**Friends of Inlet View Elementary School**

To: Anchorage Education Reporters

From: Deborah Hansen, Spokesperson (907 830-5096, deborah.l.hansen@gmail.com)

Date: November 17, 2021

Subject: 2022 Anchorage School Bond

The Anchorage School Board today ignored the written pleas and oral testimony of numerous Inlet View Elementary School neighbors and approved a 2022 school bond with a highly problematic school replacement location. Opposition to the replacement location on the south side of the school property has grown since the location was made public this fall by the Anchorage School District (ASD). This week, Anchorage Ombudsman Darrel Hess determined that the non-public nature of ASD’s Inlet View Building Design Committee was a violation of the state Open Meetings Act.

On November 16, Friends of Inlet View Elementary School (FIVES) – a new group – provided a letter (attached) to the school board with 107 signers asking that the 2022 school bond language address key concerns that likely would favor a new school on the north side of the property which is the location of the existing school. These concerns are water and seismic issues that will increase building costs for the proposed south side location, high density traffic at the main entrance to the neighborhood (L and 13th), student walking safety, and shadowing over much of the school grounds for a large portion of the school year. FIVES issued the following statement on today’s school board action:

“Anchorage School District created the Inlet View Elementary School design and location problems through its closed process that violated the state Open Meetings Act and the school board failed to fix those problems tonight. A new school built on the south side of the property likely will be significantly more expensive due to the location’s water and seismic concerns, and will degrade the outdoor experience of both students and neighbors with shadowing on the grounds much of the year. Friends of Inlet View Elementary School does not support the 2022 Anchorage School Bond as it currently is written,” said FIVES spokesperson Deborah Hansen who lives next to the Inlet View school property.

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Superintendent Bishop and Members of the Anchorage School Board:

As you are aware, Inlet View Elementary School – a cherished part of the South Addition neighborhood – requires updating and rebuilding. The undersigned 107 residents of Anchorage, most living in South Addition, support construction of the new school as soon as possible, however we have serious and important concerns with the proposed building design and location. To be clear, Friends of Inlet View Elementary School (FIVES) does not oppose placing the school replacement funding on the 2022 Anchorage School Bond but the bond language must ensure that our concerns are addressed.

A short history:

* On April 6, 2020, Anchorage voters passed the school bond that provided “$3.34 million for the new [Inlet View] school design on the *existing* site”[[1]](#footnote-1) (emphasis added). The existing site is on the north end of the school property.
* ASD formed a Building Design Committee (BDC) in October 2020 composed of three school parents and seven school staff. No residents living adjacent to the school, i.e., neighbors who would be most impacted by the school design and location, were invited to join the BDC.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* At the BDC’s first meeting on October 8, 2020 members were told that the new school would be approximately 45,000 square feet and would cost $21,875,000. The three drawings presented by ASD’s consultants showed building designs located on the north side of the property.
* At its January 5, 2021 meeting, the BDC analyzed eight building designs, four on the north side of the property, three on the south side, and one that is located on both sides (i.e., in the middle of the property).
* At its April 1, 2021 meeting, the BDC reviewed two, more-complete, building designs, one on the north side and one on the south side.
* On June 25, 2021, ASD’s consultants had completed 35% design for a building on the south side, one day after the last South Addition Community Council (SACC) meeting for the summer on June 24, 2021.
* Anchorage Municipal Traffic Department staff were asked for their views on the south side school design in mid-September 2021 at which time staff requested a traffic study for the current school that was completed in early October, 2021.[[3]](#footnote-3) Traffic staff should be involved in this design process far earlier in the design process.
* On September 23, 2021, ASD provided a brief presentation of the proposed replacement school near 65% completion to the SACC meeting (65% means trim/finishes and other details of the building are not yet completed, but the building design and location have been set). This meeting was followed by a more complete discussion of the proposed building design and location for SACC members on October 9, 2021. Given the advanced stage of the design when it was presented, SACC should have been asked for input far earlier in the design process.
* Following the SACC presentations, numerous South Addition community members identified potential problems with the proposed building design and location, as described below under the section entitled “FIVES’s Concerns.”
* At an Anchorage School Board work session on October 29, 2021,[[4]](#footnote-4) the cost estimate for the south side Inlet View rebuild was stated to be about $34,000,000, an increase of 55% from the $21,875,000 cost estimate of one year earlier. ASD and its consultants did not explain the reasons for this substantial cost increase. The obvious and significant change since October 2020 that has occurred is the proposed south side building location.

**FIVES’s Concerns**

Before the 2022 Anchorage School Bond is finalized, ASD needs to address the following concerns involving the Inlet View school rebuild even if doing so means choosing a different building design and location for the replacement school.

1. Water and other location issues. Each of these concerns has an associated cost that should be made clear to the Anchorage public.
	1. Preventing water infiltration into homes on M St. that currently have sump pumps due to high groundwater levels,
	2. Removal of subsurface peat and replacement with offsite fill to support the new building, and
	3. Addressing seismic concerns which are greater on the south side of the property.

