

KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

148 N. Binkley Street  
Soldotna, AK 99669

March 27, 2000

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

Ms. Deborah Germano, President  
Mrs. Debra Mullins, Vice President  
Mrs. Susan Larned, Clerk  
Mrs. Sammy Crawford, Treasurer  
Mrs. Mari-Anne Gross, Member  
Dr. Nels Anderson, Member  
Mr. Mike Chenault, Member  
Miss Melinda Haring, Student Representative

STAFF PRESENT:

Dr. Donna Peterson, Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Patrick Hickey, Assistant Superintendent, Operations and Business  
Management  
Mr. Ed McLain, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction  
Mr. Todd Syverson, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mrs. Sylvia Reynolds	Ms. Judy Odhner
Ms. Beth Martin	Ms. Julie Lindquist
Mr. Pete Sprague	Mrs. June Arnoldy
Mr. Lee Young	Ms. Rose Banse
Mr. John Harro	Mr. Tim Peterson
Miss Kristin Cannava	Mrs. Michele Pearson
Mr. Gene Dyson	Mr. Mark Leal
Mrs. Shana Loshbaugh	Mrs. Rosie Reeder
Mr. Justin George	Ms. Fran Stetson
Ms. Barb Vogel	Mrs. Melody Douglas
Dr. Lisa Stroh	Mr. Don Oberg

Others present not identified.

CALL TO ORDER:

Ms. Germano called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. A quorum of School Board members, Mrs. Larned, Mrs. Mullins, Mrs. Crawford, Dr. Anderson, Mr. Chenault and Ms. Germano, were in attendance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 3:31 p.m., Mrs. Crawford moved the Board go into executive session to discuss subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion. Specifically, the executive session was to conduct a student expulsion hearing. Mr. Chenault seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 4:30 p.m., Mrs. Larned moved the executive session be adjourned. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

At 7:35 p.m., Ms. Germano invited those present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:	Ms. Deborah Germano	Present
	Mrs. Debra Mullins	Present
	Mrs. Susan Larned	Present
	Mrs. Sammy Crawford	Present
	Mrs. Mari-Anne Gross	Absent
	Dr. Nels Anderson	Present
	Mr. Mike Chenault	Present
	Miss Melinda Haring	Present

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved with revisions to items Number 10a.(2), Resignation and Number 10b., Administrator Appointment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The School Board minutes of March 6, 2000, were approved as printed.

SCHOOL REPORTS: Mr. Lee Young, Soldotna Middle School principal, thanked Mr. Darrell Hagen, social studies teacher, for chaperoning students to Washington, D.C., during spring break. He stated that the students and staff have created an informative video of the school, which could be used to send home for parents to view with a videotape or compact disc. He thanked staff members, Miss Cannava and Mr. Harro, for their contribution towards creating the multi-media school report. Mr. Young introduced two students, Krystin Habighorst and Shawn Lee, who also assisted in developing the video school report. Miss Cannava thanked the Vocational Education Department staff for the Carl Perkins grant that provided funds for the equipment used to produce the video. Miss Cannava also thanked the Community Schools Program for a grant covering the cost of the materials. The video showed the school facility, an interview with Ms. Paula Christensen regarding the middle school philosophy, student participation in extracurricular activities, a review of the school assessment scores by Mr. Young and examples of various community involvement and other student activities.

Public Presentations: Ms. Judith Odhner, Moose Pass parent, thanked Mr. Hickey for addressing the school closure issue with concerned parents. She stated that the possible closure of the school would be devastating to the children and entire community of Moose Pass. She stated that, at present, the enrollment is the highest in the school's history. She noted that next year, 9 kindergarten students will be attending the school. She stated that the students benefit from a small school by allowing them to participate in school plays and extracurricular activities. She stated that if the school were closed and students moved to a larger school, Moose Pass students would be overlooked and not able to participate in school plays or other activities. She expressed concern for the length of time kindergarten and first grade students would be riding the bus and the risk of avalanches in the wintertime. She stated that after hearing Mr. Hickey speak the savings from closing Moose Pass is so small and insignificant that it should not be considered. She reported that the school is used daily for Tot Time, men's basketball, TOPS Club, and as a meeting place, and she noted that the impact of a school closure would be devastating.

Mrs. June Arnoldy, Moose Pass parent, stated that after a review of the District budget, the funding shortfall is only 1% of the entire budget; and in a budget the size of the District's, there should be at least 1% "fluff." She suggested that the District negotiate better prices for food, bussing, or warehouse leases. She stated that closing schools should not be an issue.

