

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education Meeting Minutes

April 21, 2003 – 7:30 p.m.

Borough Administration Building
Regular Meeting – 148 N. Binkley, Soldotna, Alaska

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Joe Arness, President
Mrs. Sammy Crawford, Vice President
Ms. Deborah Germano, Clerk
Mrs. Margaret Gilman, Treasurer
Mrs. Debra Mullins, Member
Dr. Nels Anderson, Member
Mr. Al Poindexter, Member
Mr. Cameron Poindexter, Student Representative

STAFF PRESENT:

Dr. Donna Peterson, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Melody Douglas, Chief Financial Officer
Dr. Gary Whiteley, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
Mr. Todd Syverson, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mrs. Debbie Stewart	Mr. Vernel Schneider
Mrs. Lassie Nelson	Miss Amy Shoemaker
Mr. Sean Dusek	Mrs. Shirley Gifford
Mrs. Colleen Ward	Mrs. Lisa Groleske
Mr. John Torgerson	Mr. Pat Nolden
Mr. Dennis Murray	Mrs. Carole Nolden
Mrs. Paula Christensen	Mrs. Jane Stein
Dr. Roy Anderson	Miss Kaitlin Vadla
Mr. John Wensley	Mr. Mark Tuter
Mr. Sam Stewart	Mrs. Teresa Kiffmeyer
Mr. Tim Peterson	Mrs. Rosie Reeder
Mr. Richard Warrington	Mr. Jim White
Mr. Michael Vasilie	Mr. Pete Sprague
Mrs. Kathy Gensel	Mr. Eric Fischer
Miss Rachel Kastner	Mrs. Mae Hughes

Others present not identified.

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Arness called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

(Tape 1, 112)

Mr. Arness asked those present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance and to remain standing while Miss Amy Shoemaker played the *National Anthem* on her saxophone.

ROLL CALL:

(Tape 1, 237)

Dr. Nels Anderson	Present
Ms. Deborah Germano	Present
Mrs. Sammy Crawford	Present
Mr. Joe Arness	Present
Mrs. Debra Mullins	Present
Mrs. Margaret Gilman	Present
Mr. Al Poindexter	Present
Mr. Cameron Poindexter	Absent/Excused

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:
(Tape 1, 261)

The agenda was approved with the addition of Consent Agenda Item Number 10a.(6), Leave of Absence-Certified.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
(Tape 1, 291)

The School Board Regular Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2003 and Special Meeting Minutes of April 11, 2003, were approved as printed.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS:
(Tape 1, 326)

The Board presented Spirit of Youth Awards to Miss Rachel Kastner, Miss Kaitlin Vadla, and Mr. Eric Fischer. Miss Heather Drake was also a recipient but was not present.

The Board presented Golden Apple awards to Mrs. Shirley Gifford, Soldotna High volunteer; Mr. Mark Tuter, Soldotna High Community Schools coordinator; Mr. Pat Nolden, Soldotna High teacher; Mrs. Mae Hughes, Sears Elementary volunteer; Mrs. Teresa Kiffmeyer, Districtwide teacher, and Mrs. Debbie Stewart, Public Relations and Recruitment Officer, Human Resources, for their service to the District.

SCHOOL REPORT:
(Tape 1, 1383)

Mr. Sean Dusek, Soldotna High School principal, gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the school goals, recent accreditation process, high school qualifying exam results, Terra Nova results, music programs, student activities and competitions, technology (webcasting and video conferencing classes), drama productions, communications with public and parents, athletic accomplishments, and recognized staff members who had received various awards. Miss Jennifer McCard introduced the Mock Trial team (Pehr Hartvigson, Jennifer McCard, Mark McCartan, Haley Smith, Justin Johnson, Ryan Myers, Matthew Meacham) and reported that the team won the state competition and will travel to New Orleans, Louisiana to compete at the national level. The team is coached by LaDawn Druce and Eric Soderquist with assistance from Mr. Dolifka and Judge Cranston. The Swing Choir sang *Lift Your Voice, America*, directed by Mrs. Trudy Peterson.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:
(Tape 1, 2787)

Ms. Anne Krogseng stated that consolidating the two Nikiski elementary schools does not express the wishes of the community and asked the Board instead, to consider reconfiguration of the schools to K-3 at one school and Grades 4-6 at the other.

