
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

Board of Education Meeting Minutes

May 1, 2006 – 7:00 p.m.
Regular Meeting

Seward High School
2100 Swetmann, Seward, Alaska

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

Mrs. Debra Mullins, President
Mrs. Sammy Crawford, Vice President
Ms. Sandra Wassilie, Clerk
Mr. Marty Anderson, Treasurer
Dr. Nels Anderson
Mrs. Debbie Brown
Mrs. Liz Downing
Mr. Bill Hatch
Mrs. Sunni Hilts
Miss Kelly King, Student Representative

STAFF PRESENT:

Dr. Donna Peterson, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Melody Douglas, Chief Financial Officer
Mr. Sam Stewart, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Glen Szymoniak, Assistant Superintendent

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mr. Jim Dawson	Mr. Tim Peterson
Mr. Steve Pautz	Mr. Jim White
Mrs. Paula Christensen	Mr. Sean Dusek
Mr. John Cook	Mrs. Cathy Carrow
Mr. David Kingsland	Mrs. Patty Rich
Ms. Terri Woodward	Mr. Pete Sprague
Mrs. Margaret Gilman	Mrs. Jacquie Steckel
Dr. Shannon Atkinson	Mr. John Steckel

Others present not identified.

CALL TO ORDER:

Mrs. Mullins called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. A quorum of School Board members, Mr. Anderson, Mrs. Hilts, Dr. Anderson, Mrs. Mullins, Ms. Wassilie, Mrs. Downing and Mr. Hatch were in attendance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 4:36 p.m. Mrs. Hilts moved the Board go into executive session to discuss matters, the immediate knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse effect upon the finances of the Borough. Specifically, the executive session was to discuss negotiations. Ms. Wassilie seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 6:40 p.m., Mrs. Hilts moved the executive session be adjourned. Ms. Wassilie seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

CALL TO ORDER:

Mrs. Mullins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mrs. Mullins invited those present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Debra Mullins	Present
Mrs. Sammy Crawford	Absent/Excused
Ms. Sandra Wassilie	Present
Mr. Marty Anderson	Present
Dr. Nels Anderson	Present
Mrs. Debbie Brown	Present
Mrs. Liz Downing	Present
Mr. Bill Hatch	Present
Mrs. Sunni Hilts	Present
Miss Kelly King	Present

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The agenda was approved with the deletion of Items 11a.(1) and 11a.(2), Approval of High School Graduation Qualifying Exam Waiver; a revision to Item 11a.(7), Resignations; and the addition of 3a., National Ocean Bowl Second Place Award presentation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The School Board Minutes of April 17, 2006 were approved as printed.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Dr. Shannon Atkinson presented sweatshirts to Seward High School students, Tyler Crista, Amy Collman, Phelan Miller and Luke Fry (was not in attendance), who successfully competed in the National Ocean Science Bowl. She recognized Jason Fantz, science teacher, for coaching the team.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS:

Dr. Peterson noted that information included in the Board General Information packet pertains mostly to the work of the Board. She pointed out that a response to the Nanwalek community was included in the Information Packet. She noted that an information item was provided to the Board from the Alaska Retirement Management Board. She noted that the Board and Superintendent evaluation information has been provided to the Board and is due to the president May 15. Mrs. Mullins asked the Board to submit evaluation information to her by May 15.

Mrs. Mullins announced that she received a packet with 79 signatures on a letter regarding the District student nutrition and physical activity policy.

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

Mr. Pete Sprague, Borough Assembly member, reported that the Assembly will meet in Seward on May 2. He reported that during the last meeting the Assembly passed a resolution in support of funding the District to the cap for the local effort for the FY07. He reported that the Borough Mayor has announced that the Borough would like to file a lawsuit against the State of Alaska for inequitable funding for education (K-12) for the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, and added that he anticipates more information on the matter at the upcoming meeting. Mrs. Brown asked whether the Assembly will conduct a public hearing regarding the lawsuit. Mr. Sprague clarified that he had not seen any information regarding the lawsuit but added that the public could comment at the beginning of the agenda.

