
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

Board of Education Meeting Minutes

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

Homer High School
600 E. Fairview Ave., Homer, Alaska

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS: Mrs. Sammy Crawford, President
Ms. Sandra Wassilie, Vice President
Mrs. Debra Mullins, Clerk
Mrs. Margaret Gilman, Treasurer
Ms. Deborah Germano
Dr. Nels Anderson
Mrs. Debbie Brown
Mr. Marty Anderson
Mrs. Sunni Hilts
Mr. DJ Tyson, Student Representative

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Ron Keffer Mr. Glenn Haupt
Mr. Randy Creamer Mrs. Paula Christensen
Mr. Charlie Walsworth Mr. Benny Abrahamson
Mr. Tim Peterson Mr. Jim White
Mrs. Norma Holmgaard Miss Katie Gavenus
Miss Samantha Halpin Mrs. Cathy Carrow
Mr. Harry Rasmussen Ms. Carey James

Others present not identified.

CALL TO ORDER: Mrs. Crawford called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

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

ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Sammy Crawford	Present
Ms. Deborah Germano	Present
Mrs. Margaret Gilman	Present
Mrs. Debra Mullins	Present
Dr. Nels Anderson	Present
Ms. Sandra Wassilie	Present
Mrs. Debbie Brown	Present
Mr. Marty Anderson	Present
Mrs. Sunni Hilts	Present
Mr. DJ Tyson	Present

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved as written.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The School Board Minutes of February 21, 2005, were approved with corrections.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS:

The Board presented Miss Samantha Halpin (for classroom volunteerism) and Miss Katie Gavenus (for establishing an ongoing recycling program), with the Spirit of Youth Award Nomination Certificate.

The Board presented Golden Apple awards to Harry Rasmussen, Homer Flex teacher, and Jeff Szarzi, Homer Flex teacher, for their service to the District. Mr. Rasmussen accepted the award for Mr. Szarzi who was not in attendance.

Mrs. Lorene Wentz, Homer Flex, was recognized for receiving the 2004-2005 Outstanding Performance Award from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

Dr. Peterson presented a 10-year service award pin to Ms. Germano.

SCHOOL REPORT:

Mr. Randy Creamer, Principal/Teacher, Kachemak Selo School, gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the unusual commute to school by staff, school facility, overcrowding situation, student enrollment, school improvements, and school activities.

Mr. Pete Swanson, McNeil Canyon Elementary School principal, gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the growing student population, cross-age activities, staffing, community support and involvement, annual school goals, classroom activities, assessment scores, academic competitions, staff development, student field trips, volunteers, artists-in-the-schools, and the 2004 National Blue Ribbon Award. Mr. Swanson expressed concern for the future of the school because of the many budget reductions that have impacted classrooms and programs. He announced that he will represent elementary principals during the upcoming AASSP/AAESP Legislative Fly-In in Juneau. He noted that his testimony to the legislature requesting additional education funding will not be as significant as testimony from parents and the general public because he is personally involved with the District.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

Ms. Laura Sheldon, McNeil Canyon Elementary secretary, expressed concern for budget reductions at the school and how they affect her job as well as the school principal. She expressed concern for the idea of regional principals. Mrs. Crawford asked Ms. Sheldon to share her story with state legislators.

**COMMUNICATIONS AND
PETITIONS:**

Dr. Peterson noted that the Career and Technical Education Curriculum still needs some work and is not ready for Board consideration as previously expected. Dr. Peterson noted that state grade level equivalents for reading, writing, and math for Grades 3 through 10 are included in the Board information packet. She explained that statewide tests are based on that information and can be accessed from the District website. Dr. Peterson announced that the Area Cost Study Update was recently released and meets the statutory requirement set forth in SB 36 which mandates a study to review the cost of educating students statewide. She noted that according to the report the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District has been under funded by \$10 million each year. She stated that there is no other district in the state that is under funded as much and for as long as the KPBSD. She stated that if the cost study does not prompt changes then the question of "Why are KPBSD children worth less than other students throughout the state?" needs to be answered. She urged those present to locate a copy of the study and testify to the legislature.

