

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education Meeting Minutes

November 3, 2003 – 7:30 p.m.
Regular Meeting

Homer High School
600 E. Fairview Ave., Homer, Alaska

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS: Ms. Deborah Germano, President
Mrs. Sammy Crawford, Vice President
Dr. Nels Anderson, Clerk
Mrs. Margaret Gilman, Treasurer
Mrs. Debra Mullins
Ms. Sandra Wassilie
Ms. Debbie Holle
Mr. Marty Anderson
Mrs. Sunni Hilts
Mr. Patrick Tilbury, Student Representative

STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Donna Peterson, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Gary Whiteley, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Sam Stewart, Assistant Superintendent

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Mike Wetherbee
Ms. Karen Wessel
Ms. McKibbin Jackinsky
Mr. Dick Sander
Miss Jenni Dillon
Mr. Tim Peterson
Mr. Glenn Haupt
Paul Gavenus
Mr. Bob Ermold
Mrs. Christine Ermold
Dr. Ron Keffer
Ms. Milli Martin
Mrs. Paula Christensen
Mr. Jim White
Ms. Virginia Espenshade
Mrs. Barb George

Others present not identified.

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Germano called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Ms. Germano invited Mr. Ron Bledsoe, Homer Flex student, to lead those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Ms. Deborah Germano Present
Mrs. Sammy Crawford Present
Mrs. Margaret Gilman Present
Mrs. Debra Mullins Present
Dr. Nels Anderson Present
Ms. Sandra Wassilie Present
Ms. Debbie Holle Present/Arrived at 7:35 p.m.
Mr. Marty Anderson Present
Mrs. Sunni Hilts Present
Mr. Patrick Tilbury Present

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved as written.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The School Board Minutes of October 20, 2003, were approved as printed.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS: The Board presented Golden Apple awards to Virginia Espenshade and Paul Gavenus for their volunteer service to the District.

SCHOOL REPORT: Mr. Dick Sander, Chapman Elementary principal, provided a Powerpoint presentation with the assistance of Miss Jordan Holmes, student body president. The report provided information on school activities, assessment information, programs and goals.

Ms. Karen Wessel, Homer Flex principal, provided a Powerpoint presentation with the assistance of Ms. Jill Sill, Career Development coordinator and Mr. Ron Bledsoe, student. The report provided information regarding the student career exploration program.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS: Ms. Amy Budge, Homer Chapter Delta Kappa Gamma International Society representative, offered the group's support to the Board in continuing the request for adequate funding for public schools.

Mrs. Barb George, K-Beach Elementary teacher, presented the Board with a petition signed by 128 parents who are concerned about class size and oppose a raise in the pupil/teacher ratio.

Ms. Debbie Boyle, Nikiski area parent, presented the Board with a petition signed by 130 people opposed to a raise in the pupil/teacher ratio and added that pupil/teacher ratios should be lowered because it is the single most factor in a student's success in school.

Ms. Susan Mathews, K-Beach Elementary parent, stated that in crowded classrooms teachers spend too much time managing children, handling paperwork, managing transitions, handling students with special needs and planning lessons, which limits the time available for teaching and learning.

Ms. Misty Hamilton stated that her daughter is in a class of 27 kindergarten students and expressed concern that she is being overlooked and asked the Board to lower the pupil/teacher ratio.

Ms. Karen Calderwood, Nikiski area parent, asked the Board not to raise the pupil/teacher ratio because students will not get the education they need.

Mrs. Michelle Steinbeck, Kenai area parent, stated that she is distressed every day when she visits her child's class of 27 students and asked the Board to visit the classroom to see first-hand that individual student issues aren't being addressed.

**Advisory Committee, Site Council
and/or P.T.A., K.P.A.A., K.P.E.A., K.
P.E.S.A, Borough Assembly:**

Mr. Dave Larson, KPEA representative, encouraged the Board to join KPEA and KPESA in inviting local legislators to spend the day in a classroom during American Education Week (November 17-21). He quoted research information from two articles relating to class size and student achievement.

