

KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

148 N. Binkley Street

Soldotna, AK 99669

January 6, 2003

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Joe Arness, President
Mrs. Sammy Crawford, Vice President
Ms. Deborah Germano, Clerk
Mrs. Margaret Gilman, Treasurer
Mrs. Debra Mullins, Member
Dr. Nels Anderson, Member
Mr. Al Poindexter, Member
Mr. Cameron Poindexter, Student Representative

STAFF PRESENT:

Dr. Donna Peterson, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Melody Douglas, Chief Financial Officer
Dr. Gary Whiteley, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
Mr. Todd Syverson, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mr. Caleb Sizemore	Mrs. Paula Christensen
Mrs. Lori Manion	Mr. Tim Cooper
Mr. Henry Anderson	Mrs. Meg Porter
Mrs. Bekkie Jackson	Mrs. Jackie Ansotegui
Mr. Bob Ermold	Mr. Sean Weigle
Mr. Dave McCard	Mr. Alex Jackson
Mr. Dave Larson	Mr. Hans Bilben
Mrs. Christine Ermold	Mr. Adam Cooper
Mr. Mick Wykis	Dr. Roy Anderson
Mr. Mike Wetherbee	Mr. Sam Stewart
Mr. Jim White	Mr. Dave Spence
Mrs. Laurie Olson	Mr. Seth Letzring

Others present not identified.

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Arness called the meeting to order at 1:49 p.m. A quorum of School Board members, Ms. Germano, Mrs. Gilman, Mrs. Mullins, Mr. Arness, and Mr. Poindexter were in attendance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 1:50 p.m. Ms. Germano 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 receive a legal update and to discuss negotiations tactics and strategies. Mr. Poindexter seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 2:50 p.m., Ms. Germano moved the executive session be adjourned. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 5:50 p.m. Mr. Poindexter 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 tactics and strategies. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 7:33 p.m., Mrs. Mullins moved the executive session be adjourned.
Mr. Poindexter seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mr. Arness invited those present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:	Dr. Nels Anderson	Absent/Excused
	Ms. Deborah Germano	Present
	Mrs. Sammy Crawford	Absent/Excused
	Mr. Joe Arness	Present
	Mrs. Debra Mullins	Present
	Mrs. Margaret Gilman	Present
	Mr. Al Poindexter	Present
	Mr. Cameron Poindexter	Present

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved with revisions to 11a(3), Approval of Request for Leave of Absence–Support, and 11c., Approval of FY03 Budget Transfer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The School Board Minutes of December 2, 2002, were approved as printed.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS: The Board presented a Golden Apple award to Mrs. Bekkie Jackson, Sears Elementary School nurse for her service to the District.

SCHOOL REPORT: Mrs. Lori Manion, North Star Elementary principal, was assisted in a PowerPoint presentation by Miss Megan Hansen and Miss Kassi Johnson who provided examples of Alaska standards that are being taught at each grade level for language arts, mathematics, science, geography, government and citizenship, history, health, art, world languages, and technology.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS: Mr. Dan Hicks, Seldovia City Council member, asked the Board not to make funding or staffing reductions to the school. He stated that it is difficult to entice people to live in Seldovia when school programs and staff are being reduced. He stated that he was sent by the citizens of Seldovia to assist the Board in making good and fair decisions for the community.

Ms. Sue Hecks, Seldovia resident and past city mayor, stated that the City of Seldovia has been actively working on economic development. She stated that one of the selling points of living in Seldovia is the quality of life including a fantastic school system that has produced many successful students. She stated that the proposed staffing cuts will discourage any interest from “outsiders” to relocate in Seldovia. She referred the Board to City of Seldovia Resolution 0315 and letters from the City treasurer and other residents. She stated that small schools make up 13 percent of the District budget and noted that Seldovia is 1.3 percent of the total. She stated that the savings from the proposed budget reductions at Susan B. English Elementary/High amount to \$150,000. She asked why the school staff is being reduced by 30 percent, which is 10 percent of the total District projected deficit and 20% of the Susan B. English Elementary/High School budget. She stated that she is concerned that if students aren’t provided with an education, families will be forced

to leave. She stated that she has spoken to families who will move to Anchorage or out of the state. She asked the Board not to lump all schools together but instead assess the small rural schools individually. She stated that there are some creative solutions and stated that the residents want to work with the Board to keep the quality of the school.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS (continued): Mr. Arness offered to travel to Seldovia to speak to the residents about possible solutions to their staff reduction problems. Ms. Hecks suggested that if he couldn't come to Seldovia that the meeting could be held via teleconference.

