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# Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

## Board of Education Meeting Minutes

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November 7, 2005 – 7:00 p.m.  
Regular Meeting

Homer High School  
600 E. Fairview, Homer, Alaska

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**SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:** Mrs. Debra Mullins, President  
Mrs. Sammy Crawford, Vice President  
Ms. Sandra Wassilie, Clerk  
Mr. Marty Anderson, Treasurer  
Dr. Nels Anderson  
Mrs. Debbie Brown  
Mrs. Liz Downing  
Mr. Bill Hatch  
Mrs. Sunni Hilts  
Miss Kelly King, Student Representative

**STAFF PRESENT:** Dr. Donna Peterson, Superintendent of Schools  
Mrs. Melody Douglas, Chief Financial Officer  
Mr. Sam Stewart, Assistant Superintendent  
Mr. Glen Szymoniak, Assistant Superintendent

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Jim White	Ms. McKibben Jackinsky
Mr. Tim Peterson	Mrs. Cathy Carrow
Mrs. Jamie Harper	Dr. Ron Keffer
Mr. Dave Spence	Mr. Sean Dusek
Ms. Deb Germano	Mrs. Norma Holmgaard
Representative Paul Seaton	Mrs. Paula Christensen
Mr. Dan Beck	Mr. Mark Robinson

Others present not identified.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mrs. Mullins called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. A quorum of School Board members, Mrs. Crawford, Mrs. Brown, Mr. Anderson, Dr. Anderson, Mrs. Hilts, Ms. Wassilie, Mrs. Downing, Mr. Hatch, and Mrs. Mullins were in attendance.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** At 4:01 p.m. Mrs. Crawford moved the Board go into executive session to discuss matters, the immediate knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse effect upon the finances of the Borough. Specifically, the executive session was to discuss negotiations. Mr. Hatch seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

**ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION:** At 5:10 p.m., Dr. Anderson moved the executive session be adjourned. Mrs. Crawford seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mrs. Mullins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mrs. Mullins invited those present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:**

Mrs. Debra Mullins	Present
Mrs. Sammy Crawford	Present
Ms. Sandra Wassilie	Present
Mr. Marty Anderson	Present
Dr. Nels Anderson	Present
Mrs. Debbie Brown	Present
Mrs. Liz Downing	Present
Mr. Bill Hatch	Present
Mrs. Sunni Hilts	Present
Miss Kelly King	Absent/Excused

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

The agenda was approved as written.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The School Board Minutes of October 17 were approved with a change. The minutes of October 26, 2005, were approved as printed.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

The Board presented Ms. Deborah Germano with an appreciation gift for her past service as a School Board member and a certificate and pin for distinguished service from the National School Boards Association. The Board recognized Mr. Mark Robinson, Homer High and Homer Middle music teacher for being selected as a finalist for the 2005 Alaska Teacher of the Year.

**SCHOOL REPORT:**

Mr. Curtis Liberty, Susan B. English Elementary/High principal/teacher, gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting registration, suicide prevention training, the community carnival, career and technical programs, the Day of Science activity, the Hansel and Gretel musical, and wind projects lesson.

Dr. Ron Keffer, Homer High School principal, gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting High School Graduation Qualifying Exam information, No Child Left Behind Act Adequate Yearly Progress information, state standards based assessment, SAT and ACT scores, Analytical Writing Assessment scores, and School Report Card to the Public information.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:**

Mr. Barrett Fletcher, IDEA parent, explained that his daughter was not allowed to participate on the Homer High School swim team because she is not enrolled in at least 5 courses in the KPBSD and added that he will appeal the decision to the KPSAA Executive Board and, if necessary, to the Borough Assembly.

Mr. Charlie Gibson, Homer High parent, thanked the District for the prompt response to parent requests for a Military Recruitment Opt Out Form and asked that the District make an effort to retract information that has already been shared with the military. He asked the District to assist parents with necessary forms to be submitted to the Pentagon, and to designate someone at the District Office to speak to regarding the opt out form.

Ms. Germano, former School Board member, explained that the 5-credit requirement for participation in cocurricular activities is an ASAA rule that was approved last school year and cannot be changed by KPSAA. She suggested that a link to the Pentagon opt out form be added to the District website.