## Public Presentations (continued):

Ms. Julie Lindquist, Moose Pass parent, stated that every child should have the opportunity for an education and it should not consist of a ten-hour day including school and a round trip bus ride to Seward. She stated that there has to be some way to reduce the budget without discussing the issue of closing schools. She asked whether the \$80,000 allotment listed in the budget as DMC Closure Reduction Consolidation was money for the special committee to consider school closures. She asked for information on the membership of the Downsizing Committee. She stated that it would be an awful thing for the Moose Pass community if the school closed. She volunteered her assistance to the District to work towards keeping the Moose Pass Elementary School open.

Ms. Germano responded that the \$80,000 budget item referred to a proposed reduction to the District Media Center and has nothing to do with the Downsizing Committee.

Ms. Rose Banse, Moose Pass parent, stated that the Moose Pass and Cooper Landing communities have had schools for many years, before oil money and before bussing and that both communities have been threatened with school closures in the past. She stated that if the Moose Pass School is closed, kindergarten and first grade students will be asked to put in a ten-hour workday. Students would not have time to do homework; they would only have time to eat dinner and go to bed so they can get up early and catch the bus. She reported that Moose Pass students receive support not only from school staff and parents but also from community members who do not have children in school. She stated that if students were bussed to Seward, they would not have time to participate in extracurricular activities, play, visit friends, or have family time. She stated that the Moose Pass community and parent volunteers would not be involved in the education of their students because of the distance. She stated that it has been said that it takes a village to raise a child and that is what has been happening at Moose Pass. She stated that when her son participates in a field trip she knows that the teacher and parent volunteers will make sure that he is safe and well-behaved and vice versa when she is a chaperone and feels it necessary to correct a student. She stated that the school does not have problems with guns, gangs, or vandalism because the students know that the parents and community care.

Mr. Hickey responded that there is no list of schools that have been targeted for closure and no plan to close the Moose Pass School or any other school in the District. He reported that the first meeting of the Downsizing Committee was held on March 14. He stated that taking all of the projected students from Moose Pass Elementary School and moving them to Seward Elementary next year results in a \$191,000 shortfall. He stated that economically it does not make sense and stated that he tried to make that clear during his visit with Moose Pass parents.

Mrs. Arnoldy expressed concern that a Downsizing Committee is necessary.

Ms. Germano replied that the District must prepare some long-range plans. She asked the administration to include parents on the Committee.

## Communications and Petitions:

Dr. Peterson stated that she received a thank you note from a parent for the opportunity for her son to visit the Alaska Sea Life Center. The letter stated that the trip was made possible with funds from the M. R. Robinson Foundation Grant.

- Awards and Presentations:** Board members presented awards of appreciation to Beth Martin, head secretary, Soldotna High School; Justin "Buck" George, custodian, Soldotna High School; and Fran Stetson, resource teacher, Tustumena Elementary School for their outstanding contributions to education and the District. The Board also presented an award of appreciation to Mr. Paul Sorenson, Kenai Middle School principal, for being selected as the 1999 Alaska Secondary School Administrators' Association Principal of the Year.
- Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Peterson noted that the minutes from the Downsizing Committee's first meeting are available on the District website. She stressed that no school closures are planned for FY01 and that many people would rather have fewer course offerings and services than give up local schools. She reminded those present that the Downsizing Committee meetings are open to the public. She noted that the Technology Plan was presented to the Assembly at their last meeting, and the plan will be acted on at the April 4 Assembly meeting.
- Ms. Mullins asked who the members of the Downsizing Committee were. Dr. Peterson explained that the membership consisted of three administrators (a high school representative, an elementary school representative and a small school representative) who were selected by the Kenai Peninsula Administrators' Association (KPAA), an Assembly representative and a School Board representative as well as two parents. Ms. Germano noted that Ms. Larned will be the Board representative.
- Financial Report:** Mr. Hickey presented the financial report of the District for the period ending February 29, 2000.
- CONSENT AGENDA:** Items presented on the Consent Agenda were AR 5144, Elementary and Secondary Discipline Guides; Resignations; and Leave of Absence Requests/Certified.
- Elementary and Secondary Discipline Guides:** Mr. McLain recommended the Board approve AR 5144, Elementary and Secondary Discipline Guides. The guides will replace the current Secondary Disciplinary Chart, E 5144.
- Resignations:** Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve resignations from Linda Kay Smith, special education/resource, Seward Elementary; and Alex Trout, Kachemak Selo and Voznesenka Elementary/High principal; Christina Hum, generalist, Bartlett Elementary/High; Gregory Scott Mengel, principal, K-Beach Elementary; Aaron Stansberry, principal/teacher, Bartlett Elementary/High; and Suzanne Stansberry, Grade K-2 teacher, Bartlett Elementary/High.
- Leave of Absence Requests/Certified:** Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve an unpaid leave of absence request for the 2000-2001 school year for Jennifer Knutson, school psychologist, districtwide; and Todd Knutson, school psychologist, districtwide.
- ACTION** Mrs. Larned moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Items Numbers 1 through 3. Mrs. Mullins seconded.
- Motion carried unanimously.
- Administrator Appointment:** Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve Dr. Ron Keffer as principal of Homer High School.

