

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development

Grants to Municipalities (AS 37.05.315)

Grant Recipient: Anchorage

Project Title:

Anchorage - Master Planning For West High School and Romig Middle School Campus Renovation

State Funding Requested: \$ 900,000

House District: Anchorage Areawide (17-32)

One-Time Need

Brief Project Description:

Funds would allow for planning to renovate the West/Romig campus in Anchorage into a public campus/community center that serves all of Anchorage. The West/Romig project could also serve as a model for future state school projects.

Funding Plan:

Total Cost of Project: \$900,000

Funding Secured

Other Pending Requests

Anticipated Future Need

Amount FY

Amount FY

Amount FY

There is no other funding needed

Detailed Project Description and Justification:

This education priority project is supported by the Anchorage School District, the Municipality of Anchorage, and several area community councils and PTAs - please see the attached resolutions and letter of support.

The "campus as a center of community" model is an innovative concept being used across the nation that incorporates community, universities and business partners into public school campuses.

The project is best described by Fanning Howey, national consultants hired for pre-planning of the project.

"The West/Romig campus location and diversity of student bodies provide an excellent opportunity to modernize the campus as a center of community. The campus is centrally located. It is also adjacent to an area of recent economic and cultural revitalization. Further, the academic and cultural diversity within the schools is a perfect match for educational opportunities that are available with public private partnering...Most importantly there is a desire within the community to participate in a partnership with the schools. Brought to fruition, the West/Romig campus will be a dynamic place serving as the source of recreation and life long learning for the entire community. It will also serve as a model for Alaska and the nation of how public/private partnerships can be leveraged to improve education and community opportunities in the 21st century."

Project Timeline:

If funds are granted, the planning process would begin in 2008.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Anchorage School District

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Contact Name: Carol Comeau

Phone Number: 907-348-5425

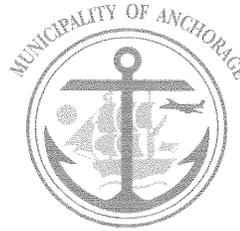
Address: 5530 E Northern Lights, Anchorage AK 99504

Email: Comeau_Carol@asdk12.org

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? Yes No



Anchorage School District



March 6, 2008

Anchorage Caucus
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: Master Planning Funds to Redevelop of the West/Romig Anchorage Campus as a Center of Community

Dear Anchorage Caucus:

As you consider the capital budget, please consider funding \$900,000 for master planning to redevelop one of Alaska's oldest public schools. Some of Alaska's oldest public schools are beginning to need comprehensive revitalization. The West Romig Anchorage campus is long overdue for redevelopment and it is well situated to serve as a pilot project for an alternative approach that could be used statewide to fund public school projects through public private partnerships.

Across the country, communities are taking a different approach to revitalizing their school. Though many community and school groups use our facilities and grounds for activities outside of the regular school day and year, many also believe that we can no longer afford to maintain and operate costly school buildings that are open only for part of a day and part of a year for instruction. We need to re-engage citizens in supporting their local schools.

By leveraging local public/private partnerships, schools can be redesigned as centers of community. A recent National Summit on School Design made eight recommendations for schools. One recommendation is to create schools as centers of community. As centers of community, school campuses can provide traditional educational services, including preparing students for the 21st century workforce and advanced education, while also offering flexible and accessible space for students and citizens to learn, meet, exercise, access services, play, entertain, and share the experiences that bind neighbors.

The West Anchorage community is actively working to redevelop the West High and Romig Middle School Campus as a center of community. West Anchorage High and Romig Middle Schools are some of the oldest and most diverse public schools in Alaska.¹ They are in dire need of revitalization.

The West Anchorage community has engaged an extensive community visioning process. Initiated by the community, and with the support of the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA), the Anchorage School District hired national consultants Fanning Howey to conduct pre-planning visioning for the campus. Over the last five months Fanning Howey held both private, single issue meetings and open, interactive, public community workshops. Fanning Howey obtained input from private businesses, municipal agencies, non profit groups, school administration, faculty, parents, students, neighbors, elected officials, the MOA, service groups and philanthropic organizations.