Mr. Justin Dahlen, Skyview High student, expressed concern for the Consolidation Schools Proposal. He stated that "quantity is being sacrificed for quality." He stated that his education is being sacrificed for more money because of funding problems. He stated that there should be other considerations instead of reducing teachers and closing schools. He stated that he has visited other schools but likes Skyview High's environment the best and that if the school is closed there will be no place for him. He stated that combining Skyview High and Soldotna High will present new funding problems. He asked the Board for their feelings regarding the proposal.

Mr. Arness explained that later on the agenda the Consolidating Schools Report will be introduced to the Board for the first time.

Doug Blossom, parent of students at Skyview High, Soldotna Middle and K-Beach Elementary, stated that he is highly opposed to the consolidating of Skyview High and Soldotna High because Skyview High is the largest school in the district. He stated that all three proposals just juggle students but does not accomplish any money savings. He stated that the effect on the students would outweigh the benefits. He stated that combining the high schools would eliminate extracurricular opportunities for half as many students since they would find it too difficult to compete for a spot on the team. He explained that part of the reason Skyview High and Nikiski Middle/High were built was because the communities wanted smaller schools. He stated that Skyview High and Soldotna High provide a choice to students. He stated that the Consolidating Schools Plan is unjustified and will not save the District any money. Mr. Blossom stated that the Board should table the Consolidating Schools Plan.

Mr. Justin Johnson, Soldotna High senior, stated that Skyview High and Soldotna High will only house a designated amount of classes each day and added that if the numbers of teachers are reduced and class sizes increased, the classes will become unmanageable and the quality of education will drop sharply. He noted that a difference of 5 to 10 students in a classroom can make the difference between a serious class and one that becomes a gossip hour.

Miss Jackie Rainwater, Skyview High class president, stated that she is opposed to the Consolidating Schools Plan for three reasons: 1) twelve years of hard work put in by the Skyview High community to establish a good environment and a distinguished school will be lost; 2) eighty-four percent of the student body participates in activities which would be limited if the two high schools are combined and 3) students cannot learn in overcrowded classrooms. She stated that combining the high schools will make parents and students angry and create more home schoolers.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS (continued): Mr. Pat Shields, Skyview High parent, stated that he is strongly opposed to the plan to consolidate Skyview High and Soldotna High. He stated that if the two schools are combined there will be a great reduction in services and opportunities for students in the areas of academics and athletics. He cited an example of his daughter who wants to try out for the swing choir next school year but her chances of being selected if the schools are combined will be extremely difficult because the choir is limited in number. He stated that opportunities will be lost in a school with large numbers of students. He stated that from a sports standpoint, the number of students who will not be able to participate will be in the hundreds. He reminded the Board that in the 1980s the Borough voted to keep school sizes small (under 600) so students could have sports and academic opportunities. He stated that combining the two high schools is a poor decision and added that any time decisions are made based upon funding, a cost benefit ratio must be considered. He stated that the amount of money saved by consolidating the high schools essentially makes the students pay with lost opportunities. He asked the Board to remove the consolidation of the two high schools from the list of options for consideration.

Mr. Dale Dolifka, Skyview High and Soldotna High parent, stated that fifteen years ago great emphasis was put on small schools and a limit of 600 students was set (500 was almost chosen). He stated that consolidating the schools will limit the participation by students in choir, band, and sports by half. He stated that a school is more than band, choir, and sports, it is the heart in the community. He noted that shortly after the Nikiski Middle/High School opened the legal community saw a significant drop in juvenile delinquent actions. He stated that opening the school in Nikiski and involving the students in choir, band and sports was the best idea because it provided positive activities for children. He stated that if the two high schools are combined, the community will see a negative difference. He asked the Board to please remember that the proposal is more than about academics, it is about the heart of a community and added that Skyview has a heart.

Mr. Arness acknowledged high school students in the audience and thanked them for their attendance.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS: Dr. Peterson reported that communications were received from various communities and cities regarding the Consolidating Schools Preliminary Plan. She stated that the Board information packet included a vehicle transportation status report. She called the Board's attention to a proposal to change the format of the Board of Education minutes and asked the Board to review and comment.

