

**Seward Schools' Site Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**January 18, 2024**

**Attendance:**

Jennifer Swander, Christiana Smith, Jenn DesErmia, Dr. Henry Burns, Jr., Heather Lindquist, Matt Cook, Traci Baumgardner, Mica Van Buskirk, Deanna Trobaugh, Geri Nipp, Tara Swanson

**Call to Order:** 6:03 pm

**Public Comments:** Mica shared that Zoom is a possible option if it is requested ahead of time.

**Approval of the Agenda:** Approved

**Reports from Student Representatives:** None (Would love to get student reps involved!)

**Old Business:**

- 2024 Site Council Goals:
  - *Sharing School Highlights*—There is less exposure for our schools now since the local paper stopped printing. Facebook might be a good way to share these. Someone from the city asked if they could get school newsletters out and would like to disseminate them through the city clerk. That would be great! It was asked if there is an electronic newspaper out there? No. The *Peninsula Clarion* occasionally does great sports press releases about Seward schools and about emergency info. The city chamber is also trying to get an events page going; they are excited to share good things going on in our schools.
  - *Advocacy*—big focus for this semester. In the fall we advocate for district funding and in the spring we advocate for a BSA increase.
  - *Digital Safety*—Digital Safety Day is Feb. 7th nationwide. Plan to set up a committee and also get the police involved. There is an interest in this at the elementary with some parents. We would like to see it broadened from Digital Safety to Digital Use. Would Scrivo be interested in presenting at the HS with Sources of Strength? Might be better to involve SOS than the police. Could be peer-led presentations/workshops afterward, like a mentorship. SOS already has an event on Feb. 9th during 3rd period. It is a peer-led mentoring that Wally is in charge of. Could we piggyback on that? Christiana will contact Scrivo. Like to put on our goals list getting a School Resource Officer. Dr. Burns talked to Officer Schaeffermeyer about this. Asst. Superintendent Kari Dendurent met w/ chief of police and it went great, but SPD is super-short-staffed right now.
  - *District Formula/Alternative Ed*—KPBSD had a work session in December. You can find useful info about it at [KPBSD.org>Board>Public Info>Dec 2023 meeting >Work Sessions>For School Formula](https://www.kpbsd.org/Board/Public%20Info/Dec%202023%20meeting%20Work%20Sessions/For%20School%20Formula), then click on the agenda at the bottom.
  - *Business Partnerships/Career Day*—Scheduled for March 20th in the afternoon. It was suggested that maybe this could be a biannual event in the future to maximize its effectiveness and because it is such a huge undertaking—how about a big event one year then follow up with a smaller event focused on matching students with businesses. Debriefing meeting afterward talked about mini-field trips to get kids into businesses behind the scenes, even younger kids. Want to

follow through. Maybe the Student Success Liaison could go out into the community. (The new position is 0.5FTE SSL and 0.5FTE online support.) For example, there is an MOA with the AK SeaLife Center right now that has 4 members and includes research/art/digital, etc. The ASLC approached the HS.

- *Honors Diploma Review*—There was a committee meeting in December about this. Unless there are any objections here, the new HD document will be enacted.
- *Strategic Planning*—The session should be led by a professional and has been postponed to hopefully get a grant for it. It was mentioned that ASLC education director is trained in strategic planning and has been contacted about this. KPBSD did have a strategic planning session with the asst. city mgr, mayor, PTA, school board, Chamber, AVTEC, principals, Site Council president, etc. They listed assets in the community and came up with lots of interesting things. They want to formalize connections between all these entities. The next meeting could be bigger-picture ideas, long-term vision, priorities, values, etc. with facilitators. It was mentioned that it would be nice to have actual stakeholders present, like parents and teachers. Dr. Burns stated that the SBC is only an advisory body with no real decision-making power. It was stated that we're all very aware of this. It was mentioned that although it is wonderful to make use of our local resources, we have to be careful that we do not create equity gaps between communities that do/do not have wonderful local resources; we need to hold the state and district accountable to provide what students need. It was mentioned that Ms. Dendurent had said that we need to be careful that we don't devalue certified teachers. Hopefully, we will get some grant funding for a community wide strategic planning meeting. KPBSD has scheduled April 2nd for the next one.
- **Committee Meetings:**
  - *Career Day*—meeting is set for next Tuesday, Jan. 23rd at 9:45am at the HS..
  - *High School Dress Code*—There is no official committee meeting for this item. Dr. Burns has been given a school year to adopt a new dress code for the high school. He distributed copies of SoHi's dress code/policy to all present at the October meeting. He asked us to look over it and give input by emailing comments to him directly. He just wants feedback; it does not need approval.
  - *4-Day School Week*—We will not set a committee meeting date right now. Mica suggested that we listen to the recording of the special meeting(s) about the 4-day school week. A survey may come out on this topic. Matt C. shared that he feels like there are more pros than cons for a 4-day school week based on what he has heard from administrators in the surrounding area of his last district down South...Someone mentioned that many people work on flextime now, so it may not be a huge problem for parents. It was said that the 4-day work week is not necessarily to save money but to be more purposeful with our time in schools. Listen to the Board Docs on these meetings.