The results of the extensive community input are compiled in a report available on line at <http://www.asdk12.org/renewal/RomigWest.asp>. At the conclusion of its interaction with the West Anchorage community, Fanning Howey recommended the following:

[The West Romig] campus location and diversity of student bodies provide an excellent opportunity to modernize the campus as a center of community. The campus is centrally located. It is also adjacent to an area of recent economic and cultural revitalization. Further, the academic and cultural diversity within the schools is a perfect match for the educational opportunities that are available with public private partnering....Most importantly there is a desire within the community to participate in a partnership with the schools. Brought to fruition, the West-Romig Campus will be a dynamic place serving as the source of recreation and life

¹ West Anchorage High School was originally constructed in 1953 and Romig Middle School in 1963. Both schools are over capacity and no significant educational improvements have been made to the campus since 1993 when a science wing was added to the campus. In fall 2007, through an alumni effort, private public partnering renovated the Anchorage Auditorium.

The West/Romig Campus has both outstanding features and major challenges. West has the highest number of National Merit Scholars in Alaska. It is the only school in the Anchorage School District offering courses leading to an International Baccalaureate diploma. It is Anchorage's designated School through the Arts and Highly Gifted Programs. The campus is Anchorage's site for continuing Spanish and Russian immersion programs. French and German are also currently taught. The West/Romig campus is becoming known for its arts and world language studies.

The schools' boundaries also encompass low-income housing units and neighborhoods. It has a high transient population and *the highest dropout rate of Anchorage's comprehensive high schools*. In the school halls, over 40 languages are spoken by approximately 2700 students in grades 7-12. Over half of the students belong to an ethnic minority group and 35% are economically disadvantaged. On any given day, as many as 100 homeless teenagers are in attendance. Close to 25% of the student population receives subsidized lunches.

long learning for the entire community. It will also serve as a model for Alaska and the nation of how public-private partnerships can be leveraged to improve education and community opportunities in the 21st century. The development of a master plan that incorporates these concepts will offer insights and options to guide future decisions. To take advantage of the enthusiasm and synergy that has developed, the creation of the master plan should begin as soon as possible.

For this project to go forward, funding for master planning is necessary. Redeveloping the West Anchorage High School and Romig Middle School campus as a center of community is an innovative way to use government dollars efficiently to support and honor diversity and education while partnering with private businesses to strengthen communities. We believe that it will re-engage citizens in supporting their local schools. This site is an excellent opportunity to provide a model for the State and the nation on how to educate our students while simultaneously creating strong communities.

We believe that this project can be a model for how our state can redevelop its public schools but for this project to go forward master planning money is necessary. Please provide the master planning money necessary to redevelop the West Romig campus as a center of community in this year's capital budget. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich
Mayor



Carol Comeau
Superintendent



ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Facilities Department
1301 Labar Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99515
Phone: (907) 348-5245
FAX (907) 348-5256

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 5, 2008

Subject: **WEST HS/ROMIG MS - MASTER PLANNING
Scope, Estimated Cost and Schedule**

To: Ray Amsden
From: Rob Balivet

cc: Mike Price, Mary Cary, Rachel Molina, Randy Ribble

Scope of Master Plan:

West HS/Romig MS' Master Plan will provide a long term concept of how various features, on and off campus, can be physically related. The features include:

- educational program, determined by approved educational specifications ("ed specs");
- existing facilities (including site) conditions and their assessed abilities to meet ed specs;
- transportation and pedestrian links (both within the campus and off campus);
- topographical, environmental and geotechnical qualities;
- municipal planning, such as the 2020 Anchorage Comprehensive Plan;
- adjacent properties and facilities potentially contributing to West Romig's role as a 'Center of Community' school; and
- demographics.

The Master Plan will provide a blueprint for prioritizing future renewal projects, including sequence and cost estimates of those priorities. Project designs and construction will be based upon the approved Master Plan.

Estimated costs:

Estimated costs for West Romig campus' Master Plan are \$750,000. Adding off campus features are estimated to cost an additional \$150,000. If the latter are to be included, they must be introduced at the same time as on-campus master planning begins.

Schedule:

We anticipate the following schedule:

- Receive funding approved.....June 1, 2008
- Develop Request for Proposals for Master Planning services.....month of June 2008
- Advertise, select, gain Board, Assembly approvals, negotiate contract....July to September 2008
- Develop & get approval of Supplemental Ed Specs.....September 2008 to January 2009
- Assess facility's conditions and ability to meet ed specs.....September 2008 to March 2009
- Develop Master Plan concepts with users.....December 2008 to June 2009
- Integrate concepts into draft Master Plan.....April to July 2009
- Finalize master plan, present to public, gain public approvals.....July to November 2009
- Gain Planning & Zoning, School Board, Assembly approvals.....October 2009 to January 2010