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

(continued)

Mrs. Gilman thanked the Board for advocating for students at the state level. She commented on the efforts being made by the Kenai Peninsula legislative delegation and noted that Representative Chenault, House Finance Chairman, is up against legislators who feel that Anchorage must be made whole financially. She asked the Board to remind the Kenai legislative delegation that while Anchorage is being allowed money for improvement, the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is cutting 6% and is not close to being whole. She expressed frustration that a lawsuit would require taxpayer dollars to be spent in order to receive money that is a legislative responsibility and required by the state constitution.

Ms. Wassilie thanked Mrs. Gilman and the other Borough Assembly members for supporting the educational needs of the District. She thanked Mrs. Gilman for her comments regarding the area cost differential which were published in the *Phoenix Log* and the *Anchorage Daily News*. Mrs. Mullins asked Mrs. Gilman, on behalf of the Board, to thank the Assembly for approving funding the District to the cap.

Mr. Ken Carr, Site Council president, thanked Dr. Peterson, Mr. Dusek, and Mr. Stewart for the Seward High School principal interview process, expressed appreciation for the timely response, and noted that the process has received positive feedback.

Dr. Shannon Atkinson, Seward PTSA representative and Indian Education Title VII Parent Advisory Committee representative, reported that Dr. Peterson clearly outlined the Seward High School principal interview process and provided an opportunity for community participation. She thanked Dr. Peterson for the quick and painless interview process. She thanked Mr. John Cote and Mr. Steve Pautz for their service to the Seward Middle/High School.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S
REPORT:**

Dr. Peterson reminded the Board that Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week is May 7 through 13 and that high school graduation ceremonies are May 25 through 26. She announced that the Nikiski Middle/High School Drama, Debate, and Forensics team placed second in state competition. She announced that the BP Teachers of Excellence appreciation dinner is May 11. She reported that she will give a presentation at the Kenai Chamber of Commerce on May 25. She announced that Pete Swanson, McNeil Canyon Elementary principal, has been selected as the 2006 Alaska Distinguished Elementary School Principal. She presented Mrs. Mullins with a 10-year pin for her service to the District as a Board member.

LEASE REPORT:

Mr. Szymoniak presented a report of District leases and agreements for the 2006-2007 school year.

BOARD REPORTS:

Mr. Hatch reported that he attended the AASB Legislative Fly-in in Juneau and attended appointments with legislators that included conversations about the area cost differential and the base student allocation. He reported that he left Juneau feeling vaguely optimistic but that the District will not be made whole in regards to funding.

BOARD REPORTS:

(continued)

Mrs. Downing reported that she attended several workshops at the AASB Legislative Fly-in and visited with legislators. She stated that one of the workshops dealt with early childhood education and encouraged support for the concept. She reported that the represented districts developed priorities for the group, and added that the AASB membership supported a change to the area cost differential for the Kenai Peninsula. She stated that she is optimistic that the District will receive additional funding but acknowledged that the amount will not be enough and will not make up for what has been lost in the past. She encouraged those present to contact legislators in support of additional funding for education.

Miss King reported that she attended the AASB Legislative Fly-in and that the appointments with legislators left her feeling hopeful and sometimes doubtful depending on the legislator. She stated that it was interesting to see how laws are made and what goes on behind the scenes. She reported that many Fly-in participants knew about the financial troubles of the Kenai Peninsula and wanted to do something to help.

Mrs. Mullins praised Miss King for the eloquent manner in which she represented the District. She added that legislators as well as Fly-in participants paid attention to the comments made by Miss King and added that she received three offers to put her testimony in print. Mrs. Mullins explained that the AASB group was vying for space and time with various oil companies as they lobbied on issues regarding the gas line and the petroleum production tax. She reported that some of the legislative appointments were canceled but that the Board met with aides and other legislative staff members.