Mrs. Juanita Petla-Moore suggested that the Board consider legal action against the state and federal government for inadequately funding education and protested the proposed closure of Nikiski Elementary School.

Ms. Melinda Cox asked the Board to make a decision to either consolidate or reconfigure the Nikiski area elementary schools so that the community can begin to work together. She expressed appreciation for the performance by the Soldotna Swing Choir.

Ms. Holly Norwood stated that a petition has been signed by Nikiski area residents who want to focus on primary achievement through a reconfiguration of the grade levels at the two Nikiski area elementary schools.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS (continued): Ms. Tammy Johnson, home school parent, stated that although there is no perfect solution, a reconfiguration of the two Nikiski elementary schools into Grades K-3 at one school and Grades 4-6 at another might encourage home school students to attend public school.

Mrs. Lisa Groleske, Soldotna parent, stated that if the Nikiski area elementary schools are not up to par, she will reconsider her future plans to move to Nikiski.

Ms. Rose Pilatti stated that consolidation of the two Nikiski elementary schools will cause a large number of students to be housed in one school, which will not improve the quality of education.

Ms. Debra Dugan, Nikiski Middle/High student, spoke in support of reconfiguring the Nikiski area elementary schools for safety and academic reasons.

Mr. Karl Cooper, Nikiski parent, expressed concern that closing one of the Nikiski elementary schools will not completely fix the budget problem and will cause the already low student achievement to become worse.

Mrs. Jill Sturgeon, Nikiski parent, stated that she moved to Nikiski because of the quality of North Star Elementary School and added that if changes are necessary; reconfiguring the two schools would be the best decision for students.

Mrs. Candace Rodriguez, former Nikiski student and parent, expressed concern for the overcrowding that would occur if all of the elementary students were put into one school. She asked the Board why money wasn't set aside in prior years to address the budget issues today.

Mrs. Maria Nunez, Nikiski parent, asked the Board to consider the children's education first and noted that money will always be an issue.

Ms. Carol Strickland, Nikiski parent, stated that the Nikiski schools will not meet the criteria of the No Child Left Behind Act if all of the elementary students are consolidated into one building because achievement scores will remain low.

Ms. Carol Hakkinen, KCHS parent, congratulated the Soldotna High mock trial team, and expressed concern for the budget cuts that reduce staff and eliminate travel money for extracurricular activities.

RECESS:

At 8:50 p.m., Mr. Arness called a recess.

RECONVENE AFTER RECESS:

At 8:59 p.m. the Board reconvened in regular session.

HEARING OF DELEGATIONS:

(Tape 1, 5387)

Dr. Peterson presented a PowerPoint report from the Career and Technical Blue Ribbon Task Force that included an overview of the work accomplished by the group. Mr. Harry Lockwood, State of Alaska Department of Labor Workforce Development vocational counselor, provided state and local labor market information noting that only 25% of all new jobs will require a bachelor's degree or above and the rest will require some type of postsecondary education. Mr. Sam Stewart shared copies of the District's Career Education Curriculum and reported on partnerships with the Kenai Peninsula College through the Workforce Development Center.

Mr. Dale Moon provided a list of present and future courses being offered for dual credit through the Workforce Development Center. Mr. Sal Matteredo, Co-chair of the Kenai Process Industry Careers Committee (KPICC), reported that the Committee's goal is to help develop a world class workforce comprised of skilled and capable workers who will have an opportunity for successful careers in industry and to replace those who will soon be retiring. Mr. Joe Donahou, Economic Development District, reported that a Workforce Coalition has been formed that to identify what Peninsula employers their employees to know.

