

KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

148 N. Binkley Street

Soldotna, AK 99669

October 21, 2002

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

Dr. Nels Anderson, President
Ms. Deborah Germano, Vice President
Mrs. Sammy Crawford, Clerk
Mr. Joe Arness, Treasurer
Mrs. Debra Mullins, Member
Mrs. Margaret Gilman, 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:

Mr. Jim White	Mr. John Harro
Mrs. Paula Christensen	Mrs. Cheryl Schweigert
Mr. Sam Stewart	Ms. Cathy Bishop
Mrs. Lassie Nelson	Mr. Steve Wright
Mrs. Debbie Stewart	Mr. John Tabor
Dr. Roy Anderson	Mrs. Terri Carter
Mr. Seth Letzring	Mr. Rick Matiya
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Rob Carson
Mr. Dave Carey	Mr. Charlie Stevens
Mrs. Pam Burns	Mrs. Bernie Wensley
Mr. Moore	Mr. Buck George
Mrs. Candice Goldstein	Mrs. Barbara George
Mr. Brad Drake	Ms. Barbara McNinch
Ms. Rosemary Pilatti	Miss Rachel Goldstein
Mr. Chuck Chavka	Mr. Dave McCard

Others present not identified.

CALL TO ORDER:

Dr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Dr. Anderson invited those present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

OATH OF OFFICE:

The Oath of Office was administered to newly elected School Board members Mrs. Margaret Gilman, Mrs. Debra Mullins, and Dr. Nels Anderson by Notary Public, Mrs. Sally Tachick.

ROLL CALL:

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	Present

- APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved with the deletion of Item 10c., Approval of Resolution 02-03-10, GO Bonds.
- REORGANIZATION OF BOARD: Dr. Anderson announced that a reorganization of the Board was in order.
- REORGANIZATION OF BOARD
(continued):
ACTION Mrs. Mullins nominated Mr. Joe Arness as president of the Board. Mrs. Mullins requested that nominations for president be closed. Mrs. Crawford seconded.
Motion carried with a secret ballot vote of six YES, one NO.
- ACTION Mrs. Gilman nominated Mrs. Sammy Crawford as vice president of the Board. Mrs. Mullins requested that nominations for vice president be closed. Mr. Poindexter seconded.
Motion carried unanimously.
- ACTION Mrs. Crawford nominated Ms. Germano as clerk of the Board. Mrs. Mullins requested that nominations for clerk be closed. Mrs. Crawford seconded.
Motion carried unanimously.
- ACTION Mrs. Crawford nominated Mrs. Gilman as treasurer of the Board. Mrs. Mullins requested that nominations for treasurer be closed. Mrs. Crawford seconded.
Motion carried unanimously.
- ESTABLISH MEETING TIME, DATE
AND PLACE:
ACTION Ms. Germano moved the Board set its meeting time, date and place for 7:30 p.m. on the first and third Monday of each month at the Borough Administration Building, Soldotna (unless otherwise noted) and that two meetings be scheduled in Homer and Seward in the fall and spring. Mrs. Crawford seconded.
Motion carried unanimously.
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The School Board Minutes of October 7, 2002, were approved as printed.
- SCHOOL REPORT: Mr. Brad Drake, Tebughna Elementary/High principal, gave a PowerPoint presentation that included pictures of the school and teacher housing, video clips of students reading, working on assignments, completing projects in shop and metals classes, participating in physical education, and learning to swim at the Nikiski Pool. He stated that the school is concentrating on raising literacy skills. He stated that some of the best things about Tyonek are the supportive parents, the students, and the opportunity to live in a rural community.
Ms. Germano reported that teacher housing for Tyonek is on the capital improvement projects list.
Mr. Drake reported that Tebughna Elementary/High has an enrollment of 45 students in kindergarten through 12th grade and that the enrollment has stabilized over the past five years.
Mr. Poindexter asked whether art, music, and cultural activities were available at the school. Mr. Drake responded that the school offers art but is lacking in music and

cultural activities. He reported that he would like to solicit help from the community to offer cultural activities.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