**West High School Parent Student Teacher Association
Resolution #2, 2007-8 School Year**

**In Support of Appropriating Funds to Redesign the West High/
Romig Middle School Campus as a Center of Community**

Whereas the Municipality of Anchorage's 2020 plan describes the intersection adjacent to the West/Romig campus as a future West Anchorage Town Center;

Whereas responsible use of limited resources suggest that school campuses can be used as centers for the community open during the day and into the early evening through out the year;

Whereas the West Anchorage High and Romig Middle School campus is well situated to become a center of community and can provide a model for how limited resources combined with private/public partnerships can improve educational and community opportunities;

Whereas both schools offer diverse and strong academic programs that include Spanish and Russian immersion programs, Cook Inlet Tribal Council Native programs, a magnet School through the Arts program, the International Baccalaureate Diploma, and gifted and highly gifted programs;

Whereas West Anchorage High School graduates approximately one third of Anchorage's Presidential and National Merit Scholars;

Whereas 28.5% of West Anchorage High School's students are also economically disadvantaged; 27% are homeless or in transition; and 39.2% do not graduate;

Whereas West Anchorage High School has the highest drop out rate in Anchorage and, on any given day, hosts one hundred homeless students, many of whom have little or no access to computers and technology and lack transportation to a public library;

Whereas no significant facilities improvements have been made to either West High School or Romig Middle School since 1995;

Whereas providing a campus that is open throughout the day and early evening to students and citizens can provide resources necessary for students to succeed and members of the community to continue life long learning;

Whereas the West/Romig campus already functions as a center of community for Anchorage and the State of Alaska;

Whereas the West/Romig campus is heavily used by the community with over 66 different community organizations renting campus facilities on a regular basis;

Whereas because of its facilities, the West/Romig campus hosts Statewide competitions including Alaska State Basketball and Volleyball Championships, All State Band and Orchestra, State of Alaska Russian Olympiada, and the Alaska State MathCounts Competition;

Whereas the West Alumni Association and Anchorage community recently orchestrated a \$1.4 million refurbishing of the Anchorage High School Auditorium demonstrating a continued strong community support for using the campus as a center of community for the State and City of Anchorage;

Whereas national consultants Fanning/Howey Associates, Inc. have engaged the Municipality of Anchorage, Anchorage School District, Anchorage businesses, non profit agencies, and citizens in an effort to vision what could be on the campus;

Whereas the vision for the campus includes a center that will not only meet Anchorage School District requirements and prepare students for the 21st Century workforce and advanced education; but will also offer flexible and accessible space for students and citizens to learn, meet, play, compete, entertain and share experiences all on a campus that binds neighbors together as a community;

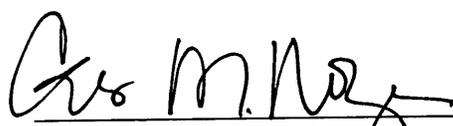
Whereas developing the campus as a center of community requires extensive public/private partnerships between the State of Alaska, the Municipality of Anchorage, the Anchorage School District, private businesses and public agencies and such partnerships will need to be coordinated in a master plan;

NOW THEREFORE, the West Anchorage High School Parent Teacher Student Association:

- 1) Supports the continued efforts of the Municipality of Anchorage, the Anchorage School District, and citizens to design a public campus that serves all members of the state and local community; and**
- 2) Encourages the Governor and Legislature of the State of Alaska to appropriate the funds necessary to complete the master planning of the West/Romig Campus as a center of community.**

I, Celia Rozen, the undersigned Secretary of the said West High School PTSA, hereby certify that I am the Secretary of the West High School PTSA, and that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the resolution duly passed by the West High School PTSA Board on February 13, 2008.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this 29th day of February, 2008.



Celia Rozen, Secretary
West High School PTSA

2/29/08

**Resolution in Support of Appropriating Funds to Redesign
the West High/Romig Middle School Campus
as a Center of Community**

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Whereas both schools offer diverse and strong academic programs that include Spanish and Russian immersion programs, Cook Inlet Tribal Council Native programs, a magnet School through the Arts program, the International Baccalaureate Diploma, and gifted and highly gifted programs;

Whereas West Anchorage High School graduates approximately one third of Anchorage's Presidential and National Merit Scholars;

Whereas 28.5% of West Anchorage High School's students are also economically disadvantaged; 27% are homeless or in transition; and 39.2% do not graduate;

Whereas West Anchorage High School has the highest drop out rate in Anchorage and, on any given day, hosts one hundred homeless students, many of whom have little or no access to computers and technology and lack transportation to a public library;