WORKSESSION REPORT:

Mrs. Mullins reported that the Board conducted a worksession regarding the Kaleidoscope Charter School request for additional space for the 2006-2007 school year. She stated that the Board is hoping to allow the Kenai community time to discuss the issue and noted that the Kaleidoscope Charter request affects three different schools. She reported that the Board conducted a short executive session regarding negotiations. She reported that the Board participated in a conference call with Kenai Peninsula legislators. She stated that the legislators reported that the base student allocation was amended to \$96 million from \$90 million. She reported that Learning Opportunity Grants may be available again. She asked those present to press the issue of equitable education funding with Kenai Peninsula legislators.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Items presented on the Consent Agenda were Approval of High School Graduation Qualifying Exam Waiver Number 2006-03; High School Graduation Qualifying Exam Waiver Number 2006-04; Nontenure Teacher for Tenure; Tentative Nontenure Teaching Assignments; New Administrator; Requests for Leave of Absence-Support; Resignations; and Long-Term Substitute Teachers.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION QUALIFYING EXAM WAIVER:

The Board removed High School Graduation Qualifying Exam Waiver request Number 2006-03 and Number 2006-04.

**2006-2007 NONTENURE
TEACHER FOR TENURE:**

Mr. Szymoniak recommended that the Board approve Naomi Fischer, a nontenure teacher, for tenure.

**TENTATIVE NONTENURE
TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS:**

Mr. Szymoniak recommended that the Board approve tentative nontenure teaching assignments for Suzanne Phillips, Grade 8, Aurora Borealis Charter; Jennifer Haugh, Grade 5, Chapman Elementary; Mary Margaret Hicks, Seward Area .50 FTE, Connections Program; Nancy Kleine, Homer Area, Connections Program; Sean Campbell, language arts, Homer High; Mark Casseri, math, Homer High; Deborah Jacobson, science .50 FTE, Homer High; Gordon Pitzman, Spanish, Homer High; Matt Stineff, science, Homer High; Anne Peel, special education-emotionally handicapped, Homer Middle; Andrew Rothenberger, generalist, Kachemak Selo School; Alison Larson, generalist, Kenai Alternative; Elizabeth Barnett, Grades 4-8, Moose Pass Elementary; Derek Bynagle, secondary generalist, Nanwalek Elementary/High; Katharine Bynagle, secondary generalist, Nanwalek Elementary/High; Karen Budge, music, Ninilchik Elementary/High; Tim Helvey, social studies, Ninilchik Elementary/High; Kim Johnson, K-8 generalist, Nikolaevsk Elementary/High; Tina Wise, music, Paul Banks Elementary; Robert Barnwell, Grade 5/6, Seward Elementary; Sharon Stevens-Ganser, Grade 5/6, Seward Elementary; Scott Jonsson, art, Seward High; Myla Liljemark, social studies/math, Seward High; Holly Alston, language arts/physical education .50 FTE, Seward Middle; Mark Woodward, language arts/social studies, Seward Middle; Jennifer Brockman, art, Skyview High; Bridgit Gillis, music, Soldotna Middle; Michael Audette, music, Sterling Elementary; Timothy Winters, Grades 7-12, Susan B. English Elementary/High; Ronanda Liberty, upper elementary, Susan B. English Elementary/High; Andrea Joachim, elementary generalist, Tebughna Elementary/High; Donny Joachim, elementary generalist, Tebughna Elementary/High; and Elizabeth Vonziegesar-Whip, library, West Homer Elementary.

**2006-2007 NEW
ADMINISTRATOR
APPOINTMENT:**

Dr. Peterson recommended the Board approve Vaughn Dosko as the Kenai Middle assistant principal for the 2006-2007 school year.

**REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF
ABSENCE-SUPPORT:**

Mr. Szymoniak recommended that the Board approve unpaid leave of absence requests from Joy Harper, special needs preschool aide, Soldotna Elementary and Neil Kinney, head custodian, West Homer Elementary.

