

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education Meeting Minutes

March 1, 2004 – 7:30 p.m.
Regular Meeting

Homer High School
600 E. Fairview, 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
Mrs. Melody Douglas, Chief Financial Officer
Dr. Gary Whiteley, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Sam Stewart, Assistant Superintendent

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Ron Keffer
Mr. Charlie Walsworth
Mr. Benny Abrahamson
Mrs. Carolyn Venuti
Ms. Terri Woodward
Mr. Dewaine Tollefsrud
Ms. Wendy Lefton
Ms. Candy Rohr
Mr. Bob VanDerWege
Mrs. Debbie Harris
Ms. Karen Wessel
Mr. Tim Peterson
Dr. Roy Anderson
Ms. Ruby Kime
Ms. Gina Creedon
Mr. Dan Florington

Others present not identified.

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Germano called the meeting to order at 2:55 p.m. A quorum of School Board members, Ms. Germano, Mrs. Gilman, Mrs. Mullins, Mr. Anderson, Mrs. Crawford, Mrs. Hilts, Ms. Wassilie and Dr. Anderson, were in attendance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 2:56 p.m. Mrs. Crawford moved the Board go into executive session to discuss matters, which by law, municipal charter, or ordinance are required to be confidential. Specifically, the executive session was to discuss High School Graduation Qualifying Exam waiver requests. Mrs. Hilts seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 3:15 p.m., Mr. Anderson moved the executive session be adjourned. Mrs. Crawford seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Germano reconvened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Ms. Germano invited those present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Sammy Crawford	Present
Ms. Deborah Germano	Present
Mrs. Margaret Gilman	Present
Mrs. Debra Mullins	Present
Dr. Nels Anderson	Present
Ms. Sandra Wassilie	Present
Ms. Debbie Holle	Absent/Excused
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 February 16, 2004, were approved.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS:

The Board presented a Golden Apple award to Ms. Guyline Rogers, West Homer Elementary custodian, for her service to the District.

The Board presented the Homer Alaska Youth for Environmental Action with the Spirit of Youth Award for their work implementing a school-wide recycling program.

Mrs. Debbie Harris, Alaska Art Alliance Board Chairperson and Mr. Lance Peterson presented an award to Mr. Pete Swanson, McNeil Canyon Elementary principal for outstanding achievements in visual arts education.

SCHOOL REPORT:

Mr. Charlie Walsworth, West Homer Elementary principal, gave a Powerpoint presentation highlighting school demographics, assistance programs, school goals, NCLB information, assessment scores, student involvement activities, student extracurricular activities, and community partnerships and the community use of the school facility. Mr. Mark Walsworth, sixth grade student council representative, told about the school's plans for a student store, and Miss Ruby Quarton, fifth grade student, reported on the Students for Human Rights Club.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

Mrs. Caroline Venuti, West Homer Elementary third grade teacher, stated that she was speaking on behalf of staff at the school and asked the Board and administration to fund 10 teachers for the 2004-2005 school year. Ms. Germano confirmed with Dr. Whiteley that West Homer Elementary has a class size reduction grant and will possibly receive money during the next school year.

Ms. Ruby Kime recommended that the Board allow public testimony during Board worksessions; restructure the way the administration office operates by providing guidance to principals; reduce the amount of paperwork and barriers between public, parents, board of education and administration; and participate in a team building activity so that Board members can become better acquainted with each other.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

(continued)

Mr. Larry Sloan stated that he was speaking for Jack Poster who was unable to attend the meeting. He distributed an eighth grade test used in 1895 and stated that Mr. Poster feels that high school graduates are not as well educated as in the past and added that he doubted that today's students could pass the exam because of the poor quality of teachers.

Dr. Anderson stated that eighth grade students in the KPBSD could pass the test and added that he is intrigued by the test but that it is outdated and that today's students are living in a much different world than in 1895. He posed a question for Mr. Sloan to give to Mr. Poster, "Why is it colder in the winter than in the summer?" and asked that Mr. Poster call him with the answer.

Ms. Gina Creedon, Connections parent, spoke in support of allowing public testimony during School Board worksessions; she praised the District Media Center and asked the Board not to cut the services; she noted that Connections high school students are required to do a large amount of online work and suggested that they be issued their own computer.

Mr. Dewaine Tollefsrud, Homer parent, stated that he is impressed with District educators' ability to do so much with less and asked the Board to do everything possible to make sure that students are provided with a positive education.

Ms. Wendy Lefton thanked the Board for offering the Connections Program as an educational choice for parents.

