

The ACE Link

THE ANCHORAGE COUNCIL OF EDUCATION



VOLUME 3
January 2008

ACE SPOT LIGHTS

Women of Achievements

Congratulations to ACE member Sandy Schoff, ASD Math Curriculum Coordinator, who was named a Woman of Achievement in December. This award is given by the YWCA and BP to 10 women each year for their professional accomplishments and community service. Totem member Christmas Cowell, ASD Art and World Languages Administrative Assistant, was also honored. Our city and district are fortunate to have these two amazing women!



Sandy Schoff

National Award:

Congratulations to ACE Member Vickie Blakeney, ASD's Social and Emotional Learning Coordinator, who received the 2007 Joseph E. Zins Practice Award. This is a prestigious national award for career contributions to the field of SEL. Vickie's outstanding work with SEL has put ASD on the national map!

Practice Award: This award is presented to a young practitioner who has contributed substantially to promoting system-level changes for SEL in schools. These contributions could include creating models of systemic change, implementing innovative programming, or influencing local, state, or federal policy.



Victoria Blakeney

Congratulations to our new Field Associate:

ACE member and Employee Representative Jennifer Nicoletto has been hired for a new staff position at APEA. This position was created in response to member needs, primarily to support grievance and contract negotiations for ACE and TOTEM. Jennifer comes to her new job from Whaley School, where she served as an Intervention Coach (formerly known as a Mental Health Specialist/Safety Security). Originally from Southern California, Jennifer has lived in Alaska for 14 years and has worked for ASD for 9 years. Jennifer has three grown sons (who are out on their own, she is proud to say!) and lives in Eagle River with her husband Kelly. You can reach Jennifer at jnicoletto@apea-aft.org or 274-1688.

Now there are two Jennifers at APEA! Our longtime Field Representative Jennifer Madsen will be known as "Jenn", and Jennifer Nicoletto will be known as "Jennifer." Hopefully these two monikers will help ease any confusion.



Jennifer Nicoletto

Special Points of Interest...

- *Welcome ACE's new field Representative Jennifer Nicoletto*
- *Five Year Anchorage School District Calendar*
- *Corinne McVee's trip to Washington, D.C.*

Inside Issues...

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Negotiations are Coming!

It's hard to believe, but it is time to begin preparations for our next contract negotiations! The current contract expires in June 2009, so now is the time to prepare for bargaining during the 2008-2009 school year.

Our first task is to elect a five-member negotiating team. The ACE Executive Board has decided to hold a special election in March, ahead of the traditional May elections, in order to take advantage of a special negotiator training that will be offered by APEA in April.

In order to secure the best possible contract, ACE needs a top-notch team! Please consider nominating either yourself or a colleague. Being a part of the ACE negotiating team is an opportunity to:

Here's Your Opportunity to...

- 1** Be an agent for positive change
- 2** Advocate for improving your salary and working conditions and those of your colleagues
- 3** Represent the heart of ACE's mission, its diversity, and its importance in the ASD.
- 4** Gain understanding of labor laws and their direct effect on you, your family, and your
- 5** Actively participate in the democratic process and civic life
- 6** Influence your professional life for the next three-year contract and beyond
- 7** Negotiate a great contract for ACE!

Candidates must be ACE members in good standing, be willing to attend negotiations training April 14 - 18 in Alyeska (leave days, housing, and meals provided), and be able to commit time and energy to this important process.

If you would like to run, or if you would like to nominate someone to run, please contact Corinne McVee, ACE 2nd Vice President. Nominations will close at a General Membership Meeting, Monday, February 11. Elections will be held March 5, 2008. Building permits were not able to be secured by press time, so please check your email for an announcement of meeting times and locations.

Once the team is elected, they will begin to solicit member input in a variety of ways. Be thinking of issues that are important to you and of improvements you would like to see in our next contract.



Superintendent Presents 2008-09 Budget Proposal to the School Board - Recommendations based on legislative task force report

January 22, 2008

Contact: Communications Department

Phone: 907-742-4153

Fax: 907-742-4175

Web: www.asdk12.org

Superintendent Carol Comeau presented the Anchorage School District's 2008-09 proposed \$581 million general fund budget today to the Anchorage School Board. Comeau's preliminary budget includes additional teaching positions in elementary, special education, world languages and math support services.

No fee increases for summer school, student activities or parking are in the preliminary general fund budget.

calendar

An ACE member made a request during the Fall of 2007 that the 5 year work plan be developed. This would off-set travel expenses as well as plan for district/school obligations. The ACE Executive Board was able to work collaboratively with the District to have a five year calendar created to allow for better planning. With the necessity of making plane reservations up to 1 year ahead of time during peak travel times, having this information should be of assistance to a number of ACE members.



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YEAR	4 TH OF JULY	WINTER HOLIDAY
2007-2008		Holidays – Dec. 24,25, 31, 2007, Jan.1, 2008 Closure Days – Dec. 26, 27, 28, 2007 Closure Period – Dec. 24, 2007-Jan. 1, 2008
2008-2009	Holiday – July 4, 2008 Closure Days -June 30-July 3, 2008 Closure Period – June 30-July 4, 2008	Holidays – Dec. 24, 25, 31, 2008 & Jan. 1, 2009 Closure Days – Dec. 26, 29, 30, 2008 Closure Period – Dec, 24, 2008- Jan. 1, 2009
2009-2010	Holiday – July 3, 2009 Closure Days – June 29- July 2, 2009 Closure Period – June 29 – July 3, 2009	Holidays – Dec. 24, 25, 31, 2009 & Jan. 1, 2010 Closure Days – Dec. 28, 29, 30, 2009 Closure Period – Dec 24, 2009 – Jan. 1, 2010
2010-2011	Holiday – July 5, 2010 Closure Days – July 6-July 9, 2010 Closure Period – July 5 –July 9, 2010	Holidays – Dec. 23, 24, 30, 31, 2010 Closure Days – Dec. 27, 28, 29, 2010 Closure Period – Dec. 23 – Dec. 31, 2010
2011-2012	Holiday – July 4, 2011 Closure Days - July 5 – July 8, 2011 Closure Period – July 4 –July 8, 2011	Holidays – Dec. 23, 26, 30, 2011 & Jan. 2, 2012 Closure Days – Dec. 27, 28, 29, 2011 Closure Period – Dec. 23, 2011 – Jan 2, 2012
2012-2013	Holiday – July 4, 2012 Closure Days – July 2, 3, 5, 6, 2007 Closure Period – July 2 – July 6, 2012	Holidays - Dec. 24, 25, 31, 2012 & Jan 1, 2013 Closure Days – Dec. 26, 27, 28, 2012 Closure Period – Dec. 24, 2012 – Jan 1, 2013