**COMMUNICATIONS AND  
PETITIONS:**

Dr. Peterson announced that information was received from Governor Murkowski regarding his proposal for funding of k-12 education; and information was received from the USDOE regarding Family Right to Privacy Act Guidelines. She reminded the Board of the dinner/worksession with Kenai Peninsula legislators on November 21 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

**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. Rachel Rowe, Homer High School PTA representative, reported on the Alaska PTA Legislative Issues Conference in Anchorage and noted that the area cost differential issue was chosen as one of the priorities as well as biannual funding and the Alaska Public School Lands Trust issue. She thanked Mrs. Downing for her willingness to represent District 2.

Representative Paul Seaton reviewed the history behind the creation of the Geographic Area Cost Differential Task Force and explained the philosophy behind the many studies that have been conducted and the reasons for rejection by the legislature. He predicted that the issue will be addressed during the upcoming legislative session but if not, the school districts with inadequate area cost differentials might consider filing a lawsuit.

Dr. Anderson stated that he understood that according to a study conducted a number of years ago, teacher costs were the same throughout the state. He stated that the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) was to study the cost of educating students throughout the state and was not about increasing the number of teachers in rural areas. He asked what portion of the factor goes towards enticing teachers versus equalizing costs of educating students around the state.

Representative Seaton explained that the first ISER study analyzed the methodology of the American Institute of Research (AIR) study and the proposal was made to the legislature to conduct a study to find out whether rural and remote teachers are being paid the same as their counterparts in Anchorage. He explained that the cost of living in the rural areas is much greater and added that the basis of the ISER study also stated that the turn over rate among teachers in rural villages is high and many fewer teachers apply for those vacancies, creating a small pool of young, inexperienced teachers, instead of a balance which is needed to provide a quality education. He reported that 30% of the report was based on cost and 70% was based on trying to ensure that there is a teacher pool that compares to the Anchorage School District. He stated that the legislature is not convinced that giving additional money to teachers will keep them in rural areas.

Dr. Anderson stated that the KPBSD is not in the same category as rural Alaska and would get a 27% increase based on the proposed change in the area cost differential. He stated that the KPBSD has been deprived because the legislature has not responded relative to the cost of doing business compared to Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Mat-Su. He stated that the District would have \$10 million more this school year if the area cost study results would have been implemented as presented last year. He stated all of the area cost studies have been ignored and he asked how many more years

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ASSEMBLY:**  
*(continued)*

District students will have to suffer. Dr. Anderson stated that \$100 million has been taken away from the District over the past twenty years because of the refusal to recognize that it costs the District more to educate students than it does in Anchorage. He assured those present that the Board cares that all Alaskan students receive an equitable amount for education. He stated that there is nothing in the governor's message that addresses inflation and increases in salaries and benefits (a majority of every school district's budget). He stated that the governor's proposal will help with TRS/PERS and fuel costs but does not help with the increase in labor costs, and noted that school employees expect that they will not be paid less over the term of their employment. He stated that the Board would accept a change in education funding that does not necessarily change the base student funding but changes the area cost differential instead. He acknowledged that the Anchorage School District as well as other districts would not support the changes because they would not receive much advantage. He stated that with oil selling for \$60 a barrel, the legislature should be able to implement the area cost study recommendations and if not, there will never be another change in which case the District should pursue a lawsuit.

Ms. Wassilie asked Representative Seaton what the ISER study recommendations mean for approximating Anchorage teachers. Representative Seaton stated that the depth of a teacher's knowledge and the length of their stay make the difference for students. Teachers in rural areas of Alaska are paid less than Anchorage teachers who are receiving the same salary because the cost of living is higher. He reported that the ISER study asks how much money will it take to encourage as many teachers to apply for vacancies in non urban areas as in Anchorage and how can non urban districts keep teachers from leaving. He stated that the amount recommended to accomplish equity in education is \$88 million. He reported that the legislature is not convinced that districts can pay teachers enough to stay in rural areas for their entire career, which is why the ISER study recommendations have been ignored although they are willing to consider funding that would extend teacher longevity by 2 to 3 years. He stated that he understands that KPBSD has been under funded, and has tried for many years to achieve equitable funding.

