

KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

148 N. Binkley Street
Soldotna, AK 99669

February 4, 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
Miss Katie Lockwood, 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:

Ms. Terri Carter	Mrs. Laurie Olson
Ms. Trena Richardson	Mr. Sam Stewart
Mrs. Paula Christensen	Mr. Brad Hibberd
Mr. Jim White	Mrs. Linda Hibberd
Mr. Richard Putney	Ms. Johni Blankenship
Mrs. Kim Russell	Mr. Rick Matiya
Mrs. Shelli Furlong	Mr. Bob VanDerWege
Ms. Terri Woodward	Mrs. Shana Loshbaugh
Mrs. Jackie Ansotegui,	Mr. Hans Bilben
Mr. Ben Histan	Mr. John Kistler
Mr. Buck George	Mrs. Barb George
Mr. Garry Betley	Ms. Michele Bournonville

Others present not identified.

CALL TO ORDER:

Dr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Dr. Anderson invited students from Kalifornsky Beach Elementary School to demonstrate their sign language skills by signing the Pledge of Allegiance.

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
Miss Katie Lockwood	Present

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The agenda was approved as written.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The School Board Minutes of January 21, 2002, were approved as printed.

SCHOOL REPORTS:

Ms. Trena Richardson, Kalifornsky Beach Elementary principal, reported that the Title I Program is providing extra assistance to those students in Grades 3 through 6 who are struggling in reading. She reported that the school purchased the Scholastic Reading Counts Program and the Scholastic Reading Inventory program to increase comprehension of students who are reading. She reported that the school uses curriculum-based measurement reading fluency tests to all students as well as DIBBLES for kindergarten students. She recounted a success story of a sixth grade student whose reading comprehension was increased from a second grade level to a fifth grade level. She reported that the school has six student teachers this year and added that they were highly appreciated, especially by teachers who have large class sizes. She stated that the school has an unwritten goal to improve writing skills; an area that receives low assessment scores. She reported that Ms. Dorothy Gray provided training to school staff in writing as a review of Analytical Writing Assessment and the Six Traits. She reported that Ms. Gray conducted a training session to help parents assist their children with writing at home. Ms. Richardson reported that every class is conducting daily oral language and that editing is being taught at all grade levels. She announced that the Alaska State Standards are posted in the school hallways and are referenced in each teacher's weekly journal. She reported that K-Beach Elementary is participating in the Adopt-A-Stream Program, a historical preservation project, the Artists-in-Residence Program, and the Senior Buddies Program. Several students presented information they researched about space, constellations, and lightening. Two groups of students reported on the Kenai River and the salmon cycle, and the preservation of antiques and artifacts from a homesteader's cabin and the creation of a webpage documenting the information.

RECESS:

At 7:57 p.m., Dr. Anderson called a recess.

RECONVENE AFTER RECESS:

At 8:01 p.m., the Board reconvened in regular session.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

Mr. John Kistler distributed a spreadsheet containing a comparison of salaries and ranges for past seven years in relation to inflation. He explained that the comparison starts before the two-tier salary schedule was implemented. Mr. Kistler concluded by stating that it would cost the District approximately \$4 million to bring teacher salaries in line with inflation.

Dr. Anderson asked if the information on the comparison study was accurate for New York. Mr. Kistler confirmed that the information is accurate and is based on the Manhattan area prior to the World Trade Center disaster.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS:

Dr. Peterson reported that she received notification from the Borough Assembly regarding a worksession on February 5 at 4:00 p.m. to review and discuss the final report filed by the Borough Reapportionment Committee. She stated that she received several thank you notes regarding the Tustumena 200 Dog Sled Race. She read from a letter sent by the State of Alaska Division of Retirement and Benefits, "The Division of Retirement and Benefits has become concerned about the number of superintendents, executive directors, school administrators, and teachers hired as independent contractors in Alaska. A review of the State of Alaska laws made it clear that these positions were under the control of local school boards and employees occupying these positions were employees of those school boards and not independent contractors." Dr. Peterson explained that the District is currently in an audit phase and will report back to the state and will take appropriate action based on the directive.

