

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education Meeting Minutes

January 10, 2005 – 7:00 p.m.
Regular Meeting

Borough Administration Building
148 N. Binkley, Soldotna, Alaska

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

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

STAFF PRESENT:

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mr. Joe Nicks	Ms. Gail Moore
Mrs. Jenni Hammond	Mrs. Sylvia Reynolds
Mr. Tim Peterson	Mrs. Paula Christensen
Mrs. Barbara George	Mr. Glenn Haupt
Mr. Jim White	Mrs. Barb Ralston
Dr. Roy Anderson	Mr. Brandy Goracke
Mrs. Norma Holmgaard	Mr. Scott Foster
Mr. Pete Sprague	Mr. Bob VanDerWege
Mr. Jon Lillevik	Mr. Brad Hibberd
Mr. Layton Ehmke	Mr. Matt Hicks

Others present not identified.

CALL TO ORDER:

(7:00:59 PM)

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

(7:01:03 PM)

Mrs. Crawford asked K-Beach Elementary students to lead those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

(PM)

Mrs. Sammy Crawford	Present
Ms. Deborah Germano	Present
Mrs. Margaret Gilman	Present
Mrs. Debra Mullins	Present
Dr. Nels Anderson	Present/left at 9:49 p.m.
Ms. Sandra Wassilie	Present
Mrs. Debbie Brown	Present
Mr. Marty Anderson	Present
Mrs. Sunni Hilts	Present
Mr. DJ Tyson	Present

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

(7:02:13 PM)

The agenda was approved with a revision to Item 10a.(1) Resignations and the addition of 10c. FY05 Budget Revision.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

(7:02:55 PM)

The School Board Minutes of December 6, 2004, were approved as printed.

SCHOOL REPORT:

(7:03:11 PM)

Mrs. Sylvia Reynolds, K-Beach Elementary Principal, gave a computer-generated presentation highlighting the school theme of the Olympics, student achievements, results of last year's theme, Monday Morning Meetings, a Russian dancer special guest, the summer reading program, teleconferencing with the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, activities with senior citizens, classroom lessons and activities, the salmon egg collection project, assessment information, therapy dogs, parent involvement, the school store and school art projects. She noted that the school achieved Annual Yearly Progress for the second year as mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act. Students from Grades 2, 3, and 4, presented information on the U.S. election process and information on presidential history and invited the Board to the mock Inaugural Ball hosted by the school on January 20.

RECESS:

(7:18:50 PM)

At 7:18 p.m., Mrs. Crawford called a recess.

RECONVENE AFTER RECESS:

(7:20:03 PM)

At 7:20 p.m., the Board reconvened in regular session.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

(7:20:25 PM)

Mrs. Jenni Hammond, Nikiski parent, reported on the preschool program and asked the Board to allow public input prior to any decisions regarding all-day kindergarten and added that it should be a school-level choice.

HEARING OF DELEGATIONS:

(7:22:21 PM)

Dr. Marilyn Jackson provided information about the Community Action Coalition for Prevention and the Communities that Care Program. She invited the Board to a training on January 28 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and January 29 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Dr. Anderson left the meeting at 7:23 p.m. and returned at 7:24 p.m.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS:

(7:27:38 PM)

Dr. Peterson noted that she has received correspondence from parents regarding issues on the agenda as well as other usual and customary correspondence.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

(7:28:25 PM)

Dr. Peterson provided an explanation about the steps that were used to generate the FY06 Preliminary Budget in advance of Board action on the proposed FY05 budget revisions. She announced that the Board and Assembly will conduct a joint worksession on January 18 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. She announced that public budget hearings will be held at Kenai Central on January 19, Seward High on January 20 and Homer High on January 24. She announced that a Site Council and parent group training will be held on January 20 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Kenai River Center. Dr. Peterson reported on the 10 Things Youth Leaders Want School Boards to Know, as printed in the *AASB Commentary*, December 2004.

Financial Report:

(7:34:02 PM)

Mrs. Douglas presented the financial report of the District for the period ending November 30, 2004. She explained that the budget does not reflect the proposed revisions which are pending further discussion and action.