**New Business:**

- FY25 Budget/Advocacy:

- *Budget 101 on KPBSD website*—KPBSD Finance Dir. has created 4 budget 101 sessions on the district's Finance page. 45 minutes each. Good to watch! The more you know, the better.
- *Public Testimony*—Legislature started this week. There was a big push before, but we didn't get the BSA increase last time—instead a one-time funding. 5 days to overturn the governor's veto. Our reps are Ben Carpenter, Ruffridge, Sarah Vance—those three stopped it from going to the floor. There is a meeting Thursday night about it. Really need BSA increase early in the year, especially since it is a contract year. Senate Bill 140 was approved in the spring; it is still open and went to House Tuesday. It would increase internet to the Bush and provide \$680 increase to BSA. District needs \$144million for next year. Status quo is not enough. There is a public hearing accessible at our local LIO office. Speak at the public hearing of the House Rules is this Sat. 10am. Go to the LIO office, or email. Cassie D is the new LIO info officer. Do not need a formal public speech. We just need to say that we are in support of SB140. Carpenter says he wants to talk about it, that's why he is blocking the veto, and is not necessarily against it.

We do not have enough certified teachers at the high school to fulfill all of the graduation requirements in person for our students, for example: Health. It was brought up that we need to be careful that we do not exaggerate this. Health can be taught by a PE teacher or Science teacher or Science majors.

Admin. Contracts go out in Feb. as well as SpEd and Math/Science. Tenured in March, nontenured later. Education is usually decided on later in the legislative session but this year it is more pressing. Admins who go to Juneau seem to get a lot of bang for the buck. In Feb., Mica is bringing kids to the Floor in Juneau on their way to the Ocean Sciences Bowl in Ketchikan. We need to talk to Juneau before we talk to our own School Board. It's super-important to email and talk at public hearing. Keep sharing info and watching for emails.

- *Alaska Reads Act*—Sounds like a good goal to have. What affects us most is the intervention piece. Students must read on grade level by 3rd grade. K-3 all need research-based curriculum. Those not meeting GL must have an IRIP-Individualized Reading Plan with documented intervention for their tier. The new language arts curriculum is called CKLA. Teachers are saying that the pros are that it is vocabulary-rich and students seem to enjoy it. The cons are that it came on quickly and it takes SO much time out of the school day; student engagement can become difficult. Also, K is not a compulsory grade, so some students enter school at 1st grade. Good news: In the data days recently, it was discovered that at Seward EI, the results are the best they've seen in a long time. There was no \$\$ added into the budget to support this new mandate by the state.

#### **Reports from Administrators, School Board Rep. & PTSA Rep.**

- *Matt Cook - Seward Elementary*: Enrollment of 225. Still need a head custodian and interventionist. Upcoming events are xc skiing for 3 weeks, then volleyball/science club offered by Mark Swanson /monthly Muffins in the Morning/recycled materials art project for each grade w/Andrew Scrivo/Spelling Bee Jan. 31st

- *Henry Burns - Seward Middle School:*
  - Enrollment of 106 with 112 projected next yr.
  - Upcoming events are Early Release on Fri. Jan. 26/Parent-Teacher Conferences Feb. 15-16 with dinner provided/Budget Mtg Feb. 28 at 5pm.
  - The middle school has financial issues, so this year, the high school's July 4th camper & RV space rental fundraiser will extend to the middle school as well. The \$\$ will be divided between all sports, mostly to replace the "vintage" uniforms. Students started a school store and have made \$100+ in 2 days.
  - Ms. Liljemark is Teacher of the Month and Josh is Support Staff Member of the Month. Looking for tutor position at middle school. Still need resource SpEd but may get our staff member back in March. Mr. Green went down to MS to fill in. Marissa and Sarah F. have been full-time subs and CJ, too. Very thankful for our subs! In a really good spot right now. The schedule will be done for the new MS principal when hired. The FTE is the driving force.
- *Henry Burns - Seward High School:*
  - Enrollment of 155 with 173 projected next yr.
  - Upcoming events are Early Release on Fri. Jan. 26/Parent-Teacher Conferences Feb. 15-16 with dinner provided/Budget Mtg Feb. 28 at 5pm/Easter Egg Hunt with 10,000 eggs, age groups, bunny costume, etc.
  - Unions are negotiating as well as asst. Superintendent and superintendent.
  - Finally fully staffed in the SpEd dept. Dylan Gillespie is new in the SpEd Dept. Olivia is the new attendance secretary. Nicole Stover is the new Students in Transition Liaison for this whole side of the district. Ms. Swander is Teacher of the Month. Ryan is Support Staff Member of the Month.
  - The July 4th camper & RV space rental fundraiser will continue this summer. There will be night duty shifts and security shifts by off-duty SPD. Will rent shower stalls. There were 200 people on property last year, so there should be a \$2400 profit for showers. Vendors and food trucks will have a flat rate of \$200.
  - Construction of the new track/field should start at the beginning of May and finish mid-July, so will need to look at alternative plans for some sports. (Mica added that the Boro said the bid goes out Jan. 26, construction should start May 9, finish July 26, with final walk-through on Aug. 9.)
- *Virginia Morgan - School Board*– unable to attend
- *Jennifer DesErmia - PTA:* The PTA pays for the Kids2Slopes downhill ski program at the middle school through grants from Youth360, the Seward Community Foundation, and KMTA. The Breeze Inn generously comped a room for the busdriver that came over to drive the ski bus...They will not be writing a grant for next year, so if anyone wants to take this on, a major grant cycle is opening now. (Geri Nipp mentioned that KFT will have Locals' Day on May 12–free boat tours, just asking for donation to Seward PTA!)

**Council Remarks...Round Table...Closing Thoughts:** It was mentioned that it would be great to have the high school announcements published on the website each day.

**Next Site Council Quarterly Meeting:** Wed. Feb. 7 at 6pm Seward El Library (with the PTA)

**Adjourn:** 8:06 pm