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

Mr. Buck George, KPESA vice president, noted that according to the School Board agenda the School Board will consider the approval of a new charter school. He expressed the Association's concern that during the time of a hiring freeze, possible wage and substitute freezes, possible elimination of cocurricular activities and possible school closures, that the Board give the matter careful consideration.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Dr. Peterson reminded the Board that the Long Range Planning Update meeting scheduled for March 7, 2002 has been cancelled and will be rescheduled at a more convenient date.

BOARD REPORTS:

Mrs. Gilman reported that she enjoyed the opportunity to serve on the Budget Review Committee and thanked the community members, the associations and administration for their efforts. She stated that it is the time to develop some "outside of the box" thinking as well as encourage the community to lobby the legislature for more funding for education. She cautioned that the community must also be prepared to discuss taxes, caps on dividends, and caps on spending that they are willing to accept.

Mr. Poindexter reported that he also attended the Budget Review Committee worksession and added that he was impressed with the people involved with the Committee. He reported that without an infusion of money, the Committee is going to begin dismantling a good system.

Ms. Germano reported that she received a document developed by the Education Advocates Group and asked Board members to share copies at the community budget meetings. She reported that the document includes good information about the cost of educating students statewide and provides a place for the public to add their own comments.

Dr. Anderson reported that the Board participates in a conference call with District legislators prior to each Board meeting in which the Board continues to advocate for more funding for education. He reported that while the legislators are sympathetic to the needs of the District, they could not make any promises.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Items presented on the Consent Agenda were AR 5141.4, Students – Child Abuse and Neglect; New Teacher Assignments; and Request for Leave of Absence – Certified.

AR 5141.4 (Students – Child Abuse and
Neglect):

Dr. Whiteley recommended the Board approve revisions to AR 5141.4, Students – Child Abuse and Neglect, in order to clarify the reporting and filing procedures for suspected child abuse or neglect.

New Teacher Assignments:

Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve teacher assignments for the 2001-2002 school year for Matthew Neagley, (temporary) generalist, Nanwalek Elementary/High; and David Little, (temporary) special education/assistive/technology, Pupil Services, Districtwide.

Request for Leave of Absence – Certified:

Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve an unpaid leave of absence for the 2002-2003 school year for Patricia A. Cruz, Grade 2/3, Niniichik School.

ACTION

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

Motion carried unanimously.

HEALTH CURRICULUM:

Dr. Whiteley recommended the Board adopt the Health Curriculum as presented by the Health Curriculum Committee.

ACTION

Mrs. Crawford moved the Board approve the Health Curriculum. Ms. Germano seconded.

Ms. Germano asked whether documentation to support sensitive health topics will be attached to the curriculum in addendum form. Dr. Whiteley responded that the Committee will develop the addendum and bring it to the Board for review. Ms. Germano asked whether the addendum would be attached to the curriculum. Dr. Whiteley stated that the addendum would be a separate informational packet on sensitive health topics and would not be considered part of the curriculum. He added that the information would be administrative advice to principals and teachers.

Ms. Germano asked whether suggested documents or reading materials are part of the curriculum document. Mr. Stewart stated that suggested materials are not currently included in the curriculum. Dr. Whiteley stated that the committee can provide the information if the Board would like.

Dr. Peterson explained that past practice has been to include a resource binder as part of the curriculum information. She stated that the administration is not sure they will produce a resource binder but instead, are considering a training packet and training information that will replace the resource binders. She explained that the training packet or the resource binder is not approved by the Board.

Motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Anderson noted that the next three agenda items to be considered will be the charter schools and added that the Board has no serious objection to granting five-year charters to each organization.

AURORA BOREALIS SCHOOL
CHARTER:

Dr. Whiteley recommended the Board approve a five-year charter for Aurora Borealis Charter School.

ACTION

Mrs. Crawford moved the Board approve a five-year charter for Aurora Borealis Charter School. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

Mrs. Gilman thanked the Aurora Borealis Charter School parents and staff for their presentation and comments.

Motion carried unanimously.

FIREWEED CHARTER SCHOOL:

Dr. Whiteley recommended the Board approve a one-year charter (due to insolvency) for Fireweed Charter School and that a financial report be submitted to the Chief Financial Officer on October 1, 2002; January 6, 2003; and April 1, 2003.