Mrs. Crawford commented on the overwhelming need for health care workers. Mr. Dennis Murray, Heritage Place Nursing Facility administrator and Executive Board Member of the Alaska State Hospital Nursing Home Association, noted that health care workers represent the largest area of employment growth and reported that the Association has partnered with the University of Alaska and the District to offer a nursing program and graduate approximately 110 students annually.

Mrs. Jane Stein told the Board to be proud of the workforce that has been educated on the Peninsula and are now employed worldwide. She added that she would like to see home economics classes return to the high school course offerings.

Mr. Arness thanked the group for their hard work and asked what obligation the District has to the Task Force. Dr. Peterson asked the Board to continue their support for the partnership and the Workforce Coalition.

Ms. Germano thanked the group for attending the meeting and for their hard work.

Dr. Anderson stated that he is impressed with the composition of the Task Force and expressed his appreciation for the members who gave their efforts and time to accomplish this Board goal.

Mrs. Gilman stated that vocational education is part of everyday life and the District needs to train students accordingly.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS: Dr. Peterson stated that routine correspondence was included in the Board's general information packet. She reported that the AASA Alaska Superintendent of the Year Award included a \$1000 student scholarship which is currently being advertised for application through May 1.
(Tape 1, 8571)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE, SITE COUNCIL, AND/OR P.T.A., K.P.A.A., K.P.E.A., K.P.E.S.A.:
(Tape 1, 8668)

Mr. Arness recognized Borough Assembly Members, Mrs. Betty Glick, Mr. Pete Sprague, and Mr. Gary Superman, who were in attendance.

Mrs. Lori Lingafelt, Soldotna Elementary PTA president, reported that at a recent PTA meeting, parents expressed support for the reconfiguration of Soldotna Elementary and Redoubt Elementary into Grades K-3 at one school and Grades 4-6 at the other. She invited the administration and the Board to "A Night of the Arts" at Soldotna Elementary on Thursday, April 24, at 6:30 p.m. which will feature a musical directed by Mrs. Erin Southwick and a student art display by Artist-in-Residence, Mr. Larry Willard.

Mr. Joe Arness recognized Mrs. Cathy Carrow as the newly-elected KPEA president.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:
(Tape 1, 8668)

Dr. Peterson reported that information regarding comprehensive schools will be posted on the Instruction Department page of the District website. Dr. Peterson reported that a pilot program was implemented at Nikiski Elementary and North Star Elementary schools to address low achievement in reading. She reported that the Districtwide inservice has been canceled for the 2003-2004 school year. She reported that the June 3 Board planning session will begin at 9:00 a.m. in the superintendent's office.

Financial Report:
(Tape 1, 9340)

Mrs. Douglas presented the financial report of the District for the periods ending February 28 and March 31, 2003.

Budget Transfer Report:
(Tape 2, 328)

Mrs. Douglas reported on third quarter budget transfers Numbers 147 through 320 for various schools and departments within the District.

Consolidation of Schools Update:
(Tape 2, 354)

Dr. Peterson presented the Consolidation of Schools Update which included recommendations for Board consideration regarding small school (under 200 students) and larger schools (over 200 students). The report also included recommendations for closure of Hope School and the consolidation of Nikiski Elementary and North Star Elementary schools. She noted that the Board will conduct a one-hour worksession on May 5 in Seward, just prior to the Board meeting, to discuss other aspects of the Consolidation Plan and for the Board to give direction to the administration.

BOARD REPORTS:

Mrs. Crawford reported that she testified at the Kenai Legislative Information Office regarding the senate budget and noted that there were so few people who testified statewide that they closed the meeting an hour early. She stated that she attended Representative Kelly Wolf's Town Meeting and noted that it was also not very well attended. She expressed her disappointment regarding the public participation level at both events. She stated that she had a wonderful experience attending the National School Boards Annual Conference and noted that a summary of the conference is included in the Board's information packet. She noted that her favorite part of the Conference was listening to Mr. Frank McCourt author of, *Angela's Ashes*. She reported that Mr. McCourt talked about the exhilaration and the ecstasy of spending thirty years in a classroom.