Mr. Dave Carey stated that because of a possible strike in February, there may not be a state tournament for wrestling, hockey or cross country skiing. He stated that the School Board has accused employees of unprofessional behavior. He stated that it is wrong to blame teachers and support staff for the current situation. Mr. Carey outlined his educational and personal history including awards and special recognition. He stated that he tried three separate times to seek employment with the District and was finally hired at Soldotna High. He stated that after twenty-three years of teaching he is facing retirement. He stated that he loves his students, but feels that he has been betrayed by the Board of Education. He stated that he was betrayed when the District hired an "outsider" who brutally crucified employees. He stated that he would not betray the support employees. He suggested the Board ask the Borough Assembly and Borough Mayor for financial help and added that they want to help but need to feel that they have been asked. He stated that taxpayers would be better served if next year's nine-member Board were abolished and the Borough Assembly took over the administration of the schools.

Ms. Rosemary Pilatti, North Star Elementary Title 1 language arts and math teacher, read a message from the school:

The educators at North Star are concerned with the direction negotiations have gone, especially our first day, when we were informed that our salaries would be frozen.

As you are aware, employees arrive before school, stay after school and work on weekends. We are not compensated for extra time, nor do we expect it. We exhibit our dedication to goals and to our students in this way.

This year we've been asked to teach another subject, music. We have not had recent training in the planning and implementation of a full music program.

Our class size numbers are unusually high. We urge you as school board members elected to support educators in striving to present the best education possible to the youth of this District, to settle the contract with a percentage increase similar to other districts in the state with no co-pay on insurance and the elimination of the Tier II salary schedule. Tier II employees were frozen at a step in the present contract, receiving less credit for employment than others. Other employees received no cost of living raise.

We are expected to work for less money as we go along and we expect and deserve to work for more money.

Thank you from these members of the North Star staff: Lesley Weatherman, Ruby Bingham, Laurie Moon, Henry Anderson, Brian Zinck, Charmain Lundy, Linda Zimmerman, Teresa Zinck, Barb Arness, Gloryann Baily, Rosemary Pilatti, Kellie Kelso.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS (continued): Ms. Barbara McNinch, occupational therapist, stated that the District is short on physical and occupational therapists, which has caused her caseload to become unmanageable. She stated that the overwhelming caseload is not good for her health and family, or the students that she serves. She stated that she is spread so thin that she cannot begin to put forth best practice. She stated that she loves her work and wants to love her job. She stated that the District needs to offer a competitive salary to attract teachers and nationally certified specialists. She asked the Board to help support a competitive salary schedule and consider awarding additional money for national certificate holders.

Ms. Linda Ralston, Nikiski High teacher, stated that she loves teaching math. She stated salaries have not kept up with the cost of living and that her salary was increased only because she spent two years completing a master's degree. She stated that the increase was negated with the cost of co-pay for health insurance. She stated that in order for the District to be competitive and attract high quality candidates, teachers should receive a significant increase. She stated that a student can graduate from high school can earn \$60,000 or more without additional degrees. She agreed that the state should contribute more money to education. She stated that she does not want to strike but will if it is necessary. She stated that all children deserve the best teachers and asked the Board to provide a contract that shows that they value teachers. She stated that she would like to stay for the Board Comments section but will probably leave because she has a 45-minute drive home, has not seen her family, and has papers to grade.

Mr. Dave McCard stated that reputations have been damaged and careers have been destroyed during the negotiations process. He stated that where he once felt respect, love, and understanding there is now hatred, bitterness, anger and mistrust. He clarified rumors regarding an apology by Dr. Peterson, a school Board member comment about money being available in the budget but that the Board would not pay for a salary increase, and harsh words spoken to the KPEA spokesperson. He also clarified that a request was made to Dr. Peterson and Dr. Anderson by the Inservice Committee not to make any comments regarding negotiations at the Districtwide inservice but the same request did not apply to the KPEA president.

Mr. Chuck Chavka, Redoubt Elementary teacher, told the KPEA/KPESA bargaining team that Redoubt Elementary is 100% behind them and that the staff appreciates their time and effort. He told the Board that the staff is disappointed in the progress made in the negotiation process. He stated that some Board members have displayed arrogance and added that relations are at the least, strained, at the worst, broken. He stated that the Redoubt Elementary staff encourages the Board to settle negotiations at mediation and added that the staff is in support of, and is preparing to participate in a strike, if necessary.