Mr. Garry Betley requested the Board reconsider a five-year charter for Fireweed Academy. He stated that a one-year charter will make it too difficult to attract more students if parents think the school will only be open for one year.

FIREWEED CHARTER SCHOOL

Ms. Michele Bournonville, Fireweed Academy parent, reported that her daughters

(continued):

attend school at Fireweed Academy and noted the last two years have been the best. She reported that students who have had a difficult time at other schools are now successful and respectful at Fireweed Academy. She asked the Board to consider approving a five-year charter.

Ms. Sara Robertson, Fireweed Academy parent, stated that she was pleased to hear that the Board is considering a five-year charter for Fireweed Academy. She stated that the charter school program is important to perpetuate educational choice for parents. She stated that her children have recently entered the public school system because of the theme emersion program offered at the school. She stated that theme emersion is on the “cutting edge” of education and is thrilled to have it available in Homer. Ms. Robertson stated that as a direct result of the dedicated teachers and the theme emersion program, she decided to enroll her children in the District. She stated that she is pleased to be in a school home where she feels comfortable. She noted that with a five-year charter, families can commit to enrolling their children.

Ms. Maureen Moore, Fireweed Academy parent, thanked the Board for considering a five-year charter for Fireweed Academy. She reported that one of the main reasons her family moved to Homer from Southeast Alaska is because of Fireweed Academy. She stated that after visiting the school she thought that it was exactly what education should be and asked the Board to support Fireweed Academy.

Mr. Gary Ault, Fireweed Academy parent, stated that he has a son who attends the Fireweed Academy School. He stated his son has changed from a “student in the seat” to a “pupil wanting to learn” and is eager to go to school each day. Mr. Ault stated that he has another child who will be entering the school system and thanked the Board for considering the five-year charter.

Ms. Shirley Fedora, Fireweed Academy parent, stated that her family moved to Homer when her son was in kindergarten in a public school. She stated that he had problems that worsened and by second grade he was spending a lot of time in the principal’s office. She stated that she was told that her son had a reputation like that of a high school student. She stated that as soon as Fireweed Academy opened she felt that it was a place her son needed to go to school. She stated that Homer is a community where involvement does make a difference and added that there is a lot of involvement at Fireweed Academy. Ms. Fedora stated that her son went from “fighting over going to school” to “getting up on his own.” She reported that in the public school system his favorite subject was recess, at Fireweed Academy he would rather read than go outside for recess. She stated that prior to enrollment she prepared the school staff for her son’s behavior problems, but after the first quarter of school, his problems had diminished.

Ms. Edna Conkel, Fireweed Academy parent, reported that her daughter spent a lot of time in the school principal’s office and after researching schools in Homer, found Fireweed Academy. She stated that after the first quarter of school her daughter is doing very well. She asked the Board to consider approving a five-year charter for Fireweed Academy.

FIREWEED CHARTER SCHOOL
(continued):

Kathleen Pfundt, Fireweed Academy parent, reported that her son was home schooled until this year when she enrolled him in Fireweed Academy. She stated that her son loves Fireweed Academy and looks forward to school each day. She stated that Fireweed Academy offers a pupil-teacher ratio of 14:1. She stated that with this ratio the teachers are aware of each child’s academic and social

development and can meet their needs. She stated that her son is not overwhelmed or under challenged and has the confidence and motivation to do well. She stated that the innovative curriculum was designed to get and keep students excited about being lifelong learners. She stated that with a manageable class size, Ms. Abrahamson and Ms. Ownes are able to successfully tie learning objectives into desk work, hands-on activities, and field trips, which makes learning meaningful. She reported that each day after school her son eagerly talks about school. She stated that the students are respected, valued, and involved, and parents are encouraged to help in the classroom. She stated that her son feels that he is an important part of the community, and because he feels valued, he is excited about contributing. She stated that when children are actively involved in their learning they do well and if they continue to be motivated throughout their school years, they will be well equipped to be contributing members of society. She reported that her family moved to Homer from Southeast Alaska because Homer offers a choice in schools. She stated that she is very happy with the results of her son's education at Fireweed Academy. She stated that she does not want to enroll her son in an institutional style public school because he would not receive the positive features of the charter school and would probably home school or enroll him in a private school, if Fireweed Academy was not an option. She stated that quality education is the key and noted that "one size fits all" does not apply to schools. She stated that she brought several letters of support from parents who could not attend the Board meeting but care deeply about Fireweed Academy.