Ms. Terri Woodward, KPESA president, noted that according to the Custodial Study presented at an earlier worksession, the District would no longer need head custodians and asked the Board to be cautious about any decision that would jeopardize public safety, cleanliness and sanitation.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Dr. Peterson reported that she participated in a conversation with the state commissioner's office regarding the state's request for proposal to provide statewide assessment. She noted that state auditors recently completed an audit of the District Pupil Services programs and added that she is pleased with preliminary outcome. She reported that she was a participant in a study group that traveled to Fort McMurry, Canada to gather information regarding the Arctic Winter Games. She noted that the District will be responsible for accommodating 2,400 athletes, coaches, and medical staff when the Kenai Peninsula hosts the games in two years. She reported that Ms. Douglas has been elected to be the Vice President of the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO).

BOARD REPORTS:

Ms. Gilman reported that Board members participated in a training session conducted by Mr. Carl Rose, AASB Executive Director. She reported that Mr. Rose facilitated a session aimed at getting members to know each other as individuals. She reported that those four hours were probably some of the most productive hours that she has spent as a School Board member. She noted that the District will be facing some tremendously difficult decisions and the opportunity to get to know other Board members will be beneficial. She stated that she participated in Cocurricular Activities Task Force along with Dr. Anderson, Borough Assembly members, Borough administration and District administration.

Dr. Anderson reported that Borough Assembly members have tentatively stated that they are willing to support the funding of District cocurricular activities next year outside the cap if the Board establishes a special revenue fund. He stated that the Task Force believes that under state law cocurricular activities can be funded outside the cap with a special revenue fund. He cautioned that if the Board moves in that direction it will be a one-time move that cannot be reversed. He stated that along with a one-year commitment for funding for \$1.4 million, a proposition would be put forth to the Borough voters to assess a mil levy that would go into the special revenue fund. He stated that the legalities of this plan have been researched by Mr. Arness, former Board member, and Mrs. Colette Thompson, Borough Attorney. He stated that he and Mrs. Gilman believe that this is the first \$1 million towards the \$5 million the District must cut for FY05. He stated that he has never been willing to sacrifice athletics and activities for a year's worth of step increases, but under the dire circumstances the District is facing, and with the favorable climate with the Borough Assembly, it is the only option. He cautioned that if Borough voters do not approve a mil levy increase to cover the cost of District cocurricular activities, they will be gone.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Items presented on the Consent Agenda were Approval of New Teacher Assignments; Resignation; and Nikiski Elementary Facility Recommendation.

New Teacher Assignments:

Dr. Whiteley recommended the Board approve teacher assignments for the 2003-2004 school year for Catherine J. Baber, K-8 teacher, Cooper Landing Elementary; Kevin Marley, special education/ emotionally handicapped, Nikiski Middle/ High; Christine L. Faber, special education/resource, Paul Banks Elementary; Karlene D. Meyers, Grade 6 teacher (temporary), Soldotna Elementary; and Allison Morgan, special education teacher (temporary), Soldotna Middle School.

Resignation:

Dr. Whiteley recommended the Board approve a resignation from Barbara K. Titus, Grades K-3, Port Graham Elementary/ High (effective November 24, 2003).

Nikiski Elementary Facility Recommendation:

Mr. Sam Stewart recommended that the Board surplus the Nikiski Elementary School facility on August 31, 2004 with the stipulation that the Borough Administration grant the School District the right to reoccupy the building in the following 24 months should there be a significant increase in the area student population.

MOTION

Mrs. Crawford moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Items Numbers 1 through 3. Mrs. Gilman seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Enrollment Projections for 2004-2005:

MOTION

Dr. Peterson recommended the Board approve the enrollment projection of 9,392 students district-wide for FY05.

Mrs. Crawford moved the Board approve 2004-2005 student enrollment projection as presented. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

MOTION

Ms. Holle moved the Board approve an amendment to change enrollment projections for Ninilchik Elementary/High to reflect 183 students under actual enrollment; change the 7th grade enrollment to reflect 25 students and change the 9th grade enrollment to reflect 33 students for a change in the total to 177 under the estimate projected enrollment. Mrs. Gilman seconded.

Mrs. Gilman asked if Ms. Holle received new student enrollment information. Ms. Holle stated that the changes are based on information from previous years and that Ninilchik Elementary/High typically gets students from Chapman Elementary and Tustumena Elementary. She stated that for the past few years the enrollment has been 183 students.