BOARD REPORTS (continued):

Ms. Germano stated that the state senate took two days of testimony and noted that the previous evening's testimony regarding the state operating budget continued until 9:45 p.m. She stated that it was interesting that there were so few people in attendance from the Central Peninsula area and encouraged those present to testify to the legislature when the opportunity arises.

CONSENT AGENDA:
(Tape 2, 547)

Items presented on the Consent Agenda were Approval of Budget Transfer Numbers 176 and 347; Requests for Leave of Absence-Support; Long-term Substitute Contracts; Tenure Teacher Assignments; and Resignation.

Budget Transfer Numbers 176 and 347:

Mrs. Douglas recommended the Board approve budget transfer number 176 for \$81,183 to pay for a foreign language program for Aurora Borealis Charter School and budget transfer number 347 for \$64,882 to pay for Student Nutrition Services baking supplies and \$15,408 for a payment on the Point of Sale system for recording sales.

Requests for Leave of Absence-Support:

Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve unpaid leave of absence requests for Michelle Gabriel, school secretary III, Soldotna Elementary (effective the 2003-2004 school year); and Dawn Stetz, administrative secretary, Instruction Office (effective June 5, 2003).

Long-term Substitute Contracts:

Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve long-term substitute teacher contracts for Thomas Rhyner, physical education, Mountain View Elementary; and Karl Kircher, reading teacher, Soldotna Middle School; and Sherry Burt, English, Susan B. English Elementary/High School.

Tenure Teacher Assignments:

Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve a tenure teacher assignment for the 2003-2004 school year for Heather Lindquist and Jerry Dixon.

Resignation:

Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve a resignation, effective April 14, 2003, from Janette Cadieux-Lexmond, physical therapist (currently on year's leave of absence from Soldotna Elementary).

Ms. Germano asked to remove Item Number 10a.(1) from the Consent Agenda.

MOTION:

Mrs. Crawford moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Items Numbers 2 through 6. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION:

Ms. Germano moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Item Number 10a.(1), Budget Transfers 176 and 347. Mrs. Gilman seconded.

CONSENT AGENDA (continued):

Ms. Germano asked for an explanation of the budget transfers relating to baking supplies. Mrs. Douglas responded that the baking functions have moved from one location to another and that the baking supplies budget was moved to the new site.

Ms. Germano asked for an explanation of budget transfers to cover miscellaneous repairs including vending machines. Mrs. Douglas responded that the District has various vending machines that dispense juice and other items and the money being transferred will cover the cost of a variety of repairs.

Motion carried unanimously.

FY04 Budget:
(Tape 2, 780)

Mrs. Douglas recommended the Board approve the FY04 Operating Fund Budget of \$72,509,508 and a total budget for all funds of \$89,270,459. Mrs. Douglas further recommended that the reductions in unallocated funds (\$400,000) and in supply allocations (\$1,236,724) be considered temporary reductions pending expected additional revenues through the legislature. She stated that revisions to the FY04 budget are likely to happen at the June 2 Board meeting.

MOTION:

Mrs. Mullins moved the Board approve the FY 2003-2004 annual budget as presented. Mrs. Crawford seconded.

Ms. Germano expressed appreciation for the hard work and energy the administration has put into the budget. Ms. Germano clarified that “reduce cocurricular program” (language in the FY04 Budget memo) actually means that there will be a reduction in extra-curricular travel. She stated that she believes that the Board is doing a disservice to the community by adopting the FY04 Budget in hopes that more funding will come from the legislature. She stated that additional reductions are being made in teaching staff and curriculum adoption materials. She stated that the Board needs to consider offering extracurricular activities in some other way because there is not enough money in the budget.