Administrator Appointment (Continued):

ACTION

Mrs. Crawford moved the Board approve Dr. Ron Keffer as principal of Homer High School. Mrs. Larned seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Student Expulsion:

ACTION

Dr. Anderson moved the Board approve the following: "The decision of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District in the matter of expulsion of CS.

CONCLUSIONS: Board policy 5131.6(a) requires the administration to recommend expulsion for a second drug or alcohol-related offense. This was C.S.'s second violation of Board policy on a drug-related offense. This behavior is inimical to the welfare and safety of other pupils. As such, C.S. is expelled for one calendar year, until February 14, 2001, for violation of KPBSD policy 5131.6(a), Alcohol and Other Drugs. C.S. shall be allowed to apply for early readmission on August 23, 2000, upon compliance with the following conditions:

1. C.S. attends ATOSS for the remainder of the school year. While attending ATOSS, there would be no contact of any kind with students or staff of Kenai Alternative High School unless prearranged with the building administrator.
2. C.S. follows through with the requirements and recommendations of ATOSS.
3. C.S. completes a minimum of three 1/2-credit correspondence courses at his expense prior to the first day of school, August 23, 2000." Ms. Mullins seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

FY 2000-2001 Budget:

Mr. Hickey recommended the Board approve the FY 2000-2001 annual budget in the amount of \$86,078,978. Included in the budget is a request for Kenai Peninsula Borough contributions for in-kind and local appropriation to the "cap" for the general fund in the amount of \$29,664,872.

Ms. Julie Lindquist asked Mr. Hickey about the District's decision to enter into a seven-year bus contract for a 24% increase. She stated that it appears that Laidlaw has a monopoly for busing services and asked what recourse the District has. She expressed her concern for the money lost over the years of the contract.

Mr. Hickey explained that the State of Alaska recognized that there were very few busing vendors in the state and tried to get the school districts to align themselves along the same five-year process. He stated that this left the District with the choice of a two-year or a seven-year contract to align with the rest of the state. He stated that the seven-year contract attracted four vendors who expressed an interest but only Laidlaw submitted a bid. He explained that Alaska Statutes states that if the federal minimum wage increases, the Alaska minimum wage must be \$.50 more than the federal minimum wage. He noted that the statute also states that school bus drivers will be paid a wage no less than twice the minimum wage, however, if contracts are in place they don't have to renew their negotiations with bus drivers until the next time they resolve the contract. He explained that the federal government increased the minimum wage between the time the bus contract was negotiated and the time it expired; and by

FY 2000-2001 Budget (Continued):

the next opportunity to renegotiate, Laidlaw faced a 19% increase in the cost of labor. He stated that he believes that at the end of seven years when the District negotiates from a rate that is 24% higher than it was a year ago and after the increase in gas and wages, a seven-year contract might not be such a foolish decision. He stated that the administration did not feel that a two-year contract, which would have raised busing prices by \$1 million per year, was in the best interest of the community.

Mr. Hickey noted that a worksession was held prior to the Board meeting to discuss the budget in more detail.

ACTION

Dr. Anderson moved the Board approve the FY01 budget as presented for \$86,078,978. Mrs. Crawford seconded.

Ms. Crawford stated the Board has been forced to make some draconian reductions to the budget, which has been very difficult. She added that with all of the time and energy spent on the budget, it is the best there is to offer.

Mrs. Mullins agreed with Mrs. Crawford's comments and thanked the Budget Review Committee who took time away from work and other duties to participate on the committee. She stated that she is sorry to approve the proposed budget because of the drastic cuts made in a number of areas. She stated that she is concerned about the possibility of the District being required to pay for 10% of the bus contracts, which could amount to \$500,000 for next year.