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

Ms. Cathy Carrow, KPEA Vice President, stated that she works too hard and too many hours. She reported that last spring the Redoubt Elementary faculty donated over 300 hours in a week to the school in extra time worked (the equivalent of nearly 8 full-time employees). She stated that what used to be a choice to work additional hours has now become an expectation and that teachers have been asked by the local and federal government to increase their responsibilities and to assist with the budget shortfall. She stated that she cannot perform her job successfully without working 60 hours each week. She reported that Mr. Arness was quoted in the Anchorage Daily News as saying that the problem with salary negotiations is that teachers were overpaid in the 1980s and now are finally catching up to what salaries ought to be. She stated that the letter to employees which was included in the December paycheck explained that staffing formulas would be increasing in an effort to hold down costs. She stated that she interpreted the letter to mean that she must work even harder in

order receive any compensation. She stated that she has become more frustrated and resentful because she feels she is required to put her family and her health at risk. She concluded by saying that quality costs and that she needs fair and equitable compensation for the enormous profoundly important job that she does and that she be included when important issues are discussed.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Dr. Peterson announced that the legislative session begins January 21, 2003. She noted that budget hearings will be conducted on January 15 at Soldotna High; January 16 at Seward High; January 21 at Kenai Central High; January 22 at Homer High; and January 23 at Nikiski Middle/High. She stated that information will be forthcoming regarding the Blue Ribbon Vocational Education Task Force. She reported that the Arctic Winter Games site visit was recently conducted at local area schools.

Financial Report:

Mrs. Douglas presented the financial report of the District for the period ending November 31, 2002.

Consolidating Schools:

Dr. Peterson presented the Preliminary Long Range Plan for Consolidating Schools. The report provides information regarding decisions to change the delivery of education at some locations, revise school boundaries and to consolidate schools throughout the District.

Mr. Arness reported that prior to the meeting, a worksession was held regarding the Preliminary Long Range Plan for Consolidating Schools. He stated that after the presentation the Board conducted an extended conversation about the various aspects and reasons for the report. He noted that no direction was given to the administration about what to do with the report. He stated that the Board will conduct another worksession regarding the Plan on February 3.

BOARD REPORTS:

Mr. Poindexter reported that he attended the Blue Ribbon Vocational Education Task Force meeting on December 9-10. He noted that statistics show that 50% to 75% of high school students do not finish a college degree. He noted that District high school programs are basically college prep. He stated that the Task Force reviewed ways to serve non college bound students. He noted that there was good representation from private industry, business, and government agencies. He reported that the group discussed philosophy, programs, finance, and community involvement. He reported that as a result, a coalition was formed called the World Class Workforce Coalition for the Kenai Peninsula. He stated that a steering committee was also formed and have met twice. He stated that there is still a lot of work to be done to figure out how to finance ideas, how to coordinate plans with schools and the community.

BOARD REPORTS (continued):

Dr. Peterson noted that there is no more money to spend on vocational education which is the reason the coalition was created. She reported that the Economic Development District has a job description available to begin coalition work and will be working very closely with the District counselors to determine how best to connect activities with what is already being done in the schools. She stated that the job description is not only for students who are not going to college but for all students because it includes information about understanding work ethics, etc. She stated that the group will meet with the Board in February for discussions regarding suggested changes. She stated that a follow-up meeting with the Task Force has been scheduled for March 11 to report the changes that have been made. She stated that

business, industry, and government is being held accountable for the changes

Mr. Kurt Braun credited the Anchorage School District vocational education program for keeping him in school so he could graduate. He stated that unfortunately, his son dropped out of high school because the Mat-Su School District (where he attended) did not have a vocational education program.

RECESS: At 8:40 p.m. Mr. Arness called a recess.

RECONVENE AFTER RECESS: At 8:47 pm. the Board reconvened in regular session.

CONSENT AGENDA: Items presented on the Consent Agenda were Approval of Revised Pay Schedule for Substitutes and Other Temporary Employees; New Teacher Assignments; and Request for Leave of Absence–Support

Revised Pay Schedule for Substitutes and Other Temporary Employees: Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve a revision to the pay schedules for substitutes and other temporary employees for the 2002-2003 school year, in accordance with the overtime changes that go into effect January 1, 2003.