*We request that ASD objectively estimate these costs, respectively, and their likely sensitivity to unknown factors that may be found during construction before a building design and location are selected. These costs are higher for a south side building.*

1. Traffic and walking safety. Inlet Place, a one-way street used to access the main neighborhood exit and entrance for approximately 20 blocks of residences,[[5]](#footnote-5) should have little to no increased traffic because it already is overloaded at certain times of the day. *We request that the Anchorage Municipal Traffic Department conduct a traffic analysis for the proposed new school and parking lots, and also assess their impacts on student crossing safety at L St. before a building design and location are selected*.
2. Health impacts on students and others of property shadows. Develop a health impact assessment[[6]](#footnote-6) of the proposed building’s shadows. Locating the school on the south side of the property will have significantly greater shadowing potential than on the north side, especially because the north side slopes downward and could allow a two-story structure on its lower portions. *We request that ASD perform a health impact assessment resulting from shadowing before a building design and location are selected,*

**Where Things Stand**

We recognize that the existing BDC has done its best to work with ASD and its consultants on this project. It is unfortunate that ASD did not include a broader cross-section of the community in the BDC during its formation. *ASD and its consultants need NOT go back to square one in the design process, however. They already have developed previous designs for the north side that might be able to address our concerns including an option that allows the school to remain in-session while building the replacement school.*

We are confident that a new school design and location that is supported by the entire South Addition community can be developed without delay, with the school replacement funding remaining on the 2022 Anchorage School Bond. If you have any questions about FIVES or this letter, please contact Lois Epstein at 907 748-0448 or Deborah Hansen at 907 830-5096. Thank you very much for your consideration of these important concerns.

Sincerely,

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| Alex Nelsen |
| Allen Rosenthal |
| Alyssa Leagjeld  |
| Amanda Compton |
| Andrew Curtin |
| Ann Gray |
| Arthur Rabago Jensen |
| Aurora Courtney |
| Benjamin Shelton  |
| Brooke Marston |
| Bryan Wright |
| Celia Foley |
| Chad Kaina |
| Charles M. Renkert |
| Charlotte L. MacCay |
| Clyde Carey |
| Cody Carver |
| Craig Lyon |
| Daniel Rzeszut |
| David Hansen |
| David Johnson |
| David McCarthy |
| David Theriault |
| Deborah Hansen |
| Emily Berliner |
| Erik Frampton |
| Esther Hong |
| Ezra Gibson |
| Fiona Rose Worcester |
| Gail Cartwright  |
| Gail Weston Taylor |
| Gary J. Prokosch |
| Harold Cahill |
| Herminio Muniz |
| Ian Blake |
| James A. Diehl |
| James LaDue |
| James Renkert |
| Jason Motyka |
| Jay Mullen |
| John Bernitz |
| John Louie |
| Karen Leis |
| Karen Stephens |
| Kate Legner |
| Katelyn Stearns |
| Katherine Reilly |
| Keith A. Zemke |
| Kelby Morisse |
| Kenneth Gutsch |
| Keven K. Kleweno  |
| Krystyna Cullom  |
| Larry Ostrovsky  |
| Lars Arneson |
| Lawrence Taylor, Jr.  |
| Liam P. DiZio |
| Linda G. Gonzales |
| Lisa Kozler |
| Lisa Nelson |
| Lois Epstein |
| Lucas Schlemme |
| Mackenzie Barnwell |
| Mara Rosenthal |
| Mariano Gonzales |
| Mariel Donovan |
| Marilyn Stack |
| Mark Carroll |
| Mark Hansen |
| Mark Lutz |
| Martin Hansen |
| Matthew Courtney |
| Michael Bertelsen |
| Michael Henrich |
| Michael Herzog |
| Michael Reilly  |
| Mitchell Cullom |
| Mitchell Laird |
| Molly F. Cullom |
| Nicholas Papacostas |
| Nicholas Shepherd |
| Pamela Tesche |
| Peerooza Hataria |
| Priya Keane |
| Rachael McKinney |
| Rebecca Rogers |
| Richard DiJulia |
| Ruby Fried |
| Samantha Englishoe |
| Sandra Schubert |
| Sarah Juetten |
| Sarana Schell |
| Sharon Barr |
| Sharon Meacham |
| Shawna Fox |
| Shawnessy L. Leon |
| Sophie Curran |
| Stephen Koteff  |
| Susan Lutz |
| Thomas Chung |
| Thomas Enzi |
| Thomas Keane |
| Titus K. Hicks |
| Tom Stephens |
| Valerie Brown |
| Veri di Suvero |
| Victoria Belser |
| Virginia Nicolaisen |

1. Anchorage School Bond description for Inlet View Elementary. Retrieved from <https://www.asdk12.org/Page/14977> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ASD did not inform the South Addition Community Council (SACC) about formation of the BDC nor of its follow-up meetings and design decisions until the September 23, 2021 SACC meeting. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Traffic and Queue Study – Site Redesign, Memorandum to Brad Coy, PE, Municipal Traffic Engineer, October 6, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.dropbox.com/s/yyhrjbkow0rcmmm/Resource%20Doc-5_Traffic%20and%20Queue%20Study_10-06-2021.pdf?dl=0> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwN7h7Rj8Ss> at 1:08:52. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. From roughly 13th to 15th Ave., several streets south of 15th, and from L to S Sts. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See <https://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/hia/Pages/default.aspx>, the Alaska Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Program. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)