
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education Meeting Minutes

February 19, 2007 – 7:00 p.m.
Regular Meeting

Borough Administration Building
148 N. Binkley, Soldotna, Alaska

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS: Mrs. Debra Mullins, President
Mrs. Sammy Crawford, Vice President
Mr. Marty Anderson, Treasurer
Mrs. Liz Downing, Clerk
Dr. Nels Anderson
Mrs. Debbie Brown
Ms. Lynn Hohl
Mr. Bill Hatch
Mrs. Sunni Hilts
Miss Lydia Ames, 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. Mick Wykis	Mr. David Legg
Mrs. Doris Cannon	Mr. John Cook
Mr. Joe Nicks	Mrs. Norma Holmgaard
Mrs. Jacquie Steckel	Mr. Tony Lewis
Mr. Jim White	Mrs. Judy Swarner
Mrs. Linda Hibberd	Mr. Brad Hibberd
Mrs. Laurie Olson	Mr. Dick Swarner
Mrs. Michelle Gage	Mr. Joe Kashi
Mrs. Sharon Geeslin	Mrs. Patty Rich
Mrs. Terri Woodward	Mr. Jim Dawson
Ms. Deb Germano	Ms. Cathy Carrow
Mr. Sean Dusek	

Others present not identified.

CALL TO ORDER: Mrs. Mullins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
(7:00:07 PM)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mrs. Mullins invited those present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.
(7:00:16 PM)

ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Debra Mullins	Present
Mrs. Sammy Crawford	Present
Mr. Marty Anderson	Present
Dr. Nels Anderson	Present
Mrs. Debbie Brown	Present
Mrs. Liz Downing	Present
Mr. Bill Hatch	Present
Ms. Lynn Hohl	Present
Mrs. Sunni Hilts	Present
Miss Lydia Ames	Present

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

(7:01:23 PM)

The agenda was approved as written.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

(7:01:55 PM)

The School Board Minutes of February 5, 2007, were approved with an addition.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS:

(7:03:35 PM)

The Board presented Mrs. Sharon Geeslin with a Golden Apple Award in recognition for her service to the District.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

(7:06:28 PM)

Mrs. Jenni Hammond, Nikiski parent, asked the Board not to decrease the teaching staff at Nikiski North Star for the 2007-2008 school year. She asked for more teachers in the future. She encouraged those present to support the area cost differential legislation and to send a strong public opinion message to state legislators to support adequate funding for education. She suggested that schools participate in the Box Tops for Education Program and the Campbell Soup Labels Program.

Mr. Joe Kashi, Soldotna Rotary Club representative, announced that the Soldotna Rotary Club is sponsoring the Digital Arts Project and has donated digital cameras, accompanying lesson plans, Adobe Photoshop software, and various other printers and electronic equipment to Soldotna area schools. He noted that the Rotary Club will also provide technical support.

Mrs. Faye Shirnberg, Soldotna area parent, asked the Board to enforce school boundaries.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS:

(7:18:18 PM)

Dr. Peterson noted that the Board has received an update on the Summer School Program, correspondence with the Department of Education and Early Education regarding at-the-cap funding, and a copy of Governor Palin's executive proclamation for School Board Recognition Month.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

(7:19:24 PM)

Dr. Peterson reminded the Board that the March 5 School Board meeting will be held at Homer High School. She reported that five community meetings have been held regarding the administrative selection process. She announced that Miss Hannah Watkins, Kenai Central High student, has won three grant awards for the District totaling \$1,700 for books she wrote about disaster preparedness. Dr. Peterson reported that she met with U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski to discuss special education funding, No Child Left Behind and federal mandates.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

(7:21:20 PM)

Mrs. Douglas presented the financial report of the District for the period ending January 31, 2007.

BOARD REPORTS:*(7:21:48 PM)*

Mr. Anderson reported that he attended the Charter School Oversight Committee to discuss assessment data and school space considerations for FY08. He announced that the Committee has requested, through Mrs. Mullins, a finance report of all charter schools in the District. He reported that he attended the AASB Legislative Fly-in in Juneau and met with various legislators to discuss the base student funding allocation, the area cost differential, and the state retirement system. He added that the Board members also discussed increased vocational education, special education funding, and block funding.