Mrs. Gilman asked the administration whether the enrollment fluctuates daily at any given school in the district.

Dr. Whiteley replied that there are several opportunities for principals to revise the enrollment projections in the future. He noted that the enrollment projections were reviewed by building administrators and feedback was given to Mrs. Douglas. He added that enrollments typically decline from a peak in November and based on feedback from administrators the administration will alter the enrollment numbers.

Enrollment Projections for 2004-2005 (continued):

Ms. Holle stated that she understood that there was some previous communication about the Ninilchik Elementary/High enrollment.

Mrs. Mullins asked Ms. Holle where the 7th and 8th grade enrollment information came from. Ms. Holle replied that the numbers are from current enrollment information.

Mrs. Crawford noted that the enrollment was taken on October 1, 2003 and expressed concern for changing the enrollment numbers to reflect current enrollment.

Ms. Germano expressed concern for many of the enrollment figures, especially at schools showing a decline. She stated that although it is frustrating to have the enrollment be down by 2% overall, it is the safest way for the Board to build the FY05 budget.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT:

Advisory Vote – YES

YES – Holle

NO – Wassilie, Crawford, N. Anderson, M. Anderson, Hilts, Mullins, Gilman, Germano

Amendment failed.

VOTE:

Advisory Vote – NO

YES – N. Anderson, Hilts, Crawford, M. Anderson, Mullins, Wassilie, Gilman, Germano

NO – Holle

Motion carried.

**STUDENT EXPULSION:
MOTION**

Dr. Anderson moved the Board approve the following: “the decision of the Kenai Peninsula School Board in the matter of the expulsion of LL. Conclusions: based on the above findings, the Board hereby expels LL from the Kenai Peninsula Borough District for the remainder of the 2003-2004 school year, provided LL shall be eligible for early readmission on or after the beginning of the second semester of the 2003-2004 school year subject to approval of the Superintendent as described below. LL shall be eligible for such early readmission if he completes counseling, as approved by the administration, designed to address the behavior resulting in this expulsion, and submits a written statement from a competent psychologist that LL no longer presents a threat to the welfare, safety or morals of other students. During the period of expulsion LL may not be present on school grounds nor attend any school district functions or events, except that LL is authorized to continue his education through the KPBSD Connections program during the period of expulsion in a manner consistent with this decision, as administered by the administration. Notice of right to appeal school Board’s final expulsion decision. You are hereby notified that you have 30 days from the date this final decision is distributed to file an appeal with the Superior Court of the State of Alaska in Kenai in accordance with the Alaska Rules of Appellate Procedure.” Mrs. Mullins seconded.

STUDENT EXPULSION (continued):

Motion carried unanimously.

Federal and State Priorities:

Dr. Peterson recommended the Board approve the list of 2004 state and federal legislative priorities. She stated that after the Board’s worksession on October 20, the administration added another priority regarding technology access for rural communities.

MOTION

Ms. Holle moved the Board approve the list of 2004 state and federal legislative priorities. Mr. Anderson seconded.

Mrs. Gilman asked whether it was the administration’s intent to list the priorities in order based on importance. Dr. Peterson stated that the list was not in any particular order.

Motion carried unanimously.

FIRST READING OF POLICY REVISIONS:

The Board heard a first reading of revisions to BP 2000 (Concepts and Roles); BP 2100 (Administrative Staff Organization); BP 2110 (Organization Chart/Lines of Responsibility); BP 2121 (Superintendent's Contract); E 2122 (Superintendent of Schools: Job Description); BP 2210 (Administrative Action in Absence of Board Policy); E 2240 (Management and Communication Systems); BP 2250 (Teacher-in-Charge/Principal's Designee); E 2250 (Teacher-in-Charge/Principal's Designee); BP 2300 (Conflict of Interest); E 3316 (Request to do Business); BB 9110 (Board Membership); BB 9130 (Board Committees); and BB 9320 (Meetings).

Ms. Wassilie asked for a definition of advisory committees mentioned in BB 9130 (Board Committees). Ms. Germano asked Dr. Peterson whether the word "advisory" should be removed from the last paragraph. Dr. Peterson stated that she would research her notes from the Board's original discussion and added that she believes the word "advisory" should be removed and the sentence ended after the word "members."