New Teacher Assignments: Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve teacher assignments for the 2002-2003 school year for Jacob J. Doth, middle school science teacher, Nikiski Middle/High School; Diane R. Bernard, (temporary) Title I .50 FTE/.50 FTE librarian, Soldotna Elementary; Jodie Garten, special education, resource, Kenai Central High; James P. Keal, .50 FTE school counselor/.50 FTE social studies, Homer High School; Christy L. Mulyca, business/technology education, Seward High School; and Carol J. Thomassen, (temporary) generalist 7-8, .50 FTE, Seward Middle School.

Request for Leave of Absence–Support: Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve unpaid leave of absence requests for Janie Finley, K-Beach Elementary School nurse (effective December 9, 2002 through December 9, 2003) and Levi Doss, Nikiski Elementary, special education aide (effective December 3, 2002 through January 20, 2003).

ACTION Mrs. Mullins moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Items Numbers 1 through 3. Mrs. Gilman seconded.

Ms. Germano asked why new teacher assignments are being brought to the Board for approval in January. Mr. Syverson explained that the District is just now receiving certification confirmation from the Department of Education and Early Development regarding newly hired teachers.

CONSENT AGENDA (continued): Ms. Germano expressed concern that not much planning was involved regarding the leave of absence requests and yet the administration is requesting approval. Mr. Syverson explained that the administration is following past practice which has allowed more leniency with support personnel.

VOTE:

YES – Gilman, Mullins, Poindexter, Arness

NO – Germano

Advisory Vote – YES

Motion carried.

Redirection of Remaining Bond Funds:

Mr. Syverson recommended the Board approve a request by the school district administration to seek DEED approval for the redirection of unexpended bond proceeds to pay for the completion of the Soldotna Middle School remodel and sprinkler installation; construction of 4 portables to replace existing substandard units; repairs to the Ninilchik School swimming pool; and repairs to the roof and drainage at Nanwalek School.

Ms. Germano asked what is included in the Soldotna Middle School remodel proposal. Mr. Syverson explained that square footage will be gained by reconfiguring available space onto more classrooms and vacate as many portables as possible. He further explained that the locker island area, home economics classroom, and computer classroom could be converted into more classroom space. He noted that Mr. Spence will work with a committee to determine which areas will be remodeled. Mr. Spence stated that the remodel will also allow sprinklers to be installed throughout the building which will bring it up to code.

Ms. Germano asked whether funds have been allocated somewhere else for the design portion of the Soldotna Middle School remodel. Mr. Spence stated that funds for design work have already been allocated. He explained that the bond funds are for the actual construction of the remodel and cannot be used for anything else.

Mrs. Gilman asked how the four projects were chosen. Mr. Spence stated that the Soldotna Middle School remodel has been at the top of the Capital Improvement Projects list for several years. He stated that many items rise to the top of the CIP list on an emergency basis and cited an example of roofs falling in on portables. He stated that the District has 34 portables throughout the District and several have exceeded their 10-year life span. He reported that the Ninilchik Elementary/High School swimming pool is leaking quite heavily from the main water line. He stated that Nanwalek Elementary School was originally included on the last bond issue list but was removed because the Department of Education and Early Development required roofs to be older than 20 years. He stated that the school roof is still bad and has drainage problems that need immediate attention. He stated that all of the projects are considered emergencies.

Mrs. Gilman asked if the remaining bond funds could be used for anything other than capital improvements. Mr. Syverson said that the money is part of the bond package and must be used for capital improvement projects.

Redirection of Remaining Bond Funds
(continued):

Ms. Germano stated that she will support the recommendations, but asked whether the bond funds could be used to address teacher housing problems. Mr. Syverson responded that the Soldotna Middle School sprinkler installation is a key issue. Mr. Spence stated that the language in the bond issue ballot stated that the funds or any residual funds could be redirected for educational projects for schools. He guessed that teacherages would not qualify within the restrictions of the use of the bond funds.

ACTION

Mrs. Mullins moved the Board approve the redirection of unexpended bond proceeds as outlined in the administrative recommendation. Mr. Poindexter seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

FY03 Budget Transfer:

Mrs. Douglas recommended the Board approve an appropriation of fund balance for

\$1,031,761 and an amended FY03 Operating Fund Budget of \$77,648,001. She also recommended budget increases of \$4,615 for the community schools fund, \$27,238 for the food service fund and \$16,808 for the pupil transportation fund as outlined.