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

Mrs. Carrow, KPEA president, commended the Board for their continued commitment to addressing lower class sizes as reflected in the 2006 budget. She thanked the Board for their support for Area Cost Study Update and for the anticipated approval of Resolution 04-05-4 and noted that KPEA and KPESA will consider similar resolutions. She explained several reasons why the retirement funds (TRS, PERS) are in jeopardy and asked the Board to oppose changes in legislation that would result in employees burdening the cost of the rate increases to the public retirement system.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S
REPORT:**

Dr. Peterson reported that principal interviews have been conducted for Sears Elementary and Kenai Central High. She reported that the assistant superintendent position vacancy has been posted and that the assistant principal position at Kenai Central High School will soon be advertised. She reported that a Board worksession will be held to discuss the proposed changes to the Alaska Student Activities Associations eligibility requirements. She told the public that adequacy and equity in education funding are two key points to discuss with state legislators.

Ms. Germano stated that she is pleased that ASAA has proposed an increase to the grade expectation for eligibility. She expressed concern regarding the proposed eligibility requirement of 5 classes for participation since the District is funded at the level of 4 classes. Dr. Peterson responded that the proposed eligibility requirements have not been approved and information is currently being shared statewide via regional representatives.

**FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006
BUDGET:**

Mrs. Melody Douglas presented the 2005-2006 Preliminary School District Budget. She stated that education funding is moving through the legislative process very quickly. She advised the Board that the administration is on hold until more information comes from the legislature. She reported that the administration is working from the January 6 version of the preliminary budget and that additional recommendations regarding staffing to address needs at the secondary level will be brought to the Board. She stated the administration recommends that the additional staff be funded by allocating 7.5 FTE of the unallocated staff already included in the budget and noted that there is no impact to the budget total.

Ms. Germano expressed concern for the pupil activity account and the disparity between schools. She thanked Mrs. Douglas for the budget document and asked why some schools have travel money for cocurricular activities when travel money was previously eliminated.

BOARD REPORTS:

Ms. Wassilie reported that she attended the Career and Technical Education Committee meeting which is evolving into the Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee and noted that the group reviewed best practices within the District. She reported that the Committee has concerns about how prepared graduates are for ongoing education and training. Ms. Wassilie asked for the Board's permission to continue to serve on the Committee.

Mrs. Crawford reported that she and Mrs. Mullins attended an employee breakfast to recognize years of service for Central Office employees. She reported that 15-, 20-, and 25-years of service pins were awarded. She stated that the Board is proud of the fact that the KPBSD Central Office is one of the smallest in the state but can accomplish more with less people because of the level of experience of the employees. She noted that the number of people in Central Office that have more than 10 years of service add up to 596 years of experience in the District.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Items presented on the Consent Agenda were Approval of Long-Term Substitute Contract; 2005-2006 Tentative Tenure Teacher Assignments; Revisions to 2005 Federal Legislative Priorities; 2005-2006 Nontenured Pupil Services Teacher Assignments; Resignations; Waiver for Soccer 10-Game Limit; and Pupil Services Nontenured Teachers for Tenure 2005-06.

**LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTE
CONTRACT:**

Mr. Fisher recommended the Board approve a substitute teacher contract for Alison Gryga, math, Nikiski Middle/High.

**2005-2006 TENTATIVE
TENURE TEACHER
ASSIGNMENTS:**

Mr. Fisher recommended the Board approve a list of tentative tenure teacher assignments for the 2005-2006 school year.

**REVISIONS TO 2005
FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE
PRIORITIES:**

Dr. Peterson recommended the Board approve revisions to the 2005 federal legislative priorities list.

**2005-2006 NONTENURED
PUPIL SERVICES TEACHER
ASSIGNMENTS:**

Mr. Fisher recommended that the Board approve a list of nontenured pupil services teacher assignments for the 2005-2006 school year.

RESIGNATIONS:

Mr. Fisher recommended the Board approve resignations from Ruby Cobus, kindergarten, Nikiski North Star Elementary; Michael S. Gullett, social studies/generalist, Nikolaevsk School, and Susan L. Bacon, Counselor, Skyview High School.

**WAIVER FOR SOCCER 10-
GAME LIMIT:**

Mr. Fisher recommended the Board approve a waiver of the 10-game limit for the 2004-2005 soccer season and that a 15-game season be temporarily approved on a trial basis, or until the KPBSD member schools bring forward a proposal for School Board action to amend the season.

**PUPIL SERVICES
NONTENURED TEACHERS
FOR TENURE 2005-06:
MOTION**

Mr. Fisher recommended the Board approve a list of nontenured Pupil Services teachers for tenure for the 2005-2006 school year.