Miss Rachel Goldstein, Soldotna High student, stated that her parents are teachers and work many additional hours. She stated that she has had the pleasure of being taught by the best teachers available and asked the Board to do everything possible to support them; otherwise the District will loose quality employees.

Mrs. Shirley Zobeck, Skyview High bookkeeper, reviewed the amount of time involved in training new staff each year. She noted that as many as three days are spent at the beginning of each school year training new teachers, custodians, and

secretaries. She stated that she is a valued employee and is worth a lot.

Mr. Arness recognized Mr. Harbison's government students in the audience.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS (continued): Mr. John Harro, Soldotna Middle School computer teacher, summarized his 16-year work history. He stated that he came to Alaska from a poor district in Idaho and was astounded at the opportunities available on the Kenai Peninsula. He stated that he was amazed by the Staff Development Program and the District Media Center and added that there is still so much to be thankful for. He stated that he was not a supporter of the Union and that he does not agree with many of NEA's policies, but is a member because the District is a closed shop. He stated that he has been extremely proud of the way Mr. Bilben, Mrs. Carrow, and Mr. George have handled the negotiations process and have been impressed with their professionalism. He stated that teachers and the Union as a whole have shown professionalism and added that he hopes that the School Board and administration can return the same kind of professionalism. He asked the Board to increase salaries, reduce the health insurance copay, and put employees on even ground with other Alaskan districts. He stated that in support of local businesses he plans to purchase a warm winter coat at Sweeney's.

Mr. Joe Rizzo, Nikiski High teacher and debate coach, stated that although he earns slightly more than \$40,000 a year, his check is only \$2,300 each month once the health insurance, Union dues, and taxes are deducted. He stated that he has four children in the school system and two more on the way. He stated that at a rate of \$6,000 per child, the District owes him money. He asked the Board to let the teachers know they are appreciated in the form of additional money.

Mr. Rob Moore, Soldotna Middle School teacher, stated that his best two years of teaching were as a volunteer at St. Mary's Mission. He stated that it has been tough adjusting to the retirement of Mr. Dave Schmidt, former Soldotna Middle School band teacher, at a time when his son had just discovered the joy of music. He stated that the change in his son was remarkable and credits Mr. Schmidt. He stated that he was shocked and dismayed to read statements that highly competent teachers are easy to replace and added that Mr. Schmidt's retirement was a huge loss to his son. He stated that he is upset by the logic of rewarding excellent teachers, such as Mr. Schmidt, with money to leave. Mr. Moore stated that when he is doing a good job teaching he is priceless and cannot be paid what he is worth, but when he is not teaching well he cannot be punished enough. He asked the Board to be reasonable and reach a fair settlement.

Mr. Paul Zobeck, Skyview High School physical education teacher, stated that Mr. Drake's school presentation touched his heart since he and his wife started their careers in Tyonek. He stated that it has been a privilege to teach with Mr. Carey, Mr. Bilben, Mrs. Crawford, and Mrs. Tabor. He stated that during the last two years, Skyview High has hired 20 new teachers which he feels are signs of a trend within the District to teach elsewhere. He stated that the professional manner to acknowledge good teachers is through remuneration. He asked the Board to address the salary issue during mediation and added that the staff at Skyview High is united and in support of Mr. Bilben.

Mr. Steve Wright, K-Beach Elementary custodian, stated that Mrs. Karen Mahurin, former KPESA president, told him that this negotiation session has been the worst she has seen in 25 years. He stated that as a result, she retired from the District. He

stated that there are many employees who feel the same. He stated that Mrs. Mahurin left because of Mr. Putney and the awful negotiations sessions. He told the Board not to question the resolve of those in attendance because there are hundreds of more employees who feel the same.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS: Dr. Peterson reported that AASB distributed a fact sheet regarding Proposition C, which is also being sent to “super voters.”