Mrs. Gilman expressed her appreciation to the administration, community, and staff for their work on the budget. She stated that she hopes Alaska wakes up and realizes that education needs more funding. She stated that the message she heard from the Nikiski parents’ testimony was that academic achievement was a top priority as well as low pupil-teacher ratios. Mrs. Gilman reminded those present that during the last School Board election she campaigned to work towards keeping pupil-teacher ratios low. She stated that one of the elements that make Aurora Borealis Charter a good school is that they have a pupil-teacher ratio of 1 to 22. She noted that if any teacher is given 22 children to teach they would see amazing results. She stated that the problem with the FY04 Budget is that it reduces so many teachers. Mrs. Gilman stated that if the Board eliminated extracurricular activities from the budget, other opportunities would be found to provide those activities for students because they are vital. She suggested that extra-curricular activities be paid for through nonprofit organizations, the Borough Assembly, or through the use pull tabs.

FY04 Budget (continued):

Mrs. Gilman stated that she will do whatever it takes to provide activities for students, but not at the expense of the English teacher. She stated that unfortunately, Governor Murkowski has explained his budget proposal and is not considering any increases to education. She stated that without money in an unallocated account, teachers will be forced to teach in unmanageable classrooms. She stated that reducing the supply budget by 50% means that more money will come out of the classroom teacher’s pocket because they will personally purchase necessary items. Mrs. Gilman expressed concerns that although the Connections Program budget was not increased, the educational allotment to students was increased. She expressed concern that the District is cutting classroom teachers and reducing supply budgets by 50%, and yet, for this group of home school students, the District is increasing the amount that they will receive. She stated that she understands that the District must be able to compete with the Galena IDEA Program. She stated that she would like to compete with the Galena program by offering a better academic program and providing an opportunity for interaction with teachers by parents and students. She stated that it is not fair to provide more money

for home school students and less money for students who attend school in a public school building.

Mr. Poindexer stated that he cannot support the budget as it is presented because he feels that it is a false budget. He stated that it gives the public a false sense of security with the hopes that additional money will come from the legislature. He stated that if the District doesn't receive more money, the Board will have to adjust the budget further. He stated that there will be items eliminated from the budget that the public will not know about. He stated that the Board should pass a budget that is realistic. He stated that it would not be fair to the public if the Board eliminated extracurricular programs during the summer. He stated that the public should have the opportunity to react to what may happen to the District budget in June. He stated that if choices have to be made, the classroom teacher and academic programs must come first. He stated that he cannot support the budget as presented.

Mrs. Crawford stated that the budget process has been very difficult and expressed appreciation to the administration for the hard work that has been put into it. She stated that even though it is a difficult choice, she will support the FY04 Budget. She stated that it is interesting that 70% of the District budget comes from the state. She stated that all 60 legislators and the governor campaigned on making education their top priority and added that she hopes the public remembers when they vote.

Dr. Anderson stated that the FY04 Budget is a sham but that he will vote for it because he feels that the Board doesn't have another option. He stated that the public should not have illusions that there will not be additional cuts. He stated that if the governor's budget is passed, the Board will have to cut an additional \$5 million. He stated that if the legislature adds \$155 or \$165 per student in the funding formula, the Board may not have to do too much damage and added that he does not know where additional cuts will come from. He stated that he will support the budget because the Board must approve a balanced budget.

FY04 Budget (continued):

Ms. Germano stated that the best the Board can hope for is to put back a supply budget and maybe some unallocated staffing funds. She stated that additional money will not change the situation by adding teachers into the classroom. She stated that each Board member is committed to teachers. She stated that the Board will revisit the budget and added that she had every intention of voting against it but realizes that this is the best thinking at the time. She stated that she hopes the Board will discuss the issue of funding extracurricular activities.

VOTE:

YES – Anderson, Crawford, Germano, Mullins, Arness

NO – Gilman, Poindexter

Motion carried.