Whereas no significant facilities improvements have been made to either West High School or Romig Middle School since 1995;

Whereas providing a campus that is open throughout the day and early evening to students and citizens can provide resources necessary for students to succeed and members of the community to continue life long learning;

Whereas the West/Romig campus already functions as a center of community for Anchorage and the State of Alaska;

Whereas the West/Romig campus is heavily used by the community with over 66 different community organizations renting campus facilities on a regular basis;

Whereas because of its facilities, the West/Romig campus hosts Statewide competitions including Alaska State Basketball and Volleyball Championships, All State Band and Orchestra, State of Alaska Russina Olympiada, and the Alaska State MathCounts Competition;

Whereas the West Alumni Association and Anchorage community recently orchestrated a \$1.4 million refurbishing of the Anchorage High School Auditorium demonstrating a continued strong community support for using the campus as a center of community for the State and City of Anchorage;

Whereas national consultants Fanning/Howey Associates, Inc. have engaged the Municipality of Anchorage, Anchorage School District, Anchorage businesses, non profit agencies, and citizens in an effort to vision what could be on the campus;

Whereas the vision for the campus includes a center that will not only meet Anchorage School District requirements and prepare students for the 21st Century workforce and advanced education; but will also offer flexible and accessible space for students and citizens to learn, meet, play, compete, entertain and share experiences all on a campus that binds neighbors together as a community;

Whereas developing the campus as a center of community requires extensive public/private partnerships between the State of Alaska, the Municipality of Anchorage, the Anchorage School District, private businesses and public agencies and such partnerships will need to be coordinated in a master plan;

NOW THEREFORE, the Spenard Community Council:

- 1) Supports the continued efforts of the Municipality of Anchorage, the Anchorage School District, and citizens to design a public campus that serves all members of the state and local community; and**
- 2) Encourages the Governor and Legislature of the State of Alaska to appropriate the funds necessary to complete the master planning of the West/Romig Campus as a center of community.**

 3/5/08

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Whereas developing the campus as a center of community requires extensive public/private partnerships between the State of Alaska, the Municipality of Anchorage, the Anchorage School District, private businesses and public agencies and such partnerships will need to be coordinated in a master plan;

NOW THEREFORE, the North Star Community Council:

- 1) Supports the continued efforts of the Municipality of Anchorage, the Anchorage School District, and citizens to design a public campus that serves all members of the state and local community; and**
- 2) Encourages the Governor and Legislature of the State of Alaska to appropriate the funds necessary to complete the master planning of the West/Romig Campus as a center of community.**

Passed unanimously by NSCC, Feb. 13, 2008
Michael G. Mitchell, Acting President

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Whereas developing the campus as a center of community requires extensive public/private partnerships between the State of Alaska, the Municipality of Anchorage, the Anchorage School District, private businesses and public agencies and such partnerships will need to be coordinated in a master plan;

NOW THEREFORE, the Turnagain Community Council:

- 1) Supports the continued efforts of the Municipality of Anchorage, the Anchorage School District, and citizens to design a public campus that serves all members of the state and local community; and**
- 2) Encourages the Governor and Legislature of the State of Alaska to appropriate the funds necessary to complete the master planning of the West/Romig Campus as a center of community.**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Anchorage community initiated this report to create and define a vision for the future of the West Anchorage High and Romig Middle School campus. The vision developed creates a campus that serves as an active cultural and educational hub; a center of community.

As we worked to define the vision for the West-Romig Campus, input was obtained from a wide ranging group including students, faculty, administrators, parents, neighbors, elected officials, municipal agencies and planners, service groups, businesses, and philanthropic organizations. We held both private, single issue meetings and open, interactive, public community workshops. The minutes of the private meetings are included in the Appendix of this report and the details of the public community workshops are discussed in Chapter 3.

The West-Romig Campus contains 45 acres and is located in northwest Anchorage near the intersection of Minnesota Drive and Northern Lights Boulevard. It serves West High School's 1,850 students and Romig Middle School's 800 students. Adjoining the campus are a municipal swimming pool and the Dempsey Anderson Ice Arena housing two municipal indoor hockey rinks.

The student bodies of West and Romig contain a unique mixture of academic and cultural diversity. There are forty languages spoken on the campus. West High School has the highest drop-out rate of

any comprehensive high school in the Anchorage School District. Yet, it also has the highest number of National Merit Scholars in Alaska. In order to serve this diverse population, West and Romig offer a rich array of educational programs.