Mrs. Crawford asked Mrs. Douglas to describe Fund 214 Mentorship. Mrs. Douglas replied that Fund 214 houses the financial transactions related to the state mentorship program.

Ms. Germano asked for more detail regarding the state mentorship program. Dr. Peterson explained that District teachers have been assigned as mentors throughout the state. She stated that the teacher's positions with the District are held for their return and the state pays their salary for the time they are working outside of the District.

BOARD REPORTS:

(7:35:59 PM)

Mrs. Gilman reported that she attended the Budget Review Committee meeting on January 5. She expressed appreciation for the detailed information provided to the Committee members. She reminded the Board that parents and community members lose money in their business or employment by being absent from work and attending District meetings. She thanked those who attended the Committee meeting.

Ms. Wassilie stated that she also attended the Budget Review Committee meeting and expressed appreciation for the time spent by the Committee members. She reported that she attended the December 9 Project GRAD Committee meeting in Voznesenka. She stated that she was impressed by the community engagement, especially from several villages in the area and the coaches who work with students and assist teachers. She stated that it is valuable to have another adult provide a positive role model to students.

CONSENT AGENDA:

(7:39:48 PM)

Items presented on the Consent Agenda were Approval of Resignations, New Teacher Assignments, High School Graduation Qualifying Exam Waiver, Budget Transfers, Request for Leave of Absence-Support, and Revisions to AR 0420 (School-Based Management/Site Councils).

Resignations:

Mr. Fisher recommended the Board approve resignations for Merlin Cordes, .50 FTE generalist, Nikolaevsk Elementary/High School, (effective on January 6, 2005); Dennis Dunn, principal, Kenai Central High School (effective at the end of the 04-05 school year); Michael W. Wykis, principal, Sears Elementary, effective at the end of the 04-05 school year; Candice L. Perry, Social Studies/P.E., Seward Middle High School (effective December 30, 2004); Linell J. McCrum, special education resource, K-Beach Elementary (effective at the end of the 04-05 school year); and John Owens, principal, Nikiski Middle/High School, (effective at the end of the 04-05 school year).

New Teacher Assignments:

Mr. Fisher recommended the Board approve teacher assignments for Mary M. Hicks, temporary generalist teacher .50FTE, Seward Area Connections Program; Kimberly R. Johnson, temporary generalist teacher at Nikolaevsk Elementary/High; and Amy Williams, special education, resource teacher at Skyview High School.

HSGQE Waiver:

Mr. Stewart recommended the Board approve a High School Graduation Qualifying Exam Waiver from student request Number 2005-03.

Budget Transfers:

Mrs. Douglas recommended the Board approve Budget Transfer Number 131 and 132 to pay for a music teacher and physical education teacher for Aurora Borealis Charter School; Number 140 to establish gas utility budgets at locations where natural or bottled gas is used for heating; Number 141 for adjustments to telephone budgets between locations as a result of changes in usage and billing; and Number 147 to pay for services contracted to meet student needs as determined by the IEP process.

Request for Leave of Absence-Support:

Mr. Fisher recommended the Board approve an unpaid leave of absence request for Justin George, III, head custodian, Soldotna High School (effective January 10, 2005 until November 8, 2005).

Revisions to AR 0420:

Dr. Peterson recommended the Board approve revisions to AR 0420 (School-Based Management/Site Councils) in order to bring policy in line with current practice.

Mrs. Barb Ralston, Sears Elementary teacher, asked the Board not to approve revisions to AR 0420 because she would like site councils to be involved in the principal interview process.

Motion

Ms. Germano moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Items Numbers 1 through 6. Mrs. Gilman seconded.

Mrs. Hilts requested the removal of Item 10a.(6) from the Consent Agenda. Ms. Germano requested the removal of Item 10a.(5) from the Consent Agenda.

Mrs. Gilman noted that the list of resignations contains top quality educators. She noted that Mr. Dunn will be sorely missed as well as others on the list.

Consent Agenda Items 1 through 4 carried unanimously.

Ms. Germano asked whether the leave of absence request for Mr. George had been approved by the Board at a previous meeting. Dr. Peterson explained that the request is an extension for the remainder of the full year which is allowed.