Ms. Candy Rohr, Homer parent, asked the Board to preserve the Quest Program in some form and suggested providing support for teachers to offer advanced placement courses or honors courses and to partner with the Kenai Peninsula College.

Mr. Dan Florington suggested that a second-hand store could be established to raise funds for school activities and noted that over \$10,000 was raised each year through a similar enterprise in Gustaves, Alaska.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS:

Dr. Peterson noted that the Board has received information in the General Information packet as well as email messages regarding the budget. She announced that there will be a joint worksession between the Board and Assembly on March 16 at 1:00 p.m. regarding the Seward Middle School. She stated that she had received a letter from the Governor's office regarding the Board's recent resolution. She noted that the Soldotna City Council passed a resolution supporting Proposition 1. She announced that the Commissioner of Education sent a letter regarding correspondence study programs.

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

Ms. Cathy Carrow, KPEA president, acknowledged the Board's efforts to develop a balanced budget; she noted that KPEA supports the Board's efforts in keeping class size increases to a minimum; providing money to purchase textbooks; and supporting beneficial programs for students. She invited those present to join in a demonstration of support for adequate and full funding for education in Alaska on April 24.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Dr. Peterson reported that 6,500 students recently participated in mandated testing and commended the efforts by District staff. She reported that she has just returned from a brief visit to the 2004 Arctic Winter Games in preparation for hosting the 2006 Arctic Winter Games. She cautioned the Board that the assumptions that were in the original bid document (including venues and schedules) are being revisited and may require a change of the dates for the 2006 spring break. She reminded the public and the Board that ballots for Proposition 1 will be mailed to registered voters in March and must be returned to the Clerk's Office by March 30. She noted that Dr. Gary Whiteley has submitted his resignation and added that his leaving will be an incredible loss for the District and thanked him for his service.

Mrs. Gilman asked whether the District achieved the goal of testing 95% of the students. Mr. Stewart reported that principals indicate that schools had an excellent testing participation level but the final count is uncertain until all tests are scored.

Fiscal Year 2004-2005 Budget:

Mrs. Melody Douglas presented the 2004-2005 preliminary School District budget.

Ms. Wassilie thanked Mrs. Douglas for producing the budget and for the historical information and cross referenced material contained in the document.

BOARD REPORTS:

Ms. Wassilie reported that she gave a monthly report to the Seward City Council. She stated that she reported that the KPBSD does not have a junior ROTC Program because the District would have to provide half of the salary for an officer to teach military science. She stated that she reported on proposed budget cuts, and informed the Council of the joint worksession regarding the Seward Middle School.

Mr. Anderson reported that he attended the AASB Legislative Fly-in in Juneau. He stated that legislators told him of their great respect for the KPBSD and added that many legislators from outside the District recognized that KPBSD does all it can for education. He reported that legislators are hearing from District residents and he urged those present to continue the communications. He reported that most legislators were reluctant to promise additional funding. He stated that several legislators asked for feedback regarding a state financial plan. He encouraged the public to continue to contact legislators and to let them know of the need to correct the educational funding issue for the long term. He stated that originally, he was undecided about whether early funding for education was good, but since his visit to Juneau, has decided that it is not a good idea.

Mr. Tilbury reported that he attended the AASB Youth Leadership Conference and Legislative Fly-in. He stated that the students attended several interesting meetings. He stated that he was well received by legislators during the Board's lobbying appointments.

BOARD REPORTS:
(continued)

Mrs. Mullins reported that she attended the AASB Legislative Fly-in. She reported that the Board had 32 appointments with legislators and that KPBSD Board members met with legislators who serve on the Education Committee, House Health Education and Social Services Committee and House and Senate Finance Committees. She reported that Board members spoke to legislators about funding for education. She stated that now that other large districts are experiencing funding shortfalls legislators are hearing from them as well, which will probably result in an increase in funding. She urged the public to keep the pressure on legislators and to let them know that educational funding needs to be increased. She noted that legislators commented that whenever timely, accurate information is needed they know they can rely on the KPBSD and Mrs. Douglas to provide that information. She stated that legislators know that 85% of KPBSD students pass the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (highest rate of the large Districts) and she credited the high rate to quality teachers who are dedicated to students. She stated that she is proud to represent the District and noted that she gave her personal view to legislators about what is happening to the District as a result of inadequate funding. She asked those present to help the Board lobby for additional educational funding.