Ms. Nell Gustafson, Fireweed Academy parent, stated that she has two children at Fireweed Academy. She stated that her oldest son comes home and immediately completes his homework. She stated that he has improved so much in his reading and creative problem-solving and attributed his success to the school. She stated that her younger son has had a difficult year at Fireweed Academy but despite the problems, has not considered withdrawing him from the school. She stated that she is a member of the Academic Policy Committee and expressed her concern for the future of the school and asked the Board to consider a five-year charter. She stated that the school has proven financial solvency over the past five years and stated that the current budget will keep them in business for two more years. She stated that the parents and staff need to develop a plan to keep financially solvent after the two-year period is over. She stated that the parents and staff want a chance to keep the school open by being granted a reasonable amount of time.

Mrs. Barb George, K-Beach Elementary teacher, stated that she is a dedicated public school teacher. She stated that she would love to have a pupil-teacher ratio of 14:1 and added that if she did she could guarantee less discipline problems. She stated that she can still teach even though she has a pupil-teacher ratio of 24:1. She stated that she has children who are already reading, even though that is not her goal since all children are not ready in kindergarten. Mrs. George stated that there should be public options but not at the expense of public education.

FIREWEED CHARTER SCHOOL
(continued):

Ms. Kiki Abrahamson, Fireweed Academy teacher, stated that she is a public school teacher and is proud of the Fireweed Academy School. She asked the Board to approve a five-year charter. She stated that signing a one-year charter would be like signing a death warrant and added stated that if the school is insolvent in a couple of years, it can be closed. She stated that a one-year charter limits the school's ability to be successful.

ACTION

Ms. Germano moved the Board approve a one-year charter for Fireweed Charter

School and that a financial report be submitted to the Chief Financial Officer on October 1, 2002; January 6, 2003; and April 1, 2003. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

ACTION

Ms. Germano moved the Board approve an amendment for a five-year charter with administrative review and recommendation to the Board next year for solvency and that a financial report be submitted to the Chief Financial Officer on October 1, 2002; January 6, 2003; and April 1, 2003. Mrs. Crawford seconded.

Ms. Germano reported that the Board had a worksession with Fireweed Academy parents and teachers prior to the Board meeting. She stated that there were concerns about solvency of the school because of the low enrollment, and a concern about facility space. She stated that the reason for the a five-year charter recommendation is so that the school can more efficiently spend their time dealing with budget issue rather than spending time reapplying for a new charter.

Mrs. Gilman asked whether the administration would be required to give Fireweed Academy notice of probation if it was determined that Fireweed Academy was not solvent. Dr. Whiteley responded that he was unsure and added that that was one of the reasons the administration wanted a financial report three times next year. He stated that if there were concerns about solvency a recommendation would be made to the Academic Policy Committee so they would have time to adjust. He stated that the administration does not have a recommendation for a reasonable amount of time to terminate the contract.

Mrs. Gilman asked whether it would be possible to terminate the Fireweed Academy charter if it was determined that the school would not be solvent during the next year or whether the District would have to subsidize the program. Dr. Whiteley responded that according to Alaska Statutes, the Board could terminate the contract.

Ms. Germano stated that her amendment asked for an administrative review and recommendation to the Board since it would be up to the Board to terminate the charter, if necessary.

Mrs. Gilman thanked the Fireweed Academy parents for attending the Board meeting. She stated that she is concerned that in the midst of the budget crisis that the District must balance the budget.

Amendment carried unanimously.

Amended motion carried unanimously.

MONTESSORI SCHOOL:

Dr. Whiteley recommended the Board approve a five-year charter for Soldotna Montessori Charter School on the condition that the school is able to enroll a minimum of 40 students and that teachers hired have an Alaskan Type A certificate and Montessori certification.

Mr. Hans Bilben, stated that he has not visited the Fireweed Charter School but has visited Aurora Borealis Charter School and commented that the staff operates an outstanding program. He stated that one of the variables for a successful program is a pupil-teacher ratio of 14:1. He asked how the District can “short change” the majority of students at the expense of a few. He recommended that with the current budget crisis, the Board not approve a new charter school.