Item 10a(5) carried unanimously.

Revisions to AR 0420:
(continued)

Mrs. Hilts stated that she is not in support of the proposed revisions to AR 0420 because it removes the school site councils from the principal interview process. She stated that although she can understand the efficiency of the changes, parents in smaller schools already feel disenfranchised. She stated that she does not question the administration's concern for principal candidates. She reminded the Board that they are not mandated to do the most efficient thing possible, but instead are mandated to provide an education for students in partnership with its richly diverse communities. She suggested that site council members be brought to a central location to conduct interviews.

Ms. Wassilie expressed concern that the proposed language in AR 0420 limits involvement by the community. She commented that principals are sometimes a key person in the community. She stated that it is important to include the community in the candidate selection process and that it is helpful when they are present for community members to meet. She stated that the language may need to be modified but suggested that the Board keep the community involved.

Dr. Anderson recounted a past situation in Sterling when the site council thought they had the right to select the principal and was upset when the administration selected another candidate. Dr. Anderson stated that the administration has the right to choose school principals and added that although input is fine, site councils need to realize that their input is advisory only. He stated that the understanding needs to exist that the superintendent or designee should choose the principals.

Mrs. Gilman stated that she is in favor of the current language in AR 0420 because the last sentence states that, "The superintendent will make the principal selection subject to approval by the Board of Education." She stated that the superintendent has the authority and responsibility for selecting school principals. She stated that the Board will turn to the superintendent if there is a problem with the decision. She stated that a concern was expressed at the Budget Review Committee meeting that the import of site based councils is being lessened.

Ms. Germano asked about the declining pool of applicants and acknowledged that finding a match for some of the District sites is difficult. She confirmed with the administration that the District has conducted some type of public interview or interaction with previous principal candidates.

Revisions to AR 0420:
(continued)

Dr. Peterson explained that the intent of the revisions to AR 0420 is to match practice with policy. She explained the current process used to advertise, select, and hire school principals. She stated that bylaws at individual schools are not clear how principal selection committee members are chosen. She explained that current District administrators are given the opportunity to transfer to vacated positions and if no one matches the criteria, the position is advertised publicly. She reported that there are many vacancy situations where less than 5 qualified candidates apply. She stated that she meets with site councils and other community members and explained the difficulties associated with the school transfer process. She stated that the current regulations will work well when hiring for schools in large communities but do not work at smaller sites.

Ms. Germano stated that she is familiar with the site council hiring committee representative selection process and added that it is a frustrating process. She reported that there are concerns that the public process will be lost with the change but added that she does not agree and will support the revision.

Mrs. Gilman thanked Ms. Germano for her question which clarified the reasons for the proposed changes and will now support the motion.

Mrs. Crawford asked about the use of the superintendent's time if AR 0420 was not revised. Dr. Peterson replied that site councils will need assistance in determining how they will conduct their selection process (if the bylaws are not clear). Dr. Peterson stated that the current regulation language will make a difference in the timing of the selection of the applicants.

Mrs. Crawford stated that the pool of principal applicants has decreased to the point that districts must act quickly when a good applicant is available. Dr. Peterson stated that the problems surrounding an aging workforce will not go away soon. Mrs. Crawford stated that the problem is nationwide.

Mrs. Brown stated that she believes in the site council system as long as the Board does not weaken it. She stated that the site councils remind her of other advisory groups that do not get much recognition and community members put in considerable time and effort into their service. She stated that families will want to have the Board keep the current regulation language, and suggested that site council bylaws be fixed instead. She stated that she does not support the proposed language.

Mrs. Hilts stated that she understands the reasons for the new language but how ever it is worded, the message will come across that the Board is lessening the influence of site councils. She explained that the places that will be the most impacted by the proposed revisions are the places where support is needed the most because they are already reluctant to give the school their full support. She stated that if the proposed language is approved the District must make a special effort to reach out to people to participate in school site councils.

Revisions to AR 0420:
(continued)

Mrs. Crawford stated that all Board members have the best interests of what is good for schools.

Ms. Germano called attention to the list of topics found in AR 0420 that can be considered by site councils and noted that site councils are under used. She added that there is so