He recommended that the board consider sending someone to the national school board meeting sometime.

Ongoing work includes formalizing the maintenance contract with First Student for the minibuses that the district owns and talking to Chugachimuit about sharing tutors.

President Laurie Hull Engles reported that a survey just went out to the high school kids at their request so that they could comment on the

facilities review that the city is currently conducting concerning all of the buildings. The kids noted some of the buses are only partly full and wondered if consolidation might be a way to save money. She pointed out that a few agenda items such as Rod Morrison's request to consider Macintosh computers for the Junior High and Ruthie Knight and Robert Houston's report on Vertical Teaming (a way to prepare kids for advanced work in high school and college) were postponed to the March meeting because the presenters were at ASTI.

Dave Lawrence, legislative liason, said that it is looking good to get an addition to the base student allocation and a promise of how that is going to change for the next few years to allow forward planning. Something will probably be done about the governor's proposal for merit scholarships and an extension of debt reimbursement funding. Other issues to watch are changes in exit exams, changing the timing of how we get our student count, and an anticorruption law that is so poorly written that it would keep all public employees and elected officials from communicating with state legislators at all. He also reported that the two students who went to Juneau with them were very involved and mature in their dealings with the legislators.

All of the administrative contracts were offered on the same salary schedule as last year. (The salary schedule has traditionally been adjusted to match the teachers every time a new contract is signed.) Tenured teachers already have their contracts. Everyone has 30 days to return his or her contract. A voluntary severnce program is in place this year which allows staff with more than 15 years of service to retire early with a bonus.

Discussion on three items followed. Laurie had done some informal surveys on the four day school week and got more nos than yeses, but more questions than either opinion. After some discussion it was decided to create a place on the VCS website where people could share information and ideas to get a better feel for what we're talking about and what implications it would have before we decide whether or not to advocate for this change to our schools (it would take a change in state law). Please lend your experience or research or opinion when that website gets up and running or talk to a board member directly.

The school facilities master planning is continuing. Architect John Weir will come back and report on their survey of buildings to the city council at noon on March 3. A similar session has already been reported to the

board. Dr. Bowie and facilities manager Ben Olds will get to meet with him on that day. The only new thing is that the structural engineer reported some earthquake concerns about the Jr High. The Board asked that he clarify which parts of the structure this applied to (gym, old part, or modular part). Incidentally, when in Juneau, our representatives were told that the bond issue passed in 2003 is still issuable and reimburable to work on school projects. Since a totally opposite ruling had been given previously, the board asked to get this in writing!

The state special ed audit has been completed, the plan of correction approved, and the corrections almost accomplished. As anyone who has had a state audit of anything knows, they always find something, but in our case it was only a few documents that they couldn't find in their short time here. Congratulations the Clarence Haugen and his staff on this favorable outcome to the hard work they put in preparing for this triannual audit.

Grace Hundorf reported a class on how to do videos starting 2/26 and running 2-5pm for 10 weeks. She also asked about figuring a way to recognize the great teachers we have in our district.

Delores Gard reminded the board that the health insurance contract for the schools and city is coming up soon. Amber assured her that the city is including us in the discussions this time.

Laurie asked Lance about a national technology conference that he is planning to attend with Doug Johnson (IT director) and whether the outgoing superintendent is the person to send for best return on investment. After some discussion the board asked for a report on his return.

Dates for upcoming board responsibilities (budget hearings, superintendent search, next roundtable with the high school students, etc) were reviewed and the regular meeting adjourned into executive session at 7:50.

Remember, we need you to help with regional music festival in April (contact Pam Verfaillie or call the high school). Also, they're looking for science fair judges on March 5 (Call Ruthie Knight ASAP - HHES can take a message) and high school baccalaureate in June needs a coordinator or two (contact Josh Miller at VHS or someone at Epiphany church 835-4541 to find out what's involved). Look for upcoming upgrades to the district website that will let you find out more about the possibility of a four

day school week (and probably about possible graduation requirement changes, too). Go there to comment on the proposed calendars also. Thanks in advance for your energy and ideas.

-Courtesy Kathleen Todd, Board Clerk