POLICY REVISION:

(Tape 2, 1924)

Dr. Whiteley recommended the Board approve the adoption of BP 5145.31, Students in Transition (Homelessness). He explained that if the policy is not adopted before the fall audit, the federal government could freeze funds to the District which equals in excess of \$4 million.

Margaret Gilman asked if the federal government will provide money for transporting the “students in transition.” Mr. Matiya responded that there would be money through Central Area Rapid Transit System (CARTS). Mr. Matiya further explained that the District is in the process of identifying the homeless population which will take a long time to accomplish.

Mrs. Crawford confirmed that there are approximately 100 homeless students. Mr. Matiya stated that the District has hired a classified staff person to work with local agencies to locate homeless students.

Mrs. Gilman asked how many homeless people live in the Borough. Mr. Matiya stated that the federal definition of a homeless student is a person who is not spending the night in their own residence.

Ms. Germano asked whether there is a count period to calculate the number of homeless youth. Mr. Matiya stated that defining and locating homeless students becomes very hard because of the many reasons why students aren’t living at home.

MOTION:

Mrs. Crawford moved the Board approve the adoption of BP 5145.31, Students in Transition (Homelessness). Ms. Germano seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS/
COMMENTS:**

(Tape 2, 2255)

Mrs. Jennie Hammond, Nikiski resident, asked the Board to use funds from local, state and federal governments for items that cannot be funded from other sources and suggested the Board consider using grants to pay for extracurricular activities.

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

Mr. Richard Warrington, State Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board Member, invited the Board to attend the Brain Awareness Week Walk for Awareness, Saturday, May 31, at 11:00 a.m. at Kenai Central High.

Mrs. Cassandra McMahon asked the Board to visit both Nikiski elementary schools and talk to the teachers and students before making a decision to close either one.

Mr. Jim Beeson cited the value and impact of extracurricular activities and added that many students would not be in

school if it were not for extracurricular activities.

BOARD COMMENTS:

(Tape 2, 3055)

Mrs. Mullins congratulated those who were given Golden Apple awards and the students who received Spirit of Youth nomination certificates. She thanked the youth for presenting the Soldotna High School report. She stated that she was impressed with the Blue Ribbon Task Force report and added that she is pleased that members of the community and business community have taken an active role in informing the Board about what they want students to know when they graduate. She reminded those present that the Board's responsibility is to approve a balanced budget and noted that she has not liked the District budget since 1986. She stated that she feels certain that the Board will revisit the FY04 budget. She stated that currently the local economy is unpredictable and noted that a Nikiski business will be reducing their workforce and another business in the Kenai area has left the community. She stated that families may be forced to relocate which will affect enrollment in August.

Dr. Anderson stated that the primary interest of each Board is what is best for students. He explained to those present that the state limits the amount of money the District can receive and noted that the Borough has generously funded the District at the cap and has found ways to contribute even more money. He explained that the reason Aurora Borealis Charter School has a lower pupil-teacher ratio is because their teachers cost less and that they require every parent to be involved in the school. He predicted that there will be a disaster if the governor's budget passes. He stated that decisions regarding additional cuts to the FY04 budget will be difficult. He stated that consolidation of the two elementary schools in Nikiski is in the best interest of the students and that he supports the idea. He stated that there may be more school consolidations within the next two or three years in order to balance the budget. He alerted Mrs. Glick that he and other Board members are interested in pursuing a lawsuit (at Borough expense) against the state to get the District a fair and equitable area cost differential. He stated that as soon as the legislature disregards the Area Cost Study information the District should pursue reparation for the damage caused by the unfair cost differential that has been in effect for a number of years. Dr. Anderson recognized Mr. Arness for his generous assistance with homeless people. He recognized Mr. Misha Vaissenberg, former District student and son of Mr. Grigori Vaissenberg, who is serving in the military in Iraq and wished Misha and other Peninsula military personnel a safe return.