ACTION

Ms. Germano moved the Board approve an appropriation of fund balance for \$1,031,761 and an amended FY03 Operating Fund Budget of \$77,648,001 and recommended budget increases of \$4,615 for the community schools fund, \$27,238 for the food service fund and \$16,808 for the pupil transportation fund as outlined. Mrs. Gilman seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Kenai Peninsula Administrator's Association Negotiated Agreement:

Dr. Whiteley recommended the Board approve the proposed Kenai Peninsula Administrator's Association Negotiated Agreement for the 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005 school years.

ACTION

Ms. Germano moved the Board approve the proposed Kenai Peninsula Administrator's Association Negotiated Agreement. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

Mrs. Gilman moved the Board postpone action on the proposed Kenai Peninsula Administrator's Association Negotiated Agreement until after the arbitration decision is made regarding the KPEA and KPESA contracts. The motion died for lack of a second.

VOTE:

YES – Germano, Mullins, Poindexter, Arness

NO – Gilman

Advisory Vote – YES

Motion carried.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS/
COMMENTS:

Mr. Henry Anderson, North Star Elementary teacher, asked the Board what process has been planned for the twelve-month communication process that will occur in the communities affected by the Long Range Plan for Consolidating Schools. He stated that the public must be made aware that there will be opportunities to provide input to the District and the Board regarding the Plan. He stated that it is important that a detailed explanation of savings gained by implementing the Plan. He noted that unless buildings are closed, there is little financial impact and that after a review of the Plan, few schools will be closed and not much savings will be gained.

Mr. William Cook, Soldotna High School student, expressed concern for the potential reductions in high school course offerings and stated that he has been made a better person because of music and drama. He stated that he is an idealist. He stated that teachers are idealists who believe that they can make a difference and added that unfortunately, idealists are killed and cynics are born. He stated that he feels bad for the students who do not know what they will be missing.

Ms. Germano thanked Mr. Cook for speaking and explained that the Consolidating Schools Plan has been presented for discussion only and that no decisions have been made.

Mr. Hans Bilben, KPEA President, stated that he is pleased that after a few closed-door bargaining sessions the Board has awarded the building administrators a fair contract. He stated that he is hoping that the Board is now willing to work with the other two bargaining groups to achieve the same end. He summarized the changes to the administrator contract and applied the same increases to the KPEA contract and reported the outcome. He stated that he is pleased that the Board could accommodate the administrators and added that he expects that the Board and Central Office administration benefits would rise accordingly. He stated that he hopes the Board will seriously attempt to settle the contracts with the two remaining bargaining groups.

Mr. Dave Blossom stated that he agrees with the opposition that has been expressed regarding the consolidation of schools. He stated that by consolidating schools, the need for portables will be even greater. He reported that some schools in the Homer area are constructed solely with portables. He stated that he is opposed to any consolidation of schools.

Ms. Linda Blake, Skyview High parent, stated that she is opposed to the consolidation of schools. She stated that the Plan puts too many students in a building. She stated that students will have less opportunity to compete in academics and activities.

Mr. Dave Larson, KCHS teacher, stated that he told a group of former advanced placement students (who are now in college) about the pupil-teacher ratio adjustments made by the Board and that KCHS will lose nearly 20% of their teaching staff. He reported that a comment made by a member of the group was, "Oh, so we readjusted our goal to strive toward mediocrity." He asked the Board to weigh the opinions of the community quite seriously and act based on the desires of the constituents and not on personal ideas or philosophies.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Mr. Al Poindexter thanked the high school students for attending the meeting and invited them back. He stated that he was 20-year idealist teacher and left as a cynic. He noted that since he has become a Board member he is no longer a cynic. He stated that the District is facing some extraordinary times. He stated that he started teaching in 1974 when coaches received \$300 for an entire year and finished his teaching career earning \$40,000 a year (now considered an average salary). He stated that he agrees with most of the speakers regarding the consolidation of schools. He explained that the School Board is trying to "look outside of the box" to make education better. He stated that the Plan is an endeavor to respond to the federal No Child Left Behind legislation where all teachers are required to be certified in each area they teach. He explained that in a small school one teacher teaches three to five different subjects and it is difficult to find a person certified in all areas. He stated that mandated teacher certification is a logical reason for consolidating schools. He reported that the idea of consolidating schools is based on research which shows that all subject areas can be offered in high schools with an enrollment of between 700 and 900 students. He stated that conversely, students lose the sense of belonging in large schools. He stated that the public needs to be informed of the research and to keep an open mind. He stated that the Board will make a decision about whether to pursue the Plan further at the February meeting. He stated that the Board does listen to the constituency and added that the Plan is not a "done deal." He stated that the Board will base their decision on what is best for children and the communities. He thanked the Nikiski PTA for the mug that was