Ms. Amy McVie, Soldotna parent, stated that she shared the concerns expressed regarding fiscal responsibility. She stated that she is concerned that there are parents in the community that the District may lose if they do not have a choice. She stated that if the Board includes the Montessori Charter School, they will add more students to the District enrollment. She stated that the charter school is a reasonable educational alternative in the community.

Ms. Jennie Hammond, Nikiski parent, expressed concern over funding a new charter school. She expressed concern for where the funds will come from. She stated that her son is in the District preschool program and added that her daughter will likely attend also. She stated that she is disappointed that not many parents are involved. She asked the Board to carefully review the budget before deciding whether there are funds to start another charter school.

Mrs. Susan Larned, Ridgeway Montessori School owner, stated that she and a group of parents have initiated the application for a Montessori charter school. She stated that starting the new charter school is a win-win situation for Soldotna Elementary (where they hope to be housed) and for the parents who are hoping for an alternative. She stated that she is concerned the school enrollment will be above the 42 students which would require a lottery drawing. She stated that she has had numerous calls from parents of children in public school and from parents with children who are not. Mrs. Larned reported that she recently visited Denali Elementary School in Anchorage which has been operating for approximately 17 years. She reported that the school began with a Montessori pilot program and is now the largest alternative elementary school in Anchorage.

Ms. Tara McMahill, Ridgeway Montessori Preschool parent, reported that her daughter has attended the preschool program for the past three years. She urged the Board to approve the new charter request. She stated that it is hard to have a child attend public school where they can not reach their potential as they could in a Montessori school.

Ms. Michelle Bournenville, stated that the School Board needs to allow more alternatives for parents. She stated that not all students fit into the public school setting and that if the Board wants more public funding they need to provide alternatives. She stated that there are a lot of children who are home schooled and are not generating money for the District, but more money will be generated by providing more options.

MONTESSORI SCHOOL (continued):

Ms. Kiki Abrahamson, Fireweed Academy teachers, stated that she is confused about why people think that the District is subsidizing charter schools. She explained that charter schools receive money for each student that is enrolled. She clarified that the District does not subsidize charter schools. She stated that charter schools do not take money away from other District schools but instead have brought money into the District. She noted that Fireweed Academy has brought in over \$200,000 in federal grant money and that one-third to one-half of the students at Fireweed Academy were home schooled or private school students and were previously not generating money for the District. She stated that the school will do everything possible to be fiscally solvent even if she has to resign in order to hire a first year teacher for less money.

Mrs. Laurie Lingafelt, Soldotna Elementary parent, stated that she has had problems at Soldotna Elementary but has received a great deal of cooperation from the teachers

and noted that they have done an excellent job educating her child. She stated that she has been proactive. She expressed concern that bringing a charter school into a public school facility will drain the resources. She asked the Board to carefully consider all the issues before making a decision.

Mr. Ben Hestand, Soldotna High School senior, stated that he has attended public schools for twelve years. He stated that he participated in the QUEST program beginning in third grade and wanted those present to know that public schools do a good job. He stated that he felt that social skills are developed better in a larger student body.

Mr. Michael Hart stated that he believes in the rights of parents to have different educational options for their children. He stated that not all students fit in the public school setting and that he supports the Montessori parents as well as the Fireweed parents. He stated that it is necessary for parents to have the most options available throughout the District.

Mrs. Lisa Quensel, Nikiski parent, stated that choices for education outside the norm should be paid for by individuals. She noted that 10,000 students attend school in the District and she does not like to see another school being opened when the District cannot even provide for existing schools. She stated that it is great that the two charter schools have parent advocates in attendance but expressed disappointment that few parents will spend time away from their families to help support the Board make quality decisions for all students. She stated that it is tough not to always be on the right side of the fence. She stated that while a pupil-teacher ratio of 14:1 is preferred, the District cannot afford it.