Mrs. Brown expressed appreciation to Representative Seaton for his attendance at the Area Cost Differential Task Force meetings and for the report to the Board. She summarized the area cost study issue beginning in 1998 and clarified that the goals have changed and noted that different pieces of information were requested as the studies progressed. She stated that the Task Force will likely report that the two major pieces will be direct cost (approximately 30%) and teacher retention in non urban areas (70%) and asked Representative Seaton if there was anything to add.

Representative Seaton stated that the AIR study reviewed the cost of educating students throughout the state and noted that costs for the same goods or services differed considerably, which is why the ISER study was asked to further review the issue and found that teacher salaries are the same statewide and yet living expenses are not.

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ASSEMBLY:**

*(continued)*

Mrs. Cathy Carrow, KPEA President, welcomed the new board members; thanked Representative Seaton for the funding information update; reminded the Board that KPEA stands ready to work together with others to ensure that adequate education funding is available; and reported that she and Terri Woodward (KPESA president) participated in the Arctic Winter Games International Committee visit and noted that many teachers are volunteering to help in various activities.

Ms. Germano, Assembly Member and former School Board Member, explained that the Assembly discussed legislative priorities and noted that the Kenai Peninsula Borough legislative delegation needs to rectify the area cost differential. She stated that she is looking forward to having the Assembly work with the Board and added that she will be the School Board liaison.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S  
REPORT:**

Dr. Peterson reported that she conducted an orientation with the two new Board members. She announced that Mr. Stewart will be the contact person for questions regarding the military opt out form. She reported that 91 school visits have been made during the month of October. She reported that parent teacher conferences were held and noted that good parental attendance was reported. She reported that competency based education conversations continue with upcoming meetings November 9 at Ninilchik Elementary/High, November 10 at Seward High, and November 15 at Homer High. She announced that Mrs. Christine Ermold, Sterling Elementary principal, was selected by the Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals to receive the 2005 Technology Leadership Award.

**BOARD REPORTS:**

Ms. Wassilie reported that she attended the Language Arts Curriculum Committee meeting and added that the Committee will meet weekly until the new curriculum has been completed. She stated that she attended the AASB Annual Conference in which Governor Murkowski announced his education funding proposal. She reported that she served on the AASB Resolution Committee and announced that a resolution and belief statement was approved "Making Children Alaska's Top Priority". She stated that the group approved the continuation of the resolution regarding the area cost differential and adopted the District's proposed resolution regarding health care issues. She stated that she focused on the digital school presentations and noted that the idea has promise and that the District is already moving in that direction with the Connections Program.

Mr. Anderson reported that he attended the AASB Annual Conference and reported that he attended sessions about sexual harassment, benefits of being a NSBA member, working with difficult people, and charter schools. He stated that during the Large District Forum the topic of area cost differential was discussed and he added that he was pleased to see that larger districts were sincere in working with KPBSD. He reported that group also discussed accountability of education and credited school board, superintendent and community for promoting the issue.

**BOARD REPORTS:**  
*(continued)*

Mrs. Hilts reported that she attended the AASB Annual Conference, and noted that the KPBSD delegation are influential and active, especially with the involvement of Mrs. Mullins and Mrs. Crawford on the AASB Executive Board and other members serving on committees. Mrs. Hilts reported that digital schools was an important topic. She reported that she attended an outstanding presentation by Wrangell students who reported on their senior projects. She reported that the theme of Making Children the Number One Priority was discussed and ideas to promote it were shared. She reported that the group wants to encourage legislators and the residents of Alaska to invest in the future, workforce development, academic achievement, and stable communities.

Mrs. Brown reported that she attended the AASB conference and focused on the wellness topic. She reported that the District will be required by the federal government to revise the nutrition policy. She reported that the process will involve public input and must be in place for the 2006-2007 year. She volunteered to serve on the Nutrition Review Committee and told the Board that she brought back informational brochures to share with interested persons. She reported that there is an interest in forming a statewide food coop to allow the purchase of foods across the state to provide better nutrition for students.

Mrs. Downing reported that she attended the AASB Annual Conference and participated in the New Board Training session presented by Mrs. Mullins. She stated that it was interesting to see the expertise and dedication of the board members throughout the state. She reported that she attended sessions on assessment and curriculum. She reported that the Northwest Arctic School District reported on their competency based or standards based education activities. She reported that it was exciting to learn about the latest developments in education and technology and to get to know other board members.