Dr. Peterson responded to Ms. Germano that the KPSAA Board is considered an advisory committee.

Ms. Holle asked for clarification of the intent of the second sentence in the first paragraph of BB 9320 (Meetings). Mrs. Mullins stated that the Board must have a majority of the Board to conduct business which means five members of the Board must be present. She added that four members would not constitute a meeting but four members could not meet privately and influence another member.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS/ COMMENTS:

Mrs. Barb George, K-Beach Elementary teacher, stated that overcrowded classrooms are unsafe and stressful on teachers and added that teachers and students are expected to make adequate yearly progress but with large classrooms are being set up for failure.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS/ COMMENTS (continued):

Ms. Germano asked Dr. Whiteley for an explanation of K-Beach Elementary additional staffing. Dr. Whiteley reported that the school is staffed with 1.5 additional FTE. He stated that .5 FTE additional is allocated for a specialist. Ms. Germano explained that a choice was made at the school level to use a teacher allocation for a specialist position.

Ms. Debbie Boyle, Nikiski area parent, stated that specials such as music and physical education are important to the education of students and asked the Board to consider reducing funding in the area of technology, specifically the Edline Program.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Dr. Anderson proposed the District close Skyview High and Nikiski High to save approximately \$1.8 to \$1.9 million and consolidate school administrator assignments (i.e. one elementary principal assigned to two schools or eliminate assistant principals) to save approximately \$750,000. He stated that, based on past history, the Board usually receives

an increase of \$1 million dollars from the legislature each year. He stated that if the cocurricular activities are funded from a special revenue fund, and the previous money saving ideas are implemented, the Board would be close to the \$5 million reduction needed to balance the FY05 budget. He stated that Board members read research information and know what works for schools and added that there is not a single Board member who wants to increase the pupil/teacher ratio. He noted that any member of the public is welcome to participate in the budget review committee and added that the Board is happy to listen to all ideas. He predicted that the District will have a similar \$5 million deficit in FY06 which may lead to bankruptcy or force the pupil/teacher ratio to increase by 4 or 5 students. He related that his sister-in-law taught in a first grade classroom of 40 students in Utah and did a fine job. He noted that average classroom sizes in Japan and Korea is around 60 students. He stated that he personally supports the comments that were made earlier regarding lowering the pupil/teacher ratio, especially in the early grades. He stated that the Board would like cooperation from the community in lobbying the legislature for additional money for education.

Ms. Wassilie thanked the public for their comments. She stated that it is important that everyone express their concerns to state legislators. She noted that she has heard from a total of 269 parents (including those who spoke to the Board and the parents who signed the two petitions) not to mention those from Seward. She stated that in Seward the music program is being supported by community funds. She noted that another consideration of higher pupil/teacher ratios is the size of the classroom and the number of students and desks a room can reasonably hold. She stated that the Board may have to consider some of the proposals made by Dr. Anderson.

BOARD COMMENTS (continued):

Mr. Anderson reiterated that everyone must send a message to the state legislature regarding the issue of adequate funding for education. He stated that it is the Board's obligation to manage the money that the District receives and to be creative in finding ways to keep programs intact. He stated that the Board is comprised of only 9 people and will need help from the public. He stated that he is proud to be a member of the Board and the community and wants to be a part of the resolution and implementation of the District's problems.

Mr. Tilbury stated that he will try to be more vocal about his viewpoints on the many issues before the Board.

Mrs. Mullins thanked Mr. Sander and Ms. Wessel for the school reports. She thanked the public for attending the meeting and for their comments. She stated that most Board members agree with the concerns that were expressed regarding pupil/teacher ratios. She stated that she cannot predict what will happen during the budget process but

encouraged those present to come to the meetings and help the Board find ways to save money. She responded to Mrs. Boyle's concern regarding technology by stating that the District was forced into making technology purchases for reasons out of the District's control. She suggested that Mrs. Boyle speak to Mr. White regarding the new student reporting system. She stated that she would like to accept KPEA's invitation to spend a day at a school and follow a teacher around. She stated that she appreciates the opportunity to participate with legislators and added that she hopes they will also accept the invitation. She stated that legislators need to visit a District classroom with 27 kindergarten students.