given to each Board member. He explained that the World Class Coalition was formed in an effort to serve the needs of the workforce and communities, and for students who do not finish a college degree. He reported that the goal of the Coalition is to ensure that every student is exposed to many different career opportunities and gains workforce entry skills.

Ms. Germano thanked the Nikiski middle/High PTA for the mug that was given as a gift. She stated that she is continually amazed by people's inability to recognize contributions made by others and suggested that employees who are unhappy with their present employment situation look for something else. She explained that the approved KPAA contract included five days of extra duty compensation. She noted that high school principals spend numerous evenings and Saturdays throughout the year at the school working. She stated that extra duty compensation for certified staff is comparable and that five days of extra duty compensation is not unreasonable for an employee who works every weekend of the school year.

BOARD COMMENTS (continued):

Mrs. Mullins thanked the Nikiski middle/High PTA for the mug that was given as a gift. She reported that the Board was introduced to the new legislators during a meeting in which the Board expressed the needs of the district. She stated that the Board hopes to conduct conference calls with the Peninsula delegation throughout the session. She asked the community to help the Board express to legislators the funding predicament of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (seven years of reductions). She thanked Mrs. Manion and the North Star Elementary students (Miss Megan Hansen and Miss Kassi Johnson) for their school report. She recognized Mrs. Jackson for her Golden Apple award and noted that the students love her. She thanked the high school students for their attendance and added that she appreciated their comments. She stated that the Board did not have time to discuss the Consolidating Schools Plan during the worksession prior to the meeting. She noted that she received copies of a number of resolutions and received telephone calls from Seldovia residents. She stated that she appreciates the calls and memos. She stated that the Board is going to listen to all public comments regarding the Consolidating Schools Plan. She stated that no decisions have been made and that all ideas must be considered. She stated that her intent is that public hearings will be held regarding the Plan so that every community can "buy in" or help find other solutions. She stated that the Board has requested more information from the administration and noted that there is still a lot of work to do and does not expect any changes as early as fall of 2003. She stated that she appreciated hearing the concerns that were expressed.

Mrs. Gilman thanked the Nikiski middle/High PTA for the mug that was given as a gift. She expressed her appreciation for the North Star Elementary presentation and stated that these types of student presentations make being a board member worthwhile. She stated that she taught for twelve years in the District before becoming a Board member and considered herself an idealist and is worried that she is now becoming a cynic. She stated that the problem is that the parents, teachers, students, are all fighting for an insufficient amount of money and the state has not provided sufficient funds. She stated that when the Board met with the legislators they discussed the Area Cost Differential Study and added that if the District does not get some relief, the entire Borough must make it a top priority to convey their protest to the legislature. She stated that the District is not being funded adequately and haven't been for the past 12 years. She stated that if the Board had not been forced to cut the budget, the District would not see the severe decline in enrollment

which has caused the consideration of consolidating schools. She asked those present to take notice of the Area Cost Differential Study when it becomes available January 15.

Mr. Arness thanked Mrs. Manion for the North Star Elementary report. He thanked Dr. Peterson and Mr. Anderson for their contribution towards making North Star Elementary a great school. Mr. Arness asked Mr. Bilben to bring him the equivalent document which was settled with the administrators and he will sign it directly after the Board meeting. He stated that the offer made to the teachers was substantially more than the amount the administrators accepted.

ADJOURN:

At 9:42 p.m., Mrs. Gilman moved the School Board Meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Joe Arness, President

Mrs. Deborah Germano, Clerk

The Minutes of January 6, 2003,
were approved on February 3, 2003
as written.