Ms. Sara Robertson reminded those present that charter schools are public schools. She stated that the pupil-teacher ratios that have been previously mentioned are not accurate and that staffing between charter schools and regular schools cannot be compared. She stated that charter school parents act as aides, custodians, art teachers, and fill other necessary jobs. She stated that starting the new Montessori Charter School is not negating the whole. She asked the Board not to lose sight that offering choices in public education is possible and that charter schools do not take money away from regular schools but instead bring in children who were being home schooled. She stated that she applauds all public school educators because teaching is an awesome job.

**MONTESSORI SCHOOL (continued):
ACTION**

Ms. Deb Germano moved the Board approve a five-year charter for Soldotna Montessori Charter School on the condition that the school is able to enroll a minimum of 40 students and that teachers hired have an Alaskan Type A certificate and Montessori certification. Mrs. Crawford seconded.

Mr. Arness stated that he is surprised at the testimony regarding the new charter school application. He stated that charter schools are a way to bring in students who have not been enrolled in the District and do not cost other schools money or drain money from the District, in fact, they bring money into the District. He stated that he is confident Mrs. Larned will run a good Montessori program. He stated that the District as a whole will benefit financially and educationally.

Mr. Poindexter asked the administration to reaffirm that a starting charter school will not drain money from the District budget. Mrs. Douglas replied that there is no cost if all of the students come from outside of the District but added that if some of the

students transfer from other schools, there is a financial adjustment within the District budget.

Miss Lockwood asked whether the recommendation is for a five-year charter.

Dr. Anderson confirmed that the recommendation for the Soldotna Montessori Charter School is for five years.

VOTE:

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

NO – Gilman

Advisory Vote – YES

Motion carried.

FIRST READING OF POLICY REVISIONS:

The Board heard a first reading of E 6162.71, Internet Safety Policy Guidelines/ Internet Use Terms and Conditions. Dr. Whiteley explained that the revisions will bring the District in compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and that the update is also necessary for the District to be eligible to receive E Rate funding after July 1, 2002.

Dr. Anderson extended an invitation to the audience to speak on the exhibit revisions. No one came forward.

Dr. Whiteley noted that the revisions to the exhibit did not require Board approval.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

Mr. Kistler explained the purpose of the spread sheet presented earlier in the meeting. He stated that the amount of money necessary to bring District educators to a compensated wage that accounts for inflation would mean that the administration would have to close all high schools and middle schools to pay for the increase. He stated that the closures would equal the loss of 120 teachers. He stated that as a private citizen, he cannot imagine any group of educators wanting to close schools to pay for salary increases and cannot imagine a community accepting school closures. He stated that he would like to see the educators voluntarily step forward and say that they are willing to keep education going by continuing with the current contract until the issue can be addressed without “killing” education on the Kenai Peninsula. He noted that the Borough is being held against a wall because of the way the state funds education. He gave examples of state money that is spent on grants and “give aways” and does not go to education, such as Public Radio, Arctic Power, and the Women’s Resource and Crisis Center. He stated that the public needs to convince state legislators to rearrange their priorities and place an emphasis back on education. He stated that the state has money in a savings account that they cannot spend; only the interest can be spent. He stated that when the interest money is gone and there are no more permanent fund dividend checks the District will be back at the same place unless legislators address the money being wasted. He stated that the state cannot continue to spend \$42,000 per family forever.

Jackie Ansotegui, K-Beach Elementary parent, explained that the misconception over charter schools being public schools comes from the parents who complained that their child did not do well in a public school and transferred to a charter school. She stated that her daughter was in a class that had a pupil-teacher ratio 34:1 and noted that it was not a pleasant experience. She stated that her children are successful in public school and that the teachers are wonderful. She stated that she is tired of the

“us” or “them” attitude and added that just because she chooses to educate her children in the public school system does not mean she is less of a parent than those to choose other options.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Miss Lockwood stated that she enjoyed the K-Beach Elementary School presentation. She stated that she enjoyed the worksession with the Soldotna Montessori Charter School. She stated that their approach to education is good and is pleased that the choice will be available to District students. She stated that she is anxious after hearing earlier discussions regarding the consolidation of schools and elimination of cocurricular activities. She stated that she hopes by lobbying the legislature and developing creative spending ideas the District can continue to move forward.