Mrs. Crawford reported that she attended the AASB Annual Conference and that the focus of the conference was "Making Children the Number One Priority". She stated that KPBSD Board Members attended early, stayed late and participated in all aspects of the conference.

Mr. Bill Hatch reported that he attended the AASB Annual Conference and participated in a session on standards based instruction.

Mrs. Mullins reported that she attended the AASB Annual Conference and participated in a session on charter schools, conduct and ethics, and how to work with the Department of Education and Early Development. She reported that the large five districts in the state met to discuss common issues and the proposed AASB resolutions. She reported that she co-presented new school board training and served as parliamentarian during the business meeting.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Items presented on the Consent Agenda were Approval of New Teacher Assignments; Long Term Substitute Teacher Contracts; Request for Leave of Absence-Certified; Resignation; and Tentative Nontenure Teaching Assignment.

**NEW TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS:**

Mr. Szymoniak recommended the Board approve teaching appointments for Paul A. Story, (temporary) .50 FTE ATOSS teacher at Homer Connections Program; Darci Drury, (temporary) .50 FTE Title I teacher at Redoubt Elementary; and MaryLynn Barnwell, (temporary) .50 FTE Title I teacher at Seward Elementary.

**LONG TERM SUBSTITUTE TEACHER CONTRACTS:**

Mr. Szymoniak recommended the Board approve long-term substitute teacher contracts for Sara Boersma, Grade 2/3 at Kaleidoscope and Emily Sims, generalist at Kenai Alternative.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE-CERTIFIED:**

Mr. Szymoniak recommended the Board approve a request for an unpaid leave of absence for Nancy Courtright, Grade 4 at Soldotna Elementary (effective for the second semester of the 2006-2007 school year).

**RESIGNATION:**

Mr. Szymoniak recommended the Board approve a resignation from Teri Bush, occupational therapist at Seward Elementary

**TENTATIVE NONTENURE TEACHING ASSIGNMENT:**

Mr. Szymoniak recommended the Board approve a tentative nontenured teacher assignment for Judy Graham (temporary), special education/emotionally handicapped case manager, Districtwide/Central Office.

**MOTION**

Mrs. Crawford moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Items Numbers 1 through 5. Mrs. Hilts seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS/ COMMENTS:**

Ms. Ginnie Espenshade thanked the Board for their work on the Opt Out Form, for coming to Homer, and for their advocacy,

Ms. Sue Christensen asked the Board to make sure the Military Opt Out Form is clearly understood, that it be easily accessible on the District website, that forms be available at school offices, and that parents be notified that information has already been shared with requesting agencies. She asked that peacemaking skills be taught at school as well as the downside of war.

Ms. Rachel Row reported that during the Alaska PTA Legislative Issues Conference, she compared notes with other districts regarding budget cuts and was surprised to learn that KPBSD has made many cuts that have not been considered by other districts. She commended Dr. Keffer for his support of PTA.

Ms. Germano thanked the Board and administration for working with her while she was a Board member. She told those present that the wall hanging decorating the stage was purchased by the Board as part of the AASB scholarship fund raiser. She noted that the hanging was bought collectively by the District Board members.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS/  
COMMENTS:**  
*(continued)*

Mrs. Mullins reported that the 2005 AASB auction raised \$12,000 for scholarships.

Ms. Karen Corbell told the Board that she is attending Education 101 at the KPC Kachemak Bay Branch and suggested that education can change by the way new teachers are educated.

**BOARD COMMENTS:**

Dr. Anderson stated that it has been a privilege to serve with Ms. Germano, and that she will be a great asset on the Assembly. He apologized to Representative Seaton for his strong comments earlier in the meeting and expressed appreciation to the legislative delegation for their hard work on equitable funding. He acknowledged that for the past few years Homer High School has led the District in above average test scores but was skeptical about the data provided in Dr. Keffer's school report. He stated that he always enjoys coming to Homer.

Mrs. Brown thanked the administration for providing the FERPA information. She expressed appreciation to the public for the amount of input regarding the Military Opt Out Form. She stated that the Board and administration could be of assistance and should follow up with the agencies who were provided with student information

**MOTION**

Mrs. Brown moved the Board approve a directive to the District administration to retract information from agencies that were provided with student information for those families who completed the new Military Opt Out Form. Motion died for lack of a second.