Schools that serve as a center of their community are not an experimental concept. The concept is successfully incorporated throughout the country. Common themes that emerge from successful experiences are:

- Partnerships must be formed between the school district, businesses, and other community groups.
- Programs that tie the business presence to the curriculum have a positive impact on students. Teacher training must be provided in order to fully utilize this opportunity.
- Schools that open their facilities for use by the community are viewed positively.
- Student safety must always be on the forefront.
- The partnerships must be well organized, with clearly established expectations and fully documented procedures.

THE VISION

The campus location and the diversity of the student bodies provide an excellent opportunity to modernize the campus as a center of community. The campus is centrally located. It is also adjacent to an area of recent economic and cultural revitalization. Further, the academic and cultural diversity within the schools is a perfect match for the educational opportunities that are available with public-private partnering.

West and Romig both have existing school business partnerships under the guidance of the Anchorage School Business Partnerships program. In Chapter 4, we envision an enhancement of that concept with the creation of Educational Enterprise Partners who would collaborate with the schools to share their expertise and interest to enhance the educational experience of the students of West-Romig.

The types of businesses or organizations that have expressed an interest in participating are:

- **Banking:** providing financial literacy classes for students and the community and mentoring opportunities for students interested in financial careers.
- **Multi-Media Technology Provider:** teaching students and community members the use of sophisticated multi-media equipment and software and providing mentoring opportunities for students interested in multi-media technology careers.
- **Police / EMT:** exposing students to careers in law enforcement and health care and teaching basic health and safety classes.
- **Coffee Shop / Internet:** providing practical job skills for students while being a community gathering place.
- **Mentor Center:** coordinating and structuring mentoring opportunities for the community and students.
- **University Classes:** providing educational opportunities for students and the community to take classes and obtain college credit.
- **Community Welcome Center:** teaming multi-lingual students with service providers for new immigrant families.
- **Health Clinic:** providing basic health screenings for students and mentoring opportunities for students interested in health care careers.
- **World Trade Center Alaska / Interpretation Services:** providing a business hub that offers conferencing capabilities with access to 21st century communication technologies while offering multi-lingual students the opportunity to offer their language skills as a service and for all students to be mentored in international business.
- **Performing and Fine Arts:** providing classes and mentorship opportunities for students and the community with performing and fine arts professionals.
- **Public Library:** providing coordination of library collections and convenient access to library services for the community.

An organizing theme for this vision provides continuity through the integration of the various programs. Recognizing the cultural diversity of the West-Romig Campus as a unique asset, the organizing theme most supported in the public workshops was "International Languages & Culture." The ability to embrace the language immersion and the International Baccalaureate programs suggest this would be a good unifying theme; however, before committing to a particular theme, we recommend additional student and community input prior to the adoption of any one particular theme.

ORGANIZATION

The development of Educational Enterprise Partners will create many opportunities for students. The positive benefits of the interaction between students and adults must be counterbalanced by a regard for student safety. The public should not have uncontrolled access to the main body of the school during normal operating hours. The solution is to create a pre-entry enterprise zone. In Chapter 4 we describe the creation of a new flexible use, education and community space called "The Forum." It is in this space the community will partner in the education of the students of West-Romig.

Administration of this program will require time and resources beyond those available to the administrators of the schools. As we describe in Chapter 4, a distinct non-profit entity should be developed to administer this program.

FUNDING

A significant issue moving forward will be funding the construction, maintenance, and operation of the campus as a center of community. No single entity will be in a position to fund the renewal of the

campus as a center of community. Funding will likely come from an array of public and private sources. We have outlined some of those potential funding sources in Chapter 6.

CONCLUSION

Based on the views expressed by the community and the stakeholders, we believe that renewing the West-Romig Campus as a center of community should be pursued. The West-Romig Campus is uniquely suited to serve as an educational and cultural hub for the northwest Anchorage community. The academic diversity of the school is a perfect match for the kinds of educational opportunities that will be made available. At-risk students will see a relevancy between their studies and career opportunities. Academically gifted students will be exposed to challenging real-world opportunities.

Most importantly there is a desire within the community to participate in a partnership with the schools. Brought to fruition, the West-Romig Campus will be a dynamic place serving as the source of recreation and life-long learning for the entire community. It will also serve as a model for Alaska and the nation of how public-private partnerships can be leveraged to improve education and community opportunities in the 21st century.

The development of a master plan that incorporates these concepts will offer insights and options to guide future decisions. To take advantage of the enthusiasm and synergy that has developed, the creation of the master plan should begin as soon as possible.