Mrs. Mullins moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Items Numbers 1 through 7. Mrs. Hilts seconded.

Ms. Wassilie asked for an explanation of the 10-game soccer limit. Mr. Fisher explained that the Skyview High School soccer team would like to participate in a tournament that, if played, will take them beyond the 10-game limit and have requested a one-time waiver. He explained that the coach followed the process set forth by KPSAA but the timing on the request would preclude the team from participating in the tournament this year. He stated that the one-time waiver would allow the team to participate and still give the Board the opportunity to consider expanding the length of the soccer season in the future.

Motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 04-05-4:

Mrs. Douglas recommended the Board approve Resolution Number 04-05-4 which supports the *Alaska School District Cost Study Update*.

MOTION

Ms. Germano moved the Board approve Resolution Number 04-05-4. Ms. Wassilie seconded.

MOTION

Ms. Germano moved the Board amend the resolution by inserting the words "the proposed area cost differential of 1.171 would be an increase of \$10 million at the base student allocation of \$4,576" at the end of the third paragraph. Ms. Wassilie seconded.

Ms. Germano explained that the reason she specifically mentioned \$4,576 is because that is what the cost study was based on. She reported that the state House of Representatives has approved \$4,919.

RESOLUTION 04-05-4:
(continued)

Mrs. Gilman asked whether the cost study report mentioned that the \$10 million would fix the discrepancy and then in addition the District would be moved to a different area cost differential for the future. Ms. Germano stated that the cost differential would be 1.171 and so when the base student allocation changes the number will increase. Mrs. Douglas stated that the amendment clarifies the language in the last paragraph.

Amendment carried unanimously.

MOTION

Ms. Germano moved the Board amend the resolution by inserting a new paragraph after the third paragraph to read, "Whereas since the inception of SB 36 the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District has been under funded by millions of dollars affecting the educational opportunities of children on the Kenai Peninsula". Dr. Anderson seconded.

Mrs. Gilman suggested the amendment say, "Whereas the most area cost differential report indicates...." Ms. Germano explained that that was the reason for the previous amendment.

Amendment carried unanimously.

MOTION

Ms. Germano moved the Board amend the resolution by deleting the words "local funding is the maximum allowed by law" and insert the word "consistently" in the sixth paragraph. Ms. Wassilie seconded.

Ms. Germano explained that the reason for deleting the language is because it is referenced in a later paragraph.

Amendment carried unanimously.

MOTION

Ms. Germano moved the Board amend the resolution by adding "three additional schools are not on state maintained roads, 16 schools are under 100 students and 18 schools are heated with high-cost fuel oil or propane". Dr. Anderson seconded.

Ms. Germano explained that the proposed amendment was meant to expand on the District's issues. She stated that the Board does not want the public to think that the only issue is that there are 4 communities accessible by air or water.

Amendment carried unanimously.

Mrs. Brown asked for the names of the three schools that are not on borough maintained roads. Ms. Germano replied that Kachemak Selo School, Razdolna School and Voznesenka School are not accessible on state maintained roads. Mrs. Brown confirmed that the intent of the amendment was "state maintained" and not "borough maintained" roads.

Amended motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS/
COMMENTS:**

Ms. Espenshade, Homer High School parent, expressed anger at the results of the *Alaska School District Cost Update*, and asked what the amount would be if the \$10 million shortage (mentioned in the update) could be divided per pupil, and suggested that the Board may have to file a lawsuit.

Ms. Rachael Roe, Homer High PTA president, asked about travel money that was listed in the FY06 Budget. Mr. Fisher stated that he will research the information and will respond. She reported that she recently attended the state PTA Legislative Issues Conference in Anchorage and noted that the area cost differential issue was not chosen as a priority by only a few votes.