RESIGNATIONS:

Mr. Szymoniak recommended that the Board approve resignations at the end of the 2005-2006 school year from Gerald M. Olson, special education-resource, Nikiski Middle/High School; Judy Leichliter, kindergarten, Nikiski North Star Elementary; Debra Womack, special education-resource, Nikiski North Star Elementary; Lana Putman, school psychologist, K-Beach Elementary; Gordy Vernon, occupational therapist, Sears Elementary; John Cote, principal, Seward Middle School; Amy Williams, special education resource, Skyview High, and Tina Skaalerud, special education resource, Soldotna Elementary.

**LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTE
TEACHERS:**

Mr. Szymoniak recommended the Board approve long-term substitute teacher contracts for Darrell Hagen, industrial arts/health/physical education, Nikiski Middle/High School; Karma Sherk, preschool, Soldotna Elementary School; and Zada Friedersdorff, language arts, Soldotna High School.

MOTION

Mrs. Hilts moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Items Numbers 3 through 8. Mr. Anderson seconded.

Ms. Wassilie removed Item Number 4.

Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Wassilie stated that she would like to abstain from voting on Item Number 4 because of a possible conflict of interest.

VOTE ON ITEM 4:

Advisory Vote – YES

YES – Downing, Hilts, N. Anderson, Brown, M. Anderson, Hatch, Mullins

ABSTAIN – Wassilie

Motion carried

**KALEIDOSCOPE CHARTER
SCHOOL SPACE
RECOMMENDATION:**

Dr. Peterson presented background information, policy information, several options and a recommendation regarding the Kaleidoscope Charter School space request. She stated that the administration recommends that Kaleidoscope Charter continue to have six classrooms at Sears Elementary for the fall of 2006 for an increased enrollment of 136 students.

Ms. Trudy Jones, parent, stated that mixing educational choices and sharing facilities is not a healthy work environment for staff or learning environment for children and asked the Board to support the administrative recommendation to provide six classrooms for Kaleidoscope Charter School and an increased enrollment of 136 students for the fall of 2006.

Mrs. Misty Hamilton, Kaleidoscope Charter School parent and Academic Policy Committee member, explained the reasons for the request to grow to an enrollment over 150 students and stated that the goal is to keep the 6 rooms at Sears Elementary and to move students in Grades 3 through 5 to the Challenger Learning Center.

Mrs. Michelle Steinbeck, Mt. View Elementary and Kaleidoscope Charter parent, expressed appreciation for educational choice. She thanked the Board for supporting Kaleidoscope Charter School and the opportunity for her daughter to explore science.

Mr. Jeremiah Hamilton read a note from Mr. Tony Lewis, who was unable to attend. Mr. Lewis requested the Board allow Kaleidoscope Charter School to have 6 classrooms at Sears Elementary and 5 classrooms at Mt. View Elementary School so that all students interested in attending the charter school can be accommodated.

**KALEIDOSCOPE CHARTER
SCHOOL SPACE
RECOMMENDATION:**
(continued)

Mrs. Jackie Steckel, Kaleidoscope Charter School administrator, acknowledged that the charter school concept is new and that there will be friction and competition when space is an issue. She asked the Board for help until the school can find a more suitable location.

Mrs. Margaret Gilman, Assembly Member and parent of four students in four Kenai Area public schools, provided a brief history of the establishment of Kaleidoscope Charter School. She encouraged the Board to conduct a community discussion regarding housing Kenai area students.

Ms. Mary Fischer, Sears Elementary teacher, provided a brief history of Kaleidoscope Charter School and expressed concern for Sears Elementary special education services and student safety.

MOTION

Dr. Anderson moved the Board approve the administrative recommendation to give Kaleidoscope Charter School 6 classrooms at Sears Elementary for the fall of 2006 for an increased enrollment of 136 students. Ms. Wassilie seconded.

Mrs. Downing stated that she would like Kaleidoscope Charter School to have as much space as they need and acknowledged that housing students from two different schools in the same building is extremely challenging. She stated that the Board needs a long range plan and further discussion.