ADVISORY COMMITTEE, SITE COUNCIL, AND/OR P.T.A., K.P.A.A., K.P.E.A., K.P.E.S.A.:

Mr. Hans Bilben, Skyview High teacher and KPEA president, thanked Dr. Anderson for the public apology for the problems created by Mr. Richard Putney during the negotiations process. He stated that he wished the apology could have gone a step further by accepting responsibility for bringing him to the District and an admission of the reason he was hired. Mr. Bilben told Mr. Arness that Mr. Putney was not a replacement for Mrs. Radtke as earlier stated. He stated that he feels he must defend himself from allegations that have been repeatedly stated in public by Board members and others that an apology concerning Mr. Putney’s actions came from Dr. Peterson to the Union leadership and was not conveyed to the members. He stated that the three Union leaders present at the February meeting were Mr. George, Mrs. Carrow, and himself. He stated that after conferring, the three Union leaders do not recall an apology. He stated that two weeks ago Dr. Peterson offered an apology for the actions of the District spokesperson on email and via telephone. He stated that he conveyed the contents of the apology to the employees who attended the general meeting and noted that the apology is accepted. Mr. Bilben stated that two weeks ago Ms. Germano encouraged all employees to review the proposals on the District website. He stated that after researching the Mat-Su School District and Anchorage School District labor contracts, there were mistakes in the comparison on the District website. He stated that after reporting the mistakes to the administration, the entire comparison section was removed instead of corrected. Mr. Bilben told Dr. Anderson that for as long as he can remember the Board and past short-term superintendents have endorsed the doctrine that any desire for economical gain on the part of District employees is unrealistic. He stated that since 1985 District employees have seen salary freezes, reductions, Tier II salary schedule, skyrocketing health care costs, and no raises (except 1991) that addressed the cost of living. He stated that employees have continually given financial concessions, time concessions, and allowed the budget to be balanced on their backs and in spite of it all, continue to be dedicated professionals. He stated that had employee needs not been neglected for so many years, the Board would not be seeing such frustration and hostility. He stated that the trends of the past seventeen years cannot continue if public education is to survive in the District. He reported that Dr. Anderson, Mr. Arness, and Mr. Syverson have publicly stated that they hold promise that a mediator will help find solutions to the negotiations situation and added that he guardedly shares their optimism. He stated that the 1200 employees would like nothing more than a fair and equitable conclusion to the process. He told the Board that the resolve of the employees is strong and they will “go the distance”, if necessary. He urged Dr. Peterson and the Board to come to the bargaining table ready to settle the contract on November 19.

COUNCIL, AND/OR P.T.A., K.P.A.A., K.P.E.A., K.P.E.S.A. (continued): Mrs. Cathy Carrow stated that it was clear during the Homer meeting that the Board and Union leaders don’t have a working relationship, and do not know each other, which has contributed to the hostile situation. She stated that in an effort to remedy that problem she offered some of her thoughts and personal and career history. She stated that she served on the negotiating team in 1980 and summarized her

experiences. She stated that in some districts active involvement in the union can put one's position in the community as well as one's livelihood as a teacher in jeopardy and added that she does not want this to be the case for the Kenai Peninsula. She stated that three years ago she was asked to serve as the KPEA vice president. She recalled monthly meetings with the Association leadership and a member of the senior administration team and noted that during the meetings they discussed topics or activities in which the groups could work together and share common ground, such as obtaining better funding for education. She stated that the group agreed they could best serve public education, the students, and community by focusing on working together. She stated that the group discussed an idea to meet informally to preplan for negotiations and use a more collaborative style of bargaining. She stated that during the past year, the District has gone a long way off course and she expressed her frustration for the negotiation process. She reported that she did not recall an apology from Dr. Peterson during the February meeting but instead, Dr. Peterson expressed a desire to put the issue behind and start over on a more positive note. She stated that the Associations concurred and were not pleased with the manner in which the negotiations process had begun. She stated that the Associations were not asked to carry a message of apology back to the negotiations team. She stated that she did not come away from the February 22 meeting with Mr. Arness with a directive to convey an apology to the KPEA membership. She stated that she feels she must clarify accusations that she has kept an apology from the membership. She stated that it is unfortunate that the groups continue the "us" versus "them" mentality, and asked why the District must return to the adversarial role if the groups are to begin again. She stated that the real issue that the District should be talking about is, "How can we make the Kenai Peninsula the best place for children, parents, teachers, support staff, and Board members and everyone who is a stakeholder?" Mrs. Carrow reminded those present of an analogy made by Dr. Peterson about her role as superintendent in comparison to the captain of a ship. She told Dr. Peterson and Board members that she does not like the way the ship is sailing. She stated that she told Dr. Peterson two weeks ago that the Association has tried for a year, in every way possible, to communicate the message that they do not like the direction the ship is sailing. She stated that a reassessment of priorities is in order and believes that employees are the single most important factor in making schools successful. She stated that employees should have a place at the table when decisions are made that affect their work and student learning conditions. She stated that teachers should earn a fair salary and compensation package. She stated that after years of budget reductions, every penny should go to people. She stated that schools might have to sacrifice a new book, or go without new computers, or a new program. She urged the Board and administration to change the course of the ship and instead, search for common ground and begin a community and a society in which all are valued and compensated fairly.