Mr. Hatch reported that he attended the AASB Legislative Fly-in in Juneau and added that he was optimistic about the state budget. He stated that he was pleased because legislators were listening and added that he was encouraged about workforce development and vocational education.

Ms. Hohl reported that she attended the AASB Legislative Fly-in in Juneau and was encouraged after the visits with state legislators. She reminded those present to keep the pressure on the legislators to support adequate educational funding.

Miss Ames reported that she attended the AASB Legislative Fly-in and the Youth Leadership Institute in Juneau. She encouraged those present to support legislation regarding the area cost differential increase and the base student funding formula increase. She stated that legislators seemed to be listening and added that the trip provided the best way to see how government works.

Mrs. Crawford reported that she recently attended the Workforce Development Center Open House and noted that the event was well attended. She reported that five years ago there was virtually no vocational education in the District and now there are 104 students enrolled in a variety of courses. She reported that students can also earn national certifications as well as college credit in some of the courses. She reported that she visited Sterling Elementary to participate in For Love of Reading Week and noted that the students created thank you cards for each School Board member.

**BOARD WORKSESSION
REPORT:***(7:29:09 PM)*

Mrs. Mullins reported that the Board heard an update on student due process procedures, District energy costs, and learned about the Performance High School.

CONSENT AGENDA:*(7:33:09 PM)*

Items presented on the Consent Agenda were Approval of 2007-2008 District Organizational Chart; 7-12 Language Arts Curriculum; 2007-2008 Administrator Assignments; New Teacher Assignment; 2007-2008 Tentative Tenure Teacher Assignments; Administrative Recommendation Regarding Leave of Absence Request-Certified; Long-Term Substitute Teacher Contracts; Adoption of AR 4112.61, Guidelines for Writing Letters of Reference; and Budget Transfers.

2007-2008 DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART:

Dr. Peterson recommended the Board approve the 2007-2008 District organizational chart that identifies the lines of primary responsibility and relationships between administrative positions.

7-12 LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM:

Mr. Stewart recommended the Board approve the 7-12 Language Arts Curriculum.

2007-2008 ADMINISTRATOR ASSIGNMENTS:

Mr. Szymoniak recommended the Board approve a list of administrator appointments for the 2007-2008 school year.

NEW TEACHER ASSIGNMENT:

Mr. Szymoniak recommended the Board approve a teaching assignment for Ann S. Walker, (temporary) Grades K-2, Nanwalek School.

2007-2008 TENTATIVE TENURE TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS:

Mr. Szymoniak recommended the Board approve a list of tentative tenure teacher assignments for the 2007-2008 school year.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION REGARDING LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST-CERTIFIED:

Mr. Szymoniak recommended the Board approve a recommendation to deny an unpaid leave of absence request for the 2007-08 school year for Jennifer Chapple, Grade 1, McNeil Canyon Elementary. The employee is currently on an approved sabbatical for the 2006-2007 school year.

LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTE TEACHER CONTRACTS:

Mr. Szymoniak recommended the Board approve long-term substitute contracts for Darrell Hagen, physical education, Aurora Borealis; and Sheilah-Margaret Pothast, Title I, Soldotna Elementary.

ADOPTION OF AR 4112.61:

Mr. Stewart recommended the Board approve the adoption of AR 4112.61, Guidelines for Writing Letters of Reference.

BUDGET TRANSFERS:

Mrs. Douglas recommended the Board approve budget transfer Numbers 174 and 214 in the amounts of \$24,000 and \$30,000, respectively, to pay for student lessons and to the Professional/Technical account to pay for Kenai Peninsula College class tuition for students enrolled in the Connections program; Number 192 in the amount of \$45,570 to pay for rent at the Willow Street location; Number 211 in the amount of \$11,179 to pay for the salary of a long-term certified substitute; and Number 215 to pay for Professional/Technical Services in the amount of \$15,916 and for employee travel in the amount of \$10,555.

Ms. Carrow, KPEA president, asked the Board for further discussion on the adoption of AR 4112.61, Guidelines for Writing Letters of Reference and listed her objections to the new regulation.

MOTION

Mrs. Crawford moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Items Numbers 1 through 9. Dr. Anderson seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

RECESS:*(7:37:20 PM)*

At 7:37 p.m., Mrs. Mullins called a recess.