Mrs. Brown stated that it is good to have educational choice and opportunities such as the Kaleidoscope Charter School. She commended the efforts of the staff at Sears Elementary and Kaleidoscope Charter and noted that parents in the Kenai community feel very strongly about their children's education. She stated that although it is her hope that charter schools will eventually operate outside of neighborhood schools entirely, she will support the motion because of the way the state law is written. She stated that she is optimistic that an agreement can be reached to house some of the students at the Challenger Learning Center or at another location. She stated that she would like the Kaleidoscope Charter School to grow and to continue to provide a successful program for students.

Ms. Wassilie asked whether Sears Elementary still has library, music, and physical education. Dr. Peterson explained that the special classes are shared with Kaleidoscope Charter. She asked if the safety issue and space for special education students can be addressed if the administrative recommendation is approved. Dr. Peterson stated that the administration will continue to review and address those concerns. Ms. Wassilie asked what will happen if the recommendation is adopted and Kaleidoscope Charter is able to negotiate space at the Challenger Learning Center. Dr. Peterson responded that the motion would have to be changed to allow them to grow beyond 136 students.

Mrs. Brown confirmed with Mrs. Mullins that the motion to allow the Charter School to increase their enrollment could be brought before the Board at any time.

**KALEIDOSCOPE CHARTER
SCHOOL SPACE
RECOMMENDATION:**
(continued)

Mr. Anderson reminded those present that the schools belong to the Borough and its taxpayers. He added that with the current situation of limited resources, it is extremely important to show the legislature that the District is being good stewards over the funding that is provided. He stated that it would not be financially responsible to pay rent to house a charter school in another facility when there are schools nearby that are not at capacity. He stated that he will support the motion and would like to have a discussion about using space at current Borough schools.

Mrs. Hilts stated that she does not believe that the Board action regarding charter school housing will matter to the legislature. She stated that the District has been financially responsible for many years and it has not made an impression. She stated that she will support the motion because it is the best solution at this time. She stated that she wished there were other options and that there was more time to fully involve the public of Kenai. She stated that the Board can modify the decision, if necessary.

Mr. Hatch stated that he will support the motion but that it is not a good decision for either school and does not see a better solution at this time. He added that he hopes Kaleidoscope Charter School can find space elsewhere so they can expand their program.

Mrs. Mullins stated that Kenai area residents need to know what direction the Board is going to take regarding charter schools and the Board needs to know what configuration the Kenai residents might want for their schools. She stated that she would like to provide an opportunity to meet with the community and have a one-on-one discussion. She stated that she will support the administrative recommendation for one year and then hopefully the Board can lay the groundwork for the future of all three schools with the help of the community.

Motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS/
COMMENTS:**

Mr. Caleb Adelman, Seward High School Baseball team representative, reported that the team has 17 players and 2 coaches and thanked the Board for allowing them to play baseball another season. He announced that the first game will be May 6.

Mr. Wayne Young, Spring Creek High School principal, reported that the Lock Up television program filmed an hour-long documentary on the operation of Spring Creek Correctional Center which will be aired sometime in August.

Mrs. Steckel, Kaleidoscope Charter School administrator, asked for clarification from the Board regarding the decision to expand the enrollment to 136 students and what to tell parents who have entered the lottery drawing. Mrs. Mullins explained that Kaleidoscope Charter School was approved to enroll 136 students and that if additional space becomes available the school can make another request to the Board to amend the earlier decision. Dr. Peterson explained that the request would also require a budget change.

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

Mrs. Polly Reutov, Kachemak Selo parent, stated that the school previously offered one hour of Russian language instruction and is now only offering 30 minutes and asked the Board for a certified fluent Russian-speaking teacher to teach a full hour of high school instruction. She requested that the current teacher aides continue working with the lower grade students.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Mrs. Downing thanked those who provided testimony and reminded the public to contact legislators regarding educational funding.