Dr. Anderson replied to an earlier question on whether the District could find 1% extra in the budget and stated that the administration has been cutting the budget for 8-10 years and that every cut made is significant. He stated that the proposed budget contains about \$800,000 in "smoke and mirrors" where costs are transferred to the next year or year after. He stated that he did not feel that there was any "fat" in the FY 01 budget. He noted that the District has been forced to cut teachers, and it is affecting the quality of education. He stated that he understands the legislature's obligation to balance the budget; but at some point, they will have to recognize that the cost of education increases from year to year and that they should allocate at least the cost of living to maintain status quo. He stated that the funding situation makes the School Board appear to be anti-education when, in fact, they are probably the biggest advocates of the School District.

Ms. Germano stated that she is very frustrated that the state has decided to make busing contracts an issue. She stated that it sidesteps the issue of educating children and that everyone must work together to solve the problems of education. She stated that the Board has done the best they can to balance the budget. She stated that she is concerned for the reductions made at the middle school level. She stated that she is confident that everything will all work out and added that she is pleased that the District was able to reduce the pupil/teacher ratio at first grade.

Motion carried unanimously.

2000-2001 Tentative Board Meeting Dates:

Dr. Peterson recommended the Board approve a tentative list of School Board meetings and miscellaneous dates for the 2000-2001 school year. She noted that August 21 (school will not be in session) and February 19 are inservice dates, and the administration will honor the wishes of the Board not to have worksessions on inservice days. She noted that because of holidays, spring break and graduation there will be only one meeting in July, September, December, March and May. There will be one meeting during the month of June with a Board planning session on June 5.

## ACTION

Mrs. Larned moved the Board approve a tentative list of School Board meetings and miscellaneous dates for the 2000-2001 school year. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

## BOARD COMMENTS:

Ms. Crawford expressed her appreciation to the Moose Pass parents for their comments. She congratulated the golden apple award winners as well as Mr. Sorenson. She thanked Mr. Young for the Soldotna Middle School report. She reported that she will be attending the National School Board conference on March 31.

Mr. Chenault thanked Mr. Young for Soldotna Middle School's multi-media school report and complimented the students and staff on the use of technology. He thanked award winners for their contribution to the District. He congratulated the Nikiski girls' basketball team for winning the state championship. He thanked the Moose Pass parents for attending the School Board meeting.

Ms. Mullins thanked the Soldotna Middle School staff for the school report. She stated that she is amazed how well the District continues to educate students and do more with less after years of budget cuts. She stated that it takes everyone throughout the District to educate students, and she saluted the people of the community who give their time. She stated that she wished the legislature could recognize the efforts the people of the Kenai Peninsula put forth. She thanked the parents for attending the Board meeting and added that the Board appreciates hearing from the Moose Pass community. She recognized the parents' commitment to the education of their children by the parents' traveling the long distance to Soldotna to address the Board. She stated that the District wants to keep students in their own communities and does not want to have boarding schools.

Ms. Mullins requested an excused absence for the April 17 Board meeting. She stated that she will be in Juneau to attend the AASB Legislative Fly-In.

Ms. Larned echoed the thanks and appreciation to those who make schools operate so well. Ms. Larned stated that she is glad the Board was able to keep the pupil/teacher ratio at 18:1 for first grade. She stated that she is optimistic about lowering class sizes to help students when they are very young and added that it will help in the long run. She congratulated the teams that played in the state basketball tournament.

## BOARD COMMENTS (Continued):

Miss Haring thanked the Moose Pass parents for attending the meeting. She also thanked the Board for the opportunity to travel to Juneau and attend the AASB Fly-In and Student Leadership Conference. She commented that while in Juneau during a conversation with Senator Ward, a quote from former Governor Walter Hickel was shared that said, "There is no vision, no hope, no future, no agenda for Alaska if your only ideology, if your only philosophy, if your only cause is to cut the budget." She reported that Senator Ward smiled and stated that his wife had written the quote.

Ms. Germano congratulated the Nikiski girls' basketball team for receiving the academic award.

ADJOURN: At 8:54 p.m., Mrs. Mullins moved the School Board Meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Crawford seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ms. Deborah Germano, President

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Mrs. Susan Larned, Clerk

The Minutes of March 27, 2000,  
were approved on April 17, 2000  
as written.