Mrs. Hilts reported that she attended the AASB Fly-in. She stated that she is proud to be associated with the KPBSD Board and District. She stated that Mr. Tilbury did an outstanding job representing the District. She stated that the trip to Juneau was educational. She stated that the District is recognized by legislators as operating an ethical and responsible school district. She stated that not only is the District recognized for having high standards, but that inadequate funding has been an issue for quite some time. She stated that it was encouraging to hear from legislators who have a passion for education and care about the children of the state. She stated that legislators commented that they do hear from Kenai Peninsula Borough residents but need to hear more about supporting schools.

Mrs. Crawford announced that she has been appointed to serve as the Board's liaison to Project GRAD and attended the first meeting a couple of weeks ago. She stated that she is impressed by Project GRAD's five-year, \$8 million commitment to assist seven District schools. She stated that much of the support is in materials for math, reading and staff development. She reported that she and Mrs. Gilman met with several members of the administration regarding a proposal for weighted grades and asked for a Board worksession on the topic in May.

Ms. Germano reported that she attended the AASB Fly-in. She noted that one legislator reported that residents of Kenai, Sterling and Nikiski do not support taxation and therefore, don't support education funding. She encouraged those present to email and send messages of support for educational funding to all legislators.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Items presented on the Consent Agenda were Approval of 2004-2005 Administrator Contracts; 2004-2005 Tentative Tenure Teacher Assignments; Resignations; Long Term Substitute Contract; Requests for Leave of Absence-Support; Budget Transfer; and District Organizational Chart.

**Approval of 2004-2005
Administrator Contracts:**

Dr. Whiteley recommended the Board approve a list of administrator appointments for the 2004-2005 school year.

**2004-2005 Tentative Tenure
Teacher Assignments:**

Dr. Whiteley recommended the Board approve a list of tentative tenure teacher assignments for the 2004-2005 school year.

Resignations:

Dr. Whiteley recommended the Board approve resignations from Gary Whiteley, assistant superintendent, Central Office (effective June 30, 2004) and Paul Kubena, Sterling Elementary principal (effective at the end of the 2003-2004 school year).

Long Term Substitute Contract:

Dr. Whiteley recommended the Board approve a substitute teacher contract for Deborah Smith, Grade 1, Paul Banks Elementary.

Requests for Leave of Absence-Support:

Dr. Whiteley recommended the Board approve unpaid leave of absence requests for Teresa Goff, Custodian, Nikiski Middle/High School; (effective April 1, 2004) and for Sharon Stevens-Ganser, Special Education Aide, Seward Elementary (effective the 2004-2005 school year).

Budget Transfer:

Mrs. Douglas recommended the Board approve Budget Transfer Number 200 for \$72,538 to purchase curriculum materials for summer school.

District Organizational Chart:

Dr. Peterson recommended the Board approve the District organizational chart which identifies the lines of primary responsibility and relationships between administrative positions.

MOTION

Mrs. Crawford moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Items Numbers 1 through 7. Mrs. Gilman seconded.

Ms. Germano noted that Dr. Whiteley is appreciated by the Board and will be missed.

Motion carried unanimously.

High School Graduation Qualifying Exam Waivers

Mr. Stewart recommended the Board approve High School Graduation Qualifying Exam Waivers from student request 2004-01, 2004-02, and 2004-03. He noted that the requests were from students who had arrived in Alaska during their senior year.

Mrs. Crawford moved the Board approve High School Graduation Qualifying Exam Waivers (2004-01, 2004-02, and 2004-03). Mrs. Mullins seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Mrs. Gilman thanked the Fireweed Academy and West Homer Elementary staff for the school reports. She suggested that students from Fireweed Academy would pass the eighth grade test distributed by Mr. Sloan. She commended Miss Quarton for beginning the Human Rights Club at West Homer Elementary. She reported that she attended a "thank you" lunch provided by Redoubt Elementary. She stated that she visited the Student of the Month luncheon celebration at Kenai Central High School. She asked Mrs. Kime for more information regarding the comment made about paperwork barriers between the Board and parents. She asked Ms. Germano to inform legislators that she is willing to pay a tax to fund education and reminded those present that residents must offer a solution and not just complain about

problems or issues.

Dr. Anderson disagreed with Ms. Kime's earlier statements and added that he has never heard anyone make the suggestion that Board members are the pawns of administration and is shocked to hear it. He stated that the Board and administration have a mutual respect and that each member of the Board is doing what is best for students. He stated that advanced placement classes could be combined with the weighted grades discussion. He stated that Dr. Whiteley has been an incredible asset to the District and added that he will be missed.

Mrs. Crawford asked those present to continue support for education and to send letters to legislators. She reminded the public to complete the Proposition 1 ballot and return it by March 30. She stated that she visited Soldotna Middle School for School Board Recognition Month. She stated that in spite of the budget cuts, the school staff and students had great morale. She thanked West Homer Elementary and Fireweed Academy for the school reports. She stated that she will miss Dr. Whiteley and wished him well in his future plans.