Meetings

There will be an ACE General Meeting on February 11th from 5-6:30pm. Meeting place TBA. Nominations for the negotiations team will include:

- 1) closing of nominations for Neg. team
- 2) upcoming Municipal elections
- 3) Summary of our Superintendent meetings with the Executive Board



Washington, D.C.

by Corinne McVee, ACE 2nd Vice President

Dateline: Washington, D.C., November 2007. I traveled to our nation's capital to attend a conference of the American Association of Grant Professionals, and I also spent a few days visiting AFT headquarters and the offices of Senator Murkowski and Representative Young.

AFT's national office is an impressive, multi-story building, within walking distance of the U.S. Capitol. Several staff members welcomed me and showed me around. The staff was busily preparing for a visit by the British Ambassador, who was interested in how AFT handles some labor issues. I had lunch with two members of AFT's Legislative Department: Jane Meroney, Deputy Director, and Derrick Figures, Senior Associate. Jane's main job revolves around NCLB, and Derrick is a lobbyist on Capitol Hill. Both were very interested to hear all about ASD, and we talked about NCLB (re-authorization is slowed due to the upcoming election year) and a variety of other union issues.

I went to the office of Representative Don Young, located in the Rayburn Building. He was not in, but I was graciously met by his Legislative Director Pamela Day. We talked about NCLB and education issues. Ms. Day shared that Rep. Young is opposed to performance-based teacher bonuses and would prefer that funds for that be used for teacher mentoring instead. Also, he is strongly in favor of recognizing improvements in yearly progress even if 100% is not attained (she gave this example: if a student's score improves from 50% to 62%, that progress should be recognized as a positive change even though there is still much room for growth). Rep. Young is familiar with the challenges in bush Alaska, having been a teacher himself.

I also visited with Senator Lisa Murkowski and her Legislative Assistant, Karen McCarthy, in the Hart Senate Building. I was pleasantly surprised that AFT sent Earl Hadley over to accompany me! Earl is another AFT Senior Associate and a very experienced lobbyist. A short time after I began talking with Ms. McCarthy (who is very knowledgeable about education issues of all kinds, both nationally and in Alaska), in walked the Senator herself! What followed was a very informative conversation about

many NCLB issues. Ms. McCarthy shared information about committee work on the bill, and the Senator talked – and listened - to me about her proposed legislation and her views. She is in favor of such positive changes as using the growth model, flexibility in Highly Qualified status, seeking ways to develop the whole child, not labeling a school as a whole failure because of the absence of a few students – the same kinds of topics that come up whenever NCLB is talked about here at ASD. I left the meeting feeling fortunate that Alaska has a senator who really “gets it.” I asked her what our members could do for her, and she strongly and sincerely encouraged us to share our views with her at any time.

Thanks to Peggy Wilcox, APEA political organizer, for helping make arrangements for these visits.



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Based on the recommendations of the Joint Legislative Education Task Force, Comeau said the proposed budget incorporates a \$100 increase in the state's base student allocation; raising the intensive needs multiplier from five to nine times the BSA and recalibrating pupil transportation funding.

PERS/TRS cost sharing, is also factored into the proposed budget. If approved, the state would fund the estimated \$79 million increase to this year's retirement fund.

"The Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force recommended much needed education funding reforms," said Comeau. "I'm thrilled that the governor also supports increased funding. The recommended changes allow us to continue improving our instructional program."

Enhancements and reductions to the general fund also reflect community input received at the high school forums, through community and advisory groups, and recommendations from last year's Budget Review Teams.

The district has proposed a one-time use of \$4 million from the undesignated fund balance to establish a process for technology and computer replacements across the district. The money would be used to prioritize and then replace outdated computers and printers.

Following are the proposed additional personnel positions:

- 24.8 teaching positions for elementary planning time
- Four elementary and middle school level math support teachers
- Two world languages teachers at the middle school level
- 55 special education teachers, specialists and teacher aides
- One Web content technician

Also included in the preliminary budget are:

- Start-up of an Alaska Native Charter School
- Creation of a Newcomer's Center at East High School
- A new swimming course
- A language interpreter center
- Increasing Internet bandwidth

Negotiated and pending salary increases as well as utility, fuel and supply costs continue to contribute to the district's increased expenditures. Employee salaries, wages and benefits account for approximately 87 percent of the general fund budget.

In an effort to direct resources to the classroom, ASD administrators thoroughly examined all budget areas and requested each department reduce its budget by 2 percent. The preliminary budget is being presented today and Wednesday to the school board, which must present its approved budget to the Municipality of Anchorage by March 1.



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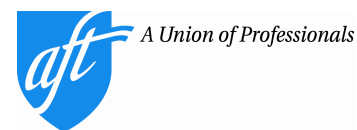
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