BOARD COMMENTS (continued):

Mrs. Gilman congratulated those who received Golden Apple and Spirit of Youth awards. She stated that Mrs. Mae Hughes is at Sears Elementary each morning and noted that she is an excellent example to students by showing them that people in the community care about them and their education. She reported that she attended the K-Beach Elementary Artist-in-

the-School presentation and reception and added that Mt. View Elementary also hosted the Artist-in-the-School Program. She reported that U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski was invited to speak to the fourth grade students. Senator Murkowski stated that she was very impressed with the students and commented that their questions were better prepared and more in-depth than any group of reporters she has faced. She thanked those who testified during the meeting. She responded to the Nikiski parent who asked why the Board did not set aside money for the future by explaining that there has not been any money to set aside. Mrs. Gilman asked whether the Soldotna High students could webcast the Board meetings as long as it does not cost anything.

Mrs. Crawford extended congratulations to those who received awards. She thanked Mr. Dusek for the Soldotna High School presentation and noted that the school play, *We Were Stardust*, was written, produced, and directed by a Soldotna High teacher. She noted that this is the first time the District has had a team place in state mock trial competition. She noted that it was a great honor to serve on the Blue Ribbon Task Force. She thanked Dr. Peterson for her work on the Consolidation Plan and thanked the administration for their work on the FY04 budget. She asked those present to assist the Board in lobby efforts during the last thirty days of the legislative session. Mrs. Crawford told Dr. Peterson that she would like to serve on the Superintendent Scholarship Committee.

Mr. Poindexter stated that he was impressed with the students that received the Spirit of Youth awards. He stated that Mr. Cameron Poindexter (student representative) was absent from the meeting because he was setting up the FFA State Convention in Palmer. He stated that he supports the idea of a lawsuit against the state for inequitable funding especially if the District does not see any improvement in funding the FY04 Budget. Mr. Poindexter announced that within five years there will be 350 jobs that will be available in the state in the field of natural resources. He stated that Governor Murkowski is counting on natural resources to help bridge the budget deficit. He stated that he has been facilitating a natural resources class in Homer funded by the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District. He stated that the Homer and Kenai offices are willing to fund more programs and suggested that they be added to the Workforce Coalition Memorandum of Agreement.

BOARD COMMENTS (continued): Ms. Germano stated that the District has been under funded for 20 years and that it is time to pursue a lawsuit. She stated that extracurricular activities should not only be a model for leadership, but also for volunteerism. She stated that the Board has said that the \$245,000 in extracurricular travel money could be paid for by parents. She noted that the additional \$1.4 million is coaching stipends and retirement for coaching. She stated that she is not asking teachers to volunteer to

coach. She suggested that local communities decide which activities are important and then ask parents to organize and pay for them. She noted that this would allow the School Board to put more of its resources into educating students. She stated that there are a lot of excellent programs run by volunteers.

Mr. Arness stated that this year the Board suspected the worse funding picture. He stated that he doesn't have a problem supporting the FY04 budget and added that the Board will probably revisit the budget more than once. He stated that extracurricular activities are in jeopardy more than ever before. He reported that all seven of his children attended Nikiski area schools and added that they all received a good education. He stated that the statements about how badly Nikiski students are doing are untrue. He stated that he does not mind the discussion regarding whether to reconfigure or consolidate the Nikiski elementary schools but asked that those who wish to present to the Board make sure that they have the correct facts. He stated that it would be hard for the District to retain its credibility and operate two schools less than half full within 5 miles of each other. He cautioned the Nikiski residents in the audience to be careful what they say about Nikiski since they are ambassadors of the community.

ADJOURN:
(Tape 2, 5325)

At 10:54 p.m., Mrs. Crawford moved the School Board Meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Germano seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Joe Arness, President

Mrs. Deborah Germano, Clerk

The Minutes of April 21, 2003
were approved on May 5, 2003
with a correction.