COUNCIL, AND/OR P.T.A., K.P.A.A., K. P.E.A., K.P.E.S.A. (continued): Ms. Terri Woodward, KPESA president, stated that she was looking for a job when she was hired by the District and, at the time, did not think it would become a part of her life. She stated that as school staff positions are eliminated, jobs do not get done. She congratulated Dr. Peterson and Mrs. Mullins for the awards they received. She stated that she does not see respect being shown to the Union bargaining team by the Board and administration at the bargaining table. She stated that she would probably volunteer at the schools after she retires because it has become a part of her life and is not just a job. She asked the Board to come to the negotiating table to settle a contract and to look at the Union bargaining team with respect.

Mr. Buck George, KPEA bargaining team, stated that he does not remember an apology by Dr. Peterson during the February meeting. He stated that he told Dr. Peterson that he considered Mr. Putney a tool and that he held the superintendent and the Board members responsible for using the tool against employees. He stated that he has had one Board member apologize for any part that they may have played in bringing Mr. Putney to the District for the purpose of negotiations. He reminded those present that there are 60 plus articles to consider during mediation. He stated that nothing has been accomplished since Mr. Arness took over as spokesperson. He stated that the best offer has been \$.25/hour more in salary for those who are at the top of the salary schedule and added that that offer is not good enough. He asked the Board to come to mediation ready to bargain.

RECESS: At 8:54 pm. Mr. Arness called a recess.

RECONVENE AFTER RECESS: At 9:06 p.m. the Board reconvened in regular session.

Dr. Anderson stated that the people who are making financial decisions and offers regarding the KPEA and KPESA contracts are the members of the Board and not the superintendent or Central Office administration. He stated that if the Associations want to be angry, their disagreement is with the Board. He stated that Dr. Peterson is a wonderful person.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS: The Board acknowledged Dr. Peterson's selection by the Alaska Association of School Administrators as Alaska's 2003 Superintendent of the Year. Dr. Anderson noted that her application will be forwarded as a candidate for the national title, to be announced in February 2003.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Peterson announced that fall retakes for the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam will be October 28-30. She reported that the City of Seward accepted a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to establish a Community Oriented Policing Service in the schools. She announced that Mr. John Pothast, Skyview High principal, was chosen by the Secondary Administrator's Association to receive the Technology Leadership Award.

Financial Report: Mrs. Douglas presented the financial report of the District for the periods ending August 31 and September 30, 2002.

Budget Transfer Report: Mrs. Douglas reported on budget transfers Numbers 1 through 56 for various schools and departments within the District.

Budget Transfer Report (continued): Ms. Germano asked for an explanation of the copier allocation. Mrs. Douglas responded that the budget was not adjusted for copier expenses until the end of the FY02 school year, which meant that the FY03 budget needed to be adjusted at the beginning of the year. She added that the Board should not see a budget transfer of this nature in the future because the budgets are now set up in the correct accounts and the budget will carry forward correctly for FY04. She noted that there is a five-year pay off on the copiers.

Ms. Germano asked about budget transfers for extracurricular activities. Mrs. Douglas responded that the total allocation for cocurricular activities was revised at the end of the fiscal year and was transferred to establish budgets for the current fiscal year, in keeping with programmatic changes.

Mr. Poindexter asked why there were expenditures for specific programs where nothing was budgeted, such as Carl Perkins and Vocational Education. Mrs. Douglas responded that grants are awarded but not received until very late in the year and therefore programs are allowed the opportunity to purchase against the money before it is received.

BOARD REPORTS:

Mrs. Gilman reported that she and Ms. Germano attended the Fine Arts Curriculum meeting held in October. She stated that it was a pleasure to be in a room with people who love the subject of fine arts.

Mr. Poindexter reported that he and Dr. Anderson attended the science curriculum meetings on October 10 and 17. He stated that he anticipates a fairly dynamic science curriculum and noted that he is working with some very exceptional people.