Mrs. Brown expressed appreciation for those who traveled a long distance to testify. She stated that she is uncomfortable making decisions on an issue where the affected families are far away. She stated that she hopes future decisions regarding charter schools can be long-term to allow the school administration and families to concentrate on the work of educating students. She stated that the pressure on the legislature is intense in regards to fiscal spending and noted that there are many people who want the legislature to take a conservative approach so that money will be available years into the future. She stated that the public should have compassion for legislators because they are dealing with many serious issues. She reminded those present that funding has improved in recent years and should be acknowledged.

Ms. Wassilie thanked those present for attending the meeting and for traveling the long distance. She congratulated the Seward National Ocean Bowl participants for placing first at the state level and wished them good luck at the national competition. She congratulated Miss Amy Collman for being selected to receive the 2006 First Lady's Youth Volunteer award and acknowledged her extensive tutoring for the Boys and Girls Club. She expressed appreciation for the leadership shown by the Borough Assembly and in particular, Borough Mayor Williams in attempting to redress the loss of \$70 million in education funding since 2001 but noted losses dating back to 1986. She defended against accusations made by state legislators about the manner in which the District handles its business and pointed out that KPBSD spends less than 5% on administration, has a high student achievement rate, has a high graduation rate compared to other districts in the state, and is a leader in the diversity of educational delivery systems. She stated that with the lack of adequate funding, it is making it difficult to meet the needs of students. She acknowledged the educational funding increases by the legislators over the past few years and pointed out that the District has an inadequate and unfair area cost differential. She stated that she would not like to think that the rest of the state legislators do not care much about the Kenai Peninsula and would allow the suffering to continue.

Mr. Anderson congratulated the Seward baseball team for beginning another season. He suggested that if Kaleidoscope Charter School grows larger than Mt. View Elementary, as predicted, they should find another facility outside of the neighborhood schools. He suggested the Board review the student housing issue in the near future so that students can learn in a safe, productive environment.

BOARD COMMENTS:
(continued)

Mrs. Hilts thanked the Seward baseball team for publicly thanking the Board. She thanked those who provided testimony regarding Russian language instruction. She stated that if the District were funded adequately, the language conversation would be much different. She stated that she personally would like the District to have the money to pay for a certified Russian language teacher to teach in a couple of schools. She stated that the Board received many letters from the public regarding charter schools, wellness, and languages. She urged those present to send the same letters to state legislators asking them to change the area cost differential. She offered bumper stickers for those interested (“I Vote for Kids as Alaska’s Top Priority”, “What’s Alaska’s Top Priority – How About our Children”, “Promote, Protect and Support Alaska’s Children”, “If We Put Kids First Today Alaska’s Future will be Second to None”).

Miss King thanked the Board for sending her to the AASB Fly-In in Juneau. She expressed frustration when talking to legislators and urged those present to contact legislators in support of a change to the area cost differential. She recognized the parents who drove a long distance to attend the meeting, especially those from the Russian villages.

Mr. Hatch recited a quote from former state governor, Wally Hickel, “leadership is not finding something new to cut every day”. He stated that the state needs to have leadership that will fund schools adequately so that school boards don’t have to discuss funding at every meeting. He asked those present to tell legislators that the KPBSD needs to have problems with the area cost differential fixed. Mrs. Mullins suggested that the public contact friends in other Districts throughout the state and ask them to voice their support to the legislature on behalf of the KPBSD.

Mrs. Mullins asked Kachemak Selo parents to contact the administration to clear up any misunderstandings regarding language instruction. She explained that the NCLB Act has caused the District some difficulty in staffing village schools. She thanked those present for attending the meeting and especially those who traveled a long distance. She thanked the Borough Assembly members for approving the District’s funding to the cap and acknowledged that it is financially difficult. She stated that the financial support shown by the Assembly was helpful during the legislative visits during the AASB Legislative Fly-In because it sent the message that the residents of the Kenai Peninsula are willing to pay their fair share and now the state needs to pay their fair share.

ADJOURN:

At 8:30 p.m., Mr. Hatch moved the School Board meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Hilts seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Debra Mullins, President

Ms. Sandra Wassilie, Clerk

The Minutes of May 1, 2006,
were approved on June 5, 2006
with corrections.