Mr. Tilbury stated that he was impressed with the school reports and with the students who spoke to the Board.

Mr. Anderson thanked Fireweed Academy and West Homer Elementary for their school presentations. He thanked Redoubt Elementary for the School Board appreciation event. He disagreed with Ms. Kime's suggestions and noted that the Board has held a "get acquainted" session. He added that the Board is extremely diverse and yet all have a mutual respect for each other. He expressed appreciation for Dr. Whiteley and added that he will be greatly missed.

BOARD COMMENTS:
(continued)

Ms. Wassilie thanked the audience for their attendance and comments. She expressed appreciation for the student presentations and awards and noted that there is a degree of social consciousness in the Homer area that is refreshing. She stated that she has already seen the eighth grade test that was shared with the Board and added that she could answer most of the questions except the history of Kansas. She stated that the test reflects a different era and noted that there were no science questions. She stated that today's students are learning problem-solving skills. She stated that she visited Sterling Elementary and met with Mr. Kubena, principal, and visited Moose Pass Elementary and met with Mrs. Ermold. She reported that the Moose Pass community is looking forward to Mr. Norgren serving as the new principal. She stated that she assisted with the judging of 13 teams (5 from KPBSD) who participated in the National Ocean Sciences Bowl. She stated that she is sorry to see Dr. Whiteley's resignation.

Mrs. Hilts expressed appreciation for the school reports and

commended the HAYEA group for their recycling work. She stated that although she is new to the Board, she feels respected and respects those on the Board. She stated that she is impressed with the commitment to education by the Board and feels proud to be a member. She stated that she feels honored to know the people on the Board and added that she is continuously getting to know them better. She stated that she feels honored to work with the administration and noted that throughout the state the KPBSD Board members are highly respected because the District administration is frugal, ethical, and responsible. She stated that the Board asks for and receives a lot of information from the administration. She stated that the Board is working hard for the public and the children of the District. She asked the public to contact legislators and each other about what is important in regards to education. She stated that the quality of education that the District can offer next school year will depend heavily on the amount of money provided by the legislature. She stated that she is sorry that Dr. Whiteley has decided to resign and commended him for the amount of information he provides to the Board.

Mrs. Mullins thanked those present for attending the meeting and added that she appreciates hearing comments from the public. She expressed appreciation for the Fireweed Academy and West Homer Elementary school reports. She stated that the KPBSD has excellent students because of the quality of staff and volunteers in the District. She thanked the staff and administration for their hard work and reported that while in Juneau, it was evident that legislators were looking to the KPBSD for educational information and leadership. She stated that she is sorry about Dr. Whiteley's resignation. She noted that Mr. Tilbury did an outstanding job representing the students of the District while in Juneau at the AASB Youth Leadership Conference and added that school board members from other districts commented on his leadership ability. She commended Mr. Anderson and Mrs. Hilts for their representation at the AASB Legislative Fly-in in Juneau and that they were well-prepared, articulate and gave personal testimony to legislators. She commended Ms. Germano for her representation and leadership while in Juneau. She recounted a visit with a

BOARD COMMENTS:
(continued)

legislator who was certain that the KPBSD was adequately funded and after discussions with Ms. Germano, came to realize and understand the District's budget problems. She stated that legislators are watching the District's ballot measure to see whether the Kenai Peninsula residents are willing to fund cocurricular activities outside the cap, which will gauge whether the people of Alaska support education. She urged those present to support Proposition 1.

Ms. Germano reported that HB 471 adds \$210 to the base student allocation. She reported that legislators are considering funding the increased retirement program costs outside of the education funding

formula. She stated that if the legislature passed HB 471 and funded the retirement programs outside the cap the District would not quite be in the same position as today. She reported that 70 staff members were reduced during the 2003-2004 school year. She reported that legislators are not willing to provide adequate funding for education and asked those present to hold them accountable. She read an excerpt from a letter from Cheryl Fresca, a director in the Governor's office, regarding additional funding that was provided for education during the 2003-2004 school year. Ms. Germano noted that last school year the legislature cut funding for the Community Schools Program, student transportation, and the Science and Technology Foundation and therefore, did not fully fund education.

ADJOURN:

At 9:20 p.m., Mrs. Crawford moved the School Board Meeting be adjourned. Ms. Mullins seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Deborah Germano, President

Dr. Nels Anderson, Clerk

The Minutes of March 1, 2004,
were approved on March 15, 2004
with a correction.