Mr. Cameron Poindexter stated that on October 24-26 Bartlett High School is hosting the Alaska Association for Student Governments conference. He stated that he is excited to attend because students will make resolutions and forward them to the legislature for consideration.

Mrs. Mullins reported that she spoke to students in Mr. Larson's freshman English class. She thanked Mr. Larson for the invitation and noted that the students were respectful and inquisitive. She stated that she appreciates students who can have interactions with adults. She noted that it was a great opportunity to see what is going on in the buildings and classrooms.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Items presented on the Consent Agenda were Resignation, Long Term Substitute Teacher Contract, and New Teacher Assignments.

Resignation:

Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve a resignation from Susan Rorrison, kindergarten, Sears Elementary, (effective August 27, 2002).

Long-Term Substitute Teacher Contract:

Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve a substitute teaching contract for Susan Rorrison, kindergarten, Montessori Charter School.

New Teacher Assignments:

Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve teaching contracts for Kristina Salness, generalist (temporary), Kenai Alternative School; Patricia J. Truesdell, generalist 7-8 (temporary), Nikiski Middle/High School; Tammy Flanders, librarian (temporary), Mountain View Elementary; Nancy Thibodeau, Grade 4 teacher (temporary), Mountain View Elementary; Jennifer R. McDonald, middle school language arts/generalist, Seward Middle School; and Janice Hottman, Title I Teacher (temporary), West Homer Elementary.

**CONSENT AGENDA (continued):
ACTION**

Ms. Germano moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Items Numbers 1 through 3. Mrs. Crawford seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Capital Improvement Projects List:

Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve the Major Maintenance/Capital Improvements Projects List for the 2002-2003 school year. He noted that the list was compiled through the efforts of the Borough Maintenance Department, Borough Public Works Department, School District Planning and Operations Department and School District building administrators. Mr. Syverson stated that he is excited that the Number 1 priority is a new Seward Middle School and noted that teacher housing

for remote schools was Number 5.

ACTION

Mrs. Crawford moved the Board approve the Capital Improvements Projects List. Ms. Germano seconded.

Deb Germano reported that the Board had a good discussion about the priority list during the worksession held prior to the meeting. She stated that there are other things that should be on the list and noted that the Borough has helped to address many of the issues on the priority list.

Mrs. Gilman explained that the Board conducted a worksession on the Capital Improvements Projects list prior to the Board meeting. She stated that the members had a healthy discussion about the various projects on the list. She stated that she was excited that a new Seward Middle School is the first item on the list and thanked the voters for passing the bond issue and thanked the administration, other Board members, and community members for informing the voters. She stated that she objected to Number 15, resurfacing of four high school tracks, for \$1 million. She stated that even though the money comes from the Borough, she feels that there are better things that could be purchased for \$1 million and for that reason, will vote against the motion.

VOTE:

Advisory Vote – YES

YES – Mullins, Crawford, Anderson, Germano, Gilman, Poindexter

NO – Gilman

Motion carried.

**Student Expulsion:
Action**

Mrs. Mullins moved the Board approve the following: “SP is expelled for one-year in violation of District Policy BP 5131.7, Weapons and Dangerous Instruments and the Alaska State Statute 14.03.160, Suspension or Expulsions of Students for Possessing Weapons.” Dr. Anderson seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS/
COMMENTS:**

Mr. Henry Anderson, North Star Elementary teacher, stated that the Board has heard many heartfelt comments from District teachers and support staff. He stated that there is great support for all employees in the District to settle a better contract. He announced that he is the strike chairperson for KPEA and KPESA and added that, if necessary, he will lead the way. He stated that he hopes the employees will have a settled contract and that a strike will not be necessary.

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

Mrs. Fran Stetson, Tustumena Elementary School special education teacher, stated that she has had a tough year since her aide resigned because of the low salary. She told the Board that 100% of the school staff is behind the bargaining team and do not want to strike but will, if necessary.

Mr. Troy Minogue, Skyview High School teacher, stated that in the days when the District had money, many people took for granted the relationship between the Board, administration, and teachers. He stated that some hard decisions have to be made. He stated that the employees are drawing the line and that the Board needs to seek more money from the state. He asked the Board to help the teachers and support staff do their job.