Mrs. Crawford congratulated Dr. Peterson on her article in The School Administrator, titled "Beyond Peer Coaching." She congratulated Ms. Douglas for being selected as vice-president of ASBO International. She thanked Mr. Sander and Ms. Wessel for the school reports. She thanked Mrs. Gilman and Dr. Anderson for their work on the Cocurricular Task Force. She thanked the public for their attendance and asked them to help the Board by petitioning the legislature and by writing letters to the editor. She reported that the Governor has said that he will cut \$250 million more from next year's state budget. She stated that legislators have told the Board that they do not hear from the public regarding funding for education. She stated that the Board may have to cut \$5 million more from the budget.

BOARD COMMENTS (continued):

Mrs. Gilman thanked Mr. Sander and Ms. Wessel for the school reports. She stated that it is vitally important to get administrators, School Board members, and legislators in classrooms as volunteers and not just visitors. She thanked Dr. Anderson for his comments regarding budget cuts. She stated that if the Board is going to address the pupil/teacher ratio concerns, then dramatic changes will need to occur. She thanked the parents for their comments. She responded that she was told that the Edline subscription is \$2 per student and added that, while she appreciates the service at the middle school level, she would prefer that teachers at the elementary level spend the time interacting with students instead. She stated that members of the Cocurricular Activities Task Force were very committed to providing activities for students. She thanked the Borough administration, Mr. Stewart, Borough Assembly members, Borough Administration and Dr. Anderson for their time and efforts. She told those present that if the cocurricular activities proposal reaches the voters it will take the work of everyone to get it to pass.

Ms. Holle requested that the District and Borough conduct a cost analysis of building maintenance and that a study be made to decide whether the Borough can legally assume the cost of building maintenance. She stated that the public also uses school facilities and so maintenance should not be only a Board expense. She stated that she would like to have figures

showing a breakdown of expenses that fall into the 30% category for administration. She stated that instead of raising pupil/teacher ratios, she would like to implement an across-the-board reduction in the 30% administration category. She stated that because it will be an election year, she doesn't think that the legislature will cut \$250 million from the state budget or that they will add any money to education. She encouraged those present to contact Borough Assembly members about the District's request for funding of cocurricular activities. She stated that if the cocurricular activity funding issue becomes a ballot proposition, the public will have to work hard to ensure its passage.

Mrs. Hilts stated that she appreciated the public comments. She stated that the Edline program is an extremely valuable service to her family and added that it is the sole reason her grandsons did not fail their classes last quarter. She stated that while some students may not need Edline services, her family finds that it is an extremely helpful tool. She stated that it will be difficult to cut programs and services from the budget that are important to some families and not to others. She stated that Susan B. English Elementary/High School is a very small school and can only offer music one hour a day and shop one hour a day. She noted that music, shop and the library are staffed by volunteers, and added that the school has aides that are volunteers. She stated that if Seldovia community members didn't help as much as they do the school could not be successful. She suggested that the public spend time volunteering directly with students.

BOARD COMMENTS (continued): Ms. Germano explained that Ms. Douglas provides a breakdown of the 70% instruction/30% administration information during the first budget session. She thanked Mr. Sander and Ms. Wessel for the school reports. She encouraged the public to review the District's legislative priorities and asked for assistance promoting them. She expressed appreciation for the public comments, especially those regarding pupil/teacher ratios. She explained that 14 years ago she got involved with public education because her daughter was in a kindergarten class of 26 students and with the exception of a few good years the District is still struggling with the same issue. Ms. Germano appointed Ms. Crawford to serve as a liaison for the Project GRAD Board. She stated that she is pleased that most of the Board members will be attending the Association of Alaska School Boards Annual Meeting. She reminded the Board that the Large District Forum will be held in Anchorage on November 6 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. She noted that the Forum will include the Anchorage School District, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Juneau-Douglas School District, Mat-Su Borough School District and the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District and will include discussions about common issues and review each district's legislative priorities.

ADJOURN: At 9:30 p.m., Mrs. Crawford moved the School Board Meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Deborah Germano, President

Dr. Nels Anderson, Clerk

The Minutes of November 3, 2003,
were approved on November 17, 2003
as written