Mr. Tom Latimer, McNeil Canyon Elementary library volunteer, noted that he heavily relies on the assistance of the school secretary and Mr. Bob VanDerWege, asked for a review of how libraries are being staffed throughout the District. He asked the Board to make a conscious effort not to close school libraries. Ms. Germano replied that the FY06 Budget contains a .38 library assistant and noted that the administration is working on a plan for certified librarians to oversee library collections.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Mrs. Gilman expressed appreciation for the Kachemak Selo School report and the McNeil Canyon Elementary School report. She noted that the Board held a discussion with the Peninsula legislative delegation prior to the Board meeting about the importance of the *Alaska School District Cost Study Update*. She asked Mr. Swanson to relate parts of his school report during his visit to Juneau to meet with legislators. She urged Mr. Creamer to share his PowerPoint presentation to the state Health, Education and Social Services Committees because it is the most apropos information that can be shared regarding education on the Kenai Peninsula. She suggested that Mr. Creamer's report be shared boroughwide to educate the public about schools within the District that are not accessible by roads. She stated that the message should also be shared with every state organization so it is understood that the Kenai Peninsula is both urban and rural. She stated that AASB must be held accountable and support the study and the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, otherwise she cannot support paying \$20,000 in membership dues. She stated that it is not right that District students are worth less than other students in the state. She stated that she hopes NEA-Alaska will also take a position regarding the *Alaska School District Cost Study Update*.

BOARD COMMENTS:*(continued)*

Mrs. Brown thanked the Homer community for hosting the meeting and thanked those who spoke to the Board. She noted that the Board has requested that federal funding be appropriated to develop the East End Road from Homer to an area above Kachemak Selo as one of the federal priority items. She stated that it is important that the various groups exchange information and noted that she was pleased that a representative from the District attended the state PTA Conference. She stated that she hopes that the AASB Executive Board will meet in a timely manner and decide to provide support for the *Alaska School District Cost Study Update* since the potential for assistance is great. She expressed concern for some of the AASB resolutions that were presented prior to the Annual Conference. She stated that she would like AASB to prove that they believe in the resolutions that were passed during the Annual Conference such as putting "kids first". She stated that so far, the AASB has failed to support the District regarding area cost differential inequities and if continued, she will recommend that the District withdraw its membership.

Mr. Tyson congratulated those who received awards. He commended the students who received Spirit of Youth nominations for their community service. He thanked Mr. Creamer for the Kachemak Selo School report and commented on the dedication of the teachers and the quality of education. He thanked Mr. Swanson for the McNeil Canyon Elementary School report and congratulated him for the Blue Ribbon Award. He wished Mr. Swanson good luck during the upcoming lobbying visit to Juneau. Mr. Tyson reported that there was not much support from students regarding ASAA's proposed eligibility requirement to take five classes instead of four. He noted that many seniors take four classes so they can participate in sports and use the extra time to work at a job.

Ms. Wassilie expressed appreciation for the school reports and agreed with Mrs. Gilman's suggestion to convey the information from the school reports to the legislature. She expressed appreciation for those who spoke to the Board about the *Alaska School District Cost Study Update* and added that she would like to see the report respected and does not want it shelved. She encouraged those present to attend the Senate Finance Committee hearing at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday to testify for adequacy and equity of education funding. She stated that she is a strong supporter of the DMC and noted that at least three schools on the eastern side of the Peninsula depend on Mr. VanDerWege and his staff for materials to support their programs. She stated that with 16 schools under 100 students, the services of the DMC are greatly needed. She stated that she remembered Mrs. Gilman's request to add \$50,000 to the student travel for statewide competitions and added that the money might assist students who qualify to compete at the state level. Ms. Wassilie asked Ms. Sheldon to share her comments with the legislature. She commented that the Board has not heard from nurses lately and added that she is bothered by inadequate nurse coverage in the buildings. She stated that the Board needs to pay attention to situations where principals cannot deal with student discipline in a timely manner.

BOARD COMMENTS:
(continued)

Dr. Anderson stated that he is gratified that the *Alaska School District Cost Study Update* confirmed the Board's long-time message to the legislature. He stated that the Board will have to create a row in order to get attention by the legislature.

Mrs. Hilts expressed appreciation for the Kachemak Selo and McNeil Canyon Elementary reports and noted that both schools are fun to visit. She stated that she appreciated hearing about the budget reductions at the schools. She reported that the Alaska Kids Count organization is making an impact for children and noted that an email was sent from them notifying subscribers about the upcoming Senate Finance Committee meeting on Wednesday, March 9, at 9:00 a.m. She stated that testifying at the Committee meeting may be the Board's only chance to speak about educational funding because Senator Wilkins has stated that education funding legislation will likely move through the legislative process before the March 15 deadline. She urged those present to contact legislators and speak in support of educational funding as soon as possible. She reported that Senator Bettye Davis suggested that peninsula residents contact friends in Anchorage, to contact legislators and lobby for education funding. She suggested that parents talk to legislators about personal experiences, and noted that education is not the same quality as 5, 10 or 30 years ago and that money makes a difference. She stated that the School Board is doing its best but needs help from the public this week.