Mrs. Brown stated that she feels the District has the responsibility for retracting student information and added that she hoped the administration would take the initiative and send a retraction to the agencies that were provided with student information. She stated that the hand outs provided for the budget hearing were helpful. She reminded those present that there is a December 1 deadline for site councils to share their input on the budget

Mrs. Downing recognized the education students in the audience. She invited Board members and members of the audience to attend the What's Happening in Homer at the Islands and Ocean Center on November 11. She explained that the event is a collection of activities focusing on issues facing Homer youth and is being sponsored by the Child Advocacy Coalition. In response to Dr. Anderson's comments regarding Homer High School testing data she stated that she suspects that more students are taking the SAT than the ACT.



**BOARD COMMENTS:**  
(continued)

Ms. Wassilie stated that it was heart warming to see the School Board welcome message on the Homer High School reader board. She stated that she appreciated the two school reports. She thanked Representative Seaton for the Area Cost Differential Task Force update. She stated that equitable funding needs to include the cost of labor and the recruitment of quality teachers. She reported that another area of concern for the District is the decrease of enrollment that may cause schools to close and noted that digital schools may be the solution. She reported that one of the AASB resolutions that may help is extraordinary loss protection which would continue funding for the remainder of the school year for schools where the enrollment drops below the minimum after the year has started.

Mr. Anderson welcomed Mr. Hatch and Mrs. Downing to the Board and added that he enjoyed getting to know the new Board members. He thanked Mr. Liberty and Dr. Keffer for the school reports. He expressed appreciation for Ms. Germano and her years of Board service. He stated that while he empathizes with Mr. Fletcher's situation, he disagreed with the use of the term "punish" and noted that the Board has supported each parent's right to choose the appropriate education for their child and added that each choice comes with consequences. He reminded those present that November 11 is Veteran's Day and thanked the many veterans who have made sacrifices to ensure the nation's freedoms and the American way of life.

Mrs. Crawford thanked Mr. Liberty and Dr. Keffer for the school reports. She thanked the administration for their work on the Military Opt Out Form. She thanked Ms. Germano for her service on the Board and thanked Representative Seaton for his work on behalf of District students. She welcomed Mr. Hatch and Ms. Downing to the Board.

Mrs. Hilts thanked Representative Seaton for the report. She expressed appreciation for Mr. Robinson and the music program. She thanked Ms. Germano for her assistance and for her work on the Board at the local and the state level. She stated that she was pleased to see future teachers in the audience and thanked them for their choice to pursue a career in education. She noted that two of the children in the school musical featured in the Susan B. English Elementary/High School report are her grandchildren and added that her daughter directed the musical. She clarified that it is the Board's duty to see that children receive an education which is made possible by the dedicated District staff. She thanked Dr. Keffer and Mr. Liberty for their attendance.

Mr. Hatch stated he was pleased that Mr. Robinson received recognition and added that he is concerned for the future of the arts in schools. He thanked Board members, especially Mrs. Mullins, for their assistance. He congratulated the Homer High School staff for preparing their students.

Mrs. Mullins welcomed Mr. Hatch and Mrs. Downing and added that although it is difficult to replace the departing members, she is encouraged with the quality of the new members. She thanked Mr. Liberty and Dr. Keffer for the school reports. She thanked Representative Seaton for his attendance and for the update. She reported that the military opt out issue was discussed at the Large District Forum as well as among other Board members throughout the state. She assured those who spoke regarding the Opt Out Form that the administration will share the information with appropriate staff persons. She expressed appreciation for Ms. Germano's service, support, and friendship over the past years.

Mrs. Mullins appointed Mr. Hatch to the KPSAA Board. She reminded Board members to attend the community conversations on competency based education.

Dr. Anderson requested an excused absence for the November 21 Board meeting.

**ADJOURN:**

At 9:21 p.m., Mrs. Crawford moved the School Board Meeting be adjourned. Dr. Anderson seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mrs. Debra Mullins, President

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Ms. Sandra Wassilie, Clerk

The Minutes of November 7, 2005  
were approved on November 9, 2005  
with a correction.