Mrs. Gilman, thanked the Social Studies Curriculum Committee members for their work. She explained that she voted no on the Soldotna Montessori Charter School because she became concerned when Mrs. Douglas explained the financial implications a new charter school would have on the District. She stated that she would have supported the motion if she could be assured that every child enrolling in the new charter school was not enrolled in another District school. She stated that inevitably some of the students enrolling in the new Soldotna Montessori Charter School will be students from Soldotna Elementary, especially when the parents have a choice to put their child in a classroom with 20 students or a classroom with 26 students. Mrs. Gilman reported that she was the moderator for the third grade Battle of the Books at Mt. View Elementary. She stated that the experience was extremely tense but amazing. She invited the Board to attend the fifth and sixth Battle of the Books on February 5 at 9:00 a.m., 9:50 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

BOARD COMMENTS (continued):

Ms. Germano thanked Ms. Richardson and the K-Beach Elementary School staff and students for their presentation. She thanked the administration for their hard work. She reminded the members that one of the Board goals is to increase student enrollment and that if families want alternatives then approving the school charters was the right thing to do. She stated that every student who resides in the Borough belongs to the District, even if they attend a private school. She stated that the same things that impact the District also impact charter schools and noted that Fireweed Academy’s costs have increased. She stated that the school will have to review their budget just like the District. She noted that every charter school is just one piece of the whole.

Mrs. Crawford reported that she attended the production of “An Evening Without Sinatra”, directed by Joe Rizzo and choreographed by Phil Morin and added that the play was awesome. She stated that she attended a German luncheon at Soldotna High School and visited the Monday Morning Assembly at K-Beach Elementary. She thanked Ms. Richardson for the K-Beach Elementary School presentation. She reported that she judged the academic decathlon at Kenai Central High and commented on the high caliber of students that were interviewed. Mrs. Crawford stated that the charter school discussion is frustrating because there are so many great things happening within District schools. She stated that Board members don’t always agree with legislation that is passed into law but are required to follow them, even though they are not funded. She stated that she is hoping the charter schools will bring back parents who have chosen to home school their children. She stated that she hopes the local newspapers will print letters to the editor asking the legislature to adequately fund education. She noted that right now the public opinion is to reduce state spending.

Mrs. Mullins thanked the K-Beach Elementary staff for the school presentation and applauded the students who spoke to the Board. She thanked the students in the audience for attending the meeting and for speaking. She noted that Miss Lockwood represents the student body very well but that it is always nice to have other students attend and provide an opinion. She reported that the Board held a teleconference call with Kenai Peninsula legislators. She reported that the legislators did not have good news but appreciated the opportunity to speak with them every two weeks. She stated that she hopes the community will let the legislature know that the priority is adequate funding for education. Mrs. Mullins expressed appreciation for the positive news coverage informing the public of the School District's plight.

BOARD COMMENTS (continued):

Dr. Anderson noted that he was somewhat upset about comments made earlier that public schools are not doing a good job. He stated that he disagreed and felt that District schools are doing a good job. He explained that he understands that not all students fit in the system (including children of Board members) and that alternatives are good but added that if students transfer from a regular school to a charter school it takes money from the regular school. He stated that he believes more students will enroll in the Soldotna Montessori School from outside the District. He stated that his personal philosophy is that schools should be user-friendly to as many students as possible and he noted that a previous superintendent was hostile toward home schooled students and gave the Board a bad name which they have been trying to change. He stated that the Board would like to encourage home schooled students to participate in public school as much as possible because they will receive an outstanding education. He stated that he will continue to advocate for as many options for education as possible. He stated that charter schools can offer lower pupil-teacher ratios because their teacher salaries are lower but as salaries rise with step increases, the schools begin to have trouble. Dr. Anderson stated that his children received a wonderful education within the public education system. He extended accolades to Ms. Loshbaugh for the balanced articles she has written over the years and hopes that she will continue awhile longer.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 9:38 p.m. Mrs. Crawford moved that 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 and litigation. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 10:25 p.m. Mrs. Mullins moved the executive session be adjourned. Mr. Poindexter seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN:

At 10:26 p.m., Mrs. Mullins moved the School Board Meeting be adjourned. Mr. Poindexter seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Nels Anderson, President

Mrs. Sammy Crawford, Clerk

The Minutes of February 4, 2002,
were approved on February 18, 2002
as written.