Mrs. Mullins expressed appreciation for the school reports and added that she wished the Board could have taken the reports to the AASB Legislative Fly-in so that legislators could learn about what it takes to provide an education for students on the Kenai Peninsula. She expressed appreciation for those who were given awards and added that each recognition was well-deserved. She requested an excused absence from the April 4 meeting for personal reasons and an excused absence from the April 18 meeting to attend the NSBA National Conference. She explained aspects of the *Alaska School District Cost Study Update* and added that AASB does not support redistributing the same amount of education dollars, instead they support the increase of money for education. She explained that if the money for education was redistributed the Anchorage School District will lose \$25 million, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District will lose \$5.5 million dollars, and the Mat-Su School District will lose \$3 million dollars and added that legislators in the large districts will not be in support of implementing changes to the area cost differential. She noted that out of the five large districts only Juneau-Douglas School District and KPBSD would gain \$1.2 million and \$4.176 million respectively. She explained that when school boards and cities are pitted against each other it is not good for students and added that Alaska is a rich state and needs to increase the amount of money allocated for education. She encouraged those present to voice their opinions to legislators and to persuade others statewide to do the same.

BOARD COMMENTS:
(continued)

Mr. Anderson thanked Mr. Creamer and Mr. Swanson for the school presentations and added that he was not aware of the difficult commute to Kachemak Selo School each day. He encouraged the administrators to share their school reports with state legislators. He stated that although AASB is a good organization, the membership needs to take a stand to support an increase to the amount spent on education. He reported that he spoke with larger districts and told them what has been cut and asked for ideas and solutions. He stated that the response was "That's too bad but we're not going to talk about anything that might hurt." He stated that if AASB is not going to help the Kenai Peninsula then the Board might want to reconsider the value of the membership. He urged those present to send emails to legislators or start a letter-writing campaign as well as make friends aware of the situation on the Kenai Peninsula. He stated that the District would look very different with an additional \$10 million and added that it is not fair to students. He stated that the Board needs an explanation from the state about why the Kenai has been ignored for 20 years when there have been three area cost differential studies. He asked for help from those present to voice their opinions.

Ms. Germano congratulated those who received Board recognition. She thanked Mr. Creamer and Mr. Swanson for the school reports. She echoed comments made to the administrators by other Board members about sharing their school reports with state legislators. She stated that many things could have been done differently if the District would have received an additional \$10 million as recommended in the *Alaska School District Cost Study Update*. She stated that McNeil Canyon is a model for enrichment, and noted that the school has done everything possible to enrich opportunities for children. She thanked the school staff and parents for making their vision possible. She stated that it is impossible to quantify what a principal does each day and encouraged all administrators to share their stories with others across the state. She asked the public to be aware of what the District has forced employees to do because of a lack of funds. She stated that frustrations expressed towards AASB by fellow Board members are misdirected, and instead should be directed towards the Kenai Peninsula legislative delegation. She thanked Ms. Sheldon for sharing her comments and suggested that she email them to each state legislator. She noted that KPBSD is the only large district that pays nurses from the support salary schedule while other districts pay nurses as certified employees. She stated that the Board cannot ask employees to do more. She instructed those present to tell legislators that the state has money because of higher oil prices when they ask where to get the money to fund education. She thanked the audience for their attendance.

BOARD COMMENTS:

(continued)

Mrs. Crawford thanked Mr. Creamer and Mr. Swanson for the school reports, and urged them to share their stories with the legislature. She thanked the Spirit of Youth nominees for their service to the District and community and thanked those who were recognized by the Board. She reported that the legislature is moving quickly on educational funding legislation and cautioned those present that it may be the last week to work on it. She urged the public to speak to legislators via email, phone, or public testimony during the March 9 teleconference. She stated that most legislators do not know the magnitude of budget reductions that have been made in the KPBSD and added that very few schools in the state have cut back as much as District schools. She stated that Board member requests to review attendance bylaws, participation in Board activities, and the Board bylaws section of the *Policy Manual* will occur on June 7 prior to the Board planning session.

ADJOURN:

At 9:06 p.m., Ms. Germano moved the School Board Meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Gilman seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Sammy Crawford, President

Mrs. Debra Mullins, Clerka

The Minutes of March 7, 2005,
were approved on April 4, 2005
with a correction.