**RECONVENE AFTER
RECESS:***(7:43:42 PM)*

At 7:43 p.m., the Board convened in regular session.

**KENAI CONVERSATION
RECOMMENDATION:***(7:43:451 PM)*

Dr. Peterson recommended the Board approve Option 3, as outlined in the Kenai Conversation Report, which would move students from Sears Elementary to Mountain View Elementary and create a combined K-5 school housed in the Mountain View facility and that the Sears facility will be offered to Kaleidoscope Charter School of Arts and Sciences, effective fall 2007. She noted that if the Board approves the recommendation they will be kept updated throughout the process.

Ms. Trudy Jones stated that she supports the administration's recommendation of Option 3, from the Kenai Conversation Report, because the consolidation of Mt. View Elementary and Sears Elementary will allow them to offer music, library, physical education and before and after school activities. She asked the Board for more vocational education choices at Kenai Central High. She thanked Board members who made personal visits to the Kenai area schools.

Ms. Angie Challans, Kenai area parent, stated that she is opposed to the proposed consolidation of Mt. View Elementary School and Sears Elementary School and noted that the Board has fulfilled their obligation to provide space for Kaleidoscope Charter School.

Mr. Tony Lewis, Kenai area parent, thanked the Board for their time and asked them to consider all of the pros and cons of the Kenai Conversation, make a rational decision, and then move forward.

Ms. Kelly Schneider stated that she disagrees with the administration's decision to combine two schools because it will increase the amount of bullying by older students, her special needs child will be overlooked at a larger school, and class sizes will be larger.

Mrs. Misty Hamilton, Kaleidoscope Academic Policy Executive Board Chairperson and Kaleidoscope Charter School parent, thanked the administration and Donna Peterson for their work on the Kenai Conversation. She asked the Board to accept the administration's recommendation to consolidate Mt. View Elementary and Sears Elementary Schools.

Ms. Deborah Germano, Homer resident, stated that students will not be hurt by consolidating Mt. View Elementary School and Sears Elementary School because the staff will move with the students to the combined school and added that there will be a savings to the District in utility costs. She suggested that the Board continue the consolidation discussion with other schools throughout the District.

**KENAI CONVERSATION
RECOMMENDATION:**

(continued)

MOTION

Dr. Anderson moved the Board approve the administration's recommendation to implement Option 3 as outlined in the Kenai Conversation Report, which would move students from Sears Elementary to Mountain View Elementary and create a combined K-5 school housed in the Mountain View facility and that the Sears facility will be offered to Kaleidoscope Charter School of Arts and Sciences, effective fall 2007. Mr. Anderson seconded.

VOTE:

Advisory Vote: YES

YES – Crawford, Hilts, N. Anderson, Downing, M. Anderson, Hohl, Mullins

NO – Brown, Hatch

Motion carried.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS/
COMMENTS:**

(8:25:24 PM)

Mrs. Jenni Hammond urged those present to contact state legislators and express support for adequate educational funding. She spoke in support of the need for additional staffing and noted that some parents agree that the money budgeted for cocurricular activities should to go back into the classroom.

Mr. Tony Lewis stated that Kaleidoscope Charter school was created to offer choice to students and parents. He stated that the Kenai Community needs to move forward. He recommended that charter schools review student demographics, methods of assessment, and finances.

Mr. Sergei Serebrekov, Razdolna resident, expressed concern for proposed reduction in teaching staff next school year.

Mrs. Natalia Basargin, Razdolna School parent, expressed concern for the proposed reduction in teaching staff and the increase in principal assignment next school year. She expressed concern that grades and test scores will decline and that students will barely be able to graduate.

Mrs. Cindy Basargin, Razdolna School parent, stated that her children need more time with the teachers and asked the Board not to change the staffing next year.

Mrs. Fenya Basargin, Razdolna School secretary, provided projected enrollment for the upcoming years and stated that the younger generation care about education and reported that students are beginning to graduate from high school.