Mr. Mike Gustkey thanked Mrs. Mullins for her comments regarding the respectful class of freshman students. He stated that respect comes from modeling and cannot be taught with worksheets or videos. He stated that teachers often deal with the issue of how to express frustration appropriately. He asked those present how to express criticism in a benign manner. He stated that the employees expressed criticism and frustration in a benign manner with the vote of no confidence. He stated that the no-confidence vote was considered by some to be unprofessional and then untasteful. He stated that he felt the no-confidence vote was a show of good problem solving. He asked the Board to give the teachers an incentive to continue to do an outstanding job teaching in the District.

Mr. Rick Fredrick, Nikiski high teacher, stated that he and many others are looking at other career options. He stated that he has taught students who have participated in the Caring for the Kenai contest and received presidential awards, and one student who appeared on Good Morning America. He stated that these same opportunities are available to his children but noted that it is changing. He stated that everyone present at the meeting came because they care about children and because of that, must set all differences apart. He acknowledged that the funding message must also go to the legislature. He stated that the question of how to fund employee raises is difficult because of the budget constraints. He stated that the District is at a pivotal point, and that people who are considering a move to the District will first consider the status of the schools. He asked the Board to give the teachers a fair contract, and to remember the children.

Mr. Roy Shapley, Sterling Elementary teacher, stated that in his previous career he visited many schools and had an opportunity to observe teachers. He stated that after his children were school aged, he became more impressed with District schools and decided to change careers and become a teacher. He stated that in previous occupations he learned that good employers surround themselves with good people and then get out of the way and let the employees do their work and then reward them. He asked the Board to look at their assets and protect them.

Mr. John Kennedy, Skyview High School teacher, stated that he taught for one year before he was laid off and ended up substituting 145 days during the following year. He stated that he read the contract proposal posted on the District website and that the numbers did not match. He stated that it is hard to know whom to believe. He stated that it is time to move on.

Ms. Judy Shields, Nikiski Elementary teacher, stated that 100 % of the staff are members of KPEA or KPESA and that all members want an equitable contract settled without a strike. She asked the Board to put an end to negotiations.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Mrs. Gilman thanked those present for attending the meeting. She stated that she is a Board member because she wanted to share her expertise as a twelve-year teacher and a parent of four children. She asked Mr. Carey to talk to her further regarding his idea of seeking additional funding from the Borough. She stated that she hopes that on November 19 an outside mediator can review the facts and come up with ideas to solve the bargaining problems. She stated that many of the comments expressed by those present dealt with class size, music and art programs. She stated that the Board conducted a worksession prior to the meeting regarding comprehensive schools and reported that in order for an elementary school to be comprehensive and offer art, music, library, and physical education, it needs to have

an enrollment of approximately 500 students. She noted that very few schools in the District have 500 students. She stated that when she attended Kenai Elementary there were nowhere near 500 students and yet she had music and physical education and library. She stated that in 1982 when she attended Kenai Central High students flew to competitions in Anchorage in the winter because the roads were considered unsafe. She agreed with comments that the Board should lobby the legislature for more money but added that the Board cannot do it alone. She urged those present to vote during the November 5 election for the candidate who they think would make funding education a priority and bring more money to the District and state.

Ms. Germano reported that the Board has tried to lobby the legislature for equitable funding for the District. She stated that the Board worked hard last year along with many of the people in attendance and thanked those who helped. She reported that the Board has spent a lot of time lobbying for more money from the legislature and will continue again this year.

Mrs. Crawford expressed her appreciation to all who spoke. She urged those present to vote for state and house candidates who will support additional funding for education and to vote for Proposition C. She stated that she is serving on the Board to make things better and has tried to make a difference. She announced that she is hosting KSRM Radio's Sound Off program on Friday mornings. She reported that her guests on Friday, October 19 were Mrs. Margaret Gilman and Mrs. Marilyn Dimmick who spoke about Proposition C. She stated that prior to the meeting the Board conducted worksessions regarding comprehensive schools and eighth grade credit. She thanked Mr. Drake for the school report. She thanked Dr. Anderson for serving as president during the past year. She thanked Dr. Peterson for her work as superintendent.