BOARD COMMENTS:*(8:43:53 PM)*

Mrs. Brown expressed appreciation for the public testimony. She acknowledged that the administration brought forward some good options to consider regarding the Kenai Conversation. She expressed appreciation for the discussion, adding that she believes that Kenai families will continue to be a community and will now move ahead. She explained that each Board member tries to do what is best for their constituents. She stated that she believes that Board members can represent their district and also represent the best interests of the entire District. She stated that the state legislature's decision to allow charters schools to exist was good for families and urged the public to continue to support educational choice.

Mr. Hatch stated that he is pleased that a decision has been made regarding the Kenai Conversation. He stated that he is confident that the new combined school will have great teachers and they will make it a fabulous school. He noted that the Board heard from Moose Pass Elementary School parents at the February 5 Board meeting (another small school) regarding the proposed reduction in teachers and added that he expects to hear from other small schools. He acknowledged that it is difficult to teach in a two-teacher school and stated that the Board has got to find a way to do what is best for all students.

Miss Ames thanked those who testified and acknowledged that the issues discussed are all tied to money. She urged those who are interested in the issue of adequate funding for education, to seek help from the legislature. She stated that she is glad that the Board has made a decision regarding the Kenai Conversation and added that it is important to keep the community of students together so they can grow up together and accept each other.

Mr. Hatch asked for an excused absence from the March 5 Board meeting.

Mrs. Crawford expressed hope that the Kenai community will work together to do what is best for students and move forward in a positive way. She asked those present to help the Board by contacting state legislators and ask for adequate funding for education. She explained that the School District does not have taxing powers and that funding comes from decisions made by the state legislature.

Dr. Anderson stated that he is optimistic about the Kenai Conversation decision. He stated that he hopes the public will realize that the decision was made with a sense of fairness. He stated that the fact that few people testified bodes well for the transition process because while there will be disagreements, people are willing to accept that change had to occur.

BOARD COMMENTS:*(continued)*

Ms. Hohl asked for more information from the superintendent on items that came up during public presentations. She thanked the Rotary Club for the Digital Camera Program. She asked for more information regarding zone exemptions. She suggested that Kaleidoscope Charter School develop a method to improve the student demographics during the transition. She expressed concern for small schools.

Mrs. Downing expressed appreciation to Mr. Stewart for providing information regarding the Performance High School program. She explained that the program will also provide support for smaller schools and upper grade students by offering more choices. She reported that she visited Razdolna School and has gained a greater appreciation for the school and what it offers. She stated that she hopes the parents will work together to create a new Kenai school that will provide what is best for all students.

Mrs. Hilts stated that although the Kenai Conversation decision was difficult, the Board made the best possible decision for the students of the District. She thanked the Rotary Club for their donations. She thanked Jenni Hammond for her encouragement to contact state legislators and reminded those present that it is the only way to change the funding situation. She acknowledged the residents of Razdolna who were in attendance and assured them that their appeals have been heard by the Board. She thanked the Borough Assembly for passing a resolution asking the State of Alaska to make children their top priority. She reported that the United States does not stand well in the world for its care of children and that Alaska ranks 35 in the U.S. by many standards. She added that the State of Alaska does not protect children well.

Mr. Anderson thanked Mrs. Geeslin for her service to the District. He thanked the Rotary Club for their efforts in improving the community. He thanked those who provided comments to the Board, specifically Mrs. Hammond and Mrs. Jones. He thanked Sterling Elementary for the handmade recognition cards. He thanked Ms. Germano for her comments. He reminded the public that the Kenai Peninsula is equal to the size of West Virginia with more than 40 schools (some accessible only by boat or plane), with 7,700 miles in bus service and yet are funded lower than Mat-Su School District and Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. He encouraged those present to convert passion into making the District a better place.

Mrs. Mullins commended those who traveled a long distance to speak during Public Presentations at the early part of the agenda. She stated that although many people in attendance did not testify, they were concerned about the Kenai Conversation issue and she expressed appreciation for the public involvement. She stated that the Board appreciates public testimony and consider all comments before making decisions. Mrs. Mullins stated that she does not come to board meetings with her mind made up about how to vote on each item. She reminded Board members that the next meeting will be in Homer.

ADJOURN:
(9:03:56 PM)

At 9:03 p.m., Dr. Anderson moved the School Board Meeting be adjourned. Mr. Hatch seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Debra Mullins, President

Mrs. Liz Downing, Clerk

The Minutes of February 19, 2007,
were approved on March 5, 2007
as written.