BOARD COMMENTS (continued):

Dr. Anderson stated that he would applaud many of the comments made by those present. He stated that he has never liked the negotiations process. He stated that while every member of the Board would like to give raises, they must balance the budget. He reported that since 1991 the increase to the District budget has been \$10 million (\$1 million/year) and of that amount \$8 to \$9 million went to step increases. He stated that the Board has done some terrible things in order to balance the budget such as, implemented the Tier II schedule, offered early retirements, gave limited credit for previous teaching experience for new employees, increased pupil/teacher ratios, and reduced support staff. He stated that the proposal offered by the District with the current funding available, will require the laying off of the equivalent of 20 teachers each year of the contract. He stated that if the District accepted the Union proposal, the Board would have to lay off 150 teachers or every noncertified employee to balance the budget. He stated that the Board spent about half of the FY02 Board travel budget trying to influence the legislature to provide additional funding for education. He stated that the Board is hopeful that when the Area Cost Differential Study is completed it will provide more money for the District. He stated that none of the Board members want to be adversarial and expressed concern that the things that have happened will leave people feeling bitter long after negotiations are over. He stated that there are times when he cannot sleep at night because he worries about the problems of the District and that it bothers him when he is accused of things that are untrue. He stated that he is hopeful the mediation process will result in a solution. He stated that he respects and admires all of the hard-working District employees. He thanked Mr. George for rescuing the flowers he planted next to the sign at Soldotna High School.

Mrs. Mullins stated that she is serving on the Board because she believes in an educated populace. She stated that she does not want to return to the days when the rich and privileged were the only ones to have an education. She stated that she believes in education for all people, and that all children can learn and deserve to learn. She stated that she hasn't spoken publicly about the negotiation process because it would not be appropriate since she is a member of the negotiating team. She stated that her job on the team is to sit and listen and not respond. She stated that she respects every person who sits at the negotiating table and expressed deep regrets for what has transpired during the negotiating process and offered her apology. She stated that teaching is a noble profession. She stated that she took numerous pages of notes and will impart comments made during the meeting to the legislature. She stated that she does not like the negotiations process and that sometimes both sides get caught up in emotions. She stated that she does not impugn the character of any person on the team, or in the leadership, or District employees. She stated that she has a longstanding appreciation for the people who work for the District. She stated that her family had many opportunities to leave the Kenai Peninsula but she wanted her children to attend schools in the District. She stated that she appreciates the efforts by teachers on behalf of her children. She stated that she decided to serve on the Board because she wanted to give something back to the community and will serve as long as the community will have her.

Mr. Cameron Poindexter stated that it has been a long day. He stated that not many students his age have the opportunity to experience such an intense meeting. He thanked those present for their comments and added that he enjoyed hearing both sides of the story.

BOARD COMMENTS (continued):

Mr. Poindexter agreed with Mrs. Mullins' comments. He stated that he began teaching in 1974 and added that there were times when he felt that the Board did not appreciate him. He stated that he understands how teachers feel. He stated that during his twentieth year of teaching his principal informed him that he would not be teaching the classes he was qualified to teach, instead, he would teach health. He stated that, as a result, he quit teaching. He stated that he is serving on the Board because he felt he could make a difference and could convey the needs and desires of teachers and students. He stated that every day he fights the battle of choosing whether to increase class sizes or watch teachers look for jobs elsewhere. He stated that the bucket is empty and asked those present where the money will come from. He reported that the Board spent many hours lobbying the legislature (some with their own money) for more money for education. He stated that the lack of funds is causing the dismantling of the District. He stated that he hopes that the mediation process will be successful. He extended his appreciation for those who stayed to listen to the Board Comments section.

Mr. Arness thanked those who stayed for the Board Comments section. He stated that it is frustrating to sit and listen and not be able to respond. He stated that the day when he can't look a District teacher in the eye and shake their hand and talk to them as an equal, he will know he has mistreated them and added that he is not at that point. He stated that he understands that everyone wants more money but explained that the Board has an obligation to operate a school system. He stated that he has a lot of confidence that the contract issue will be resolved. He thanked those persons who spoke for their comments and noted that the Board heard them.

ADJOURN:

At 10:06 p.m., Ms. Germano moved the School Board Meeting be adjourned. Ms. Crawford seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Joe Arness, President

Mrs. Deborah Germano, Clerk

The Minutes of October 21, 2002,
were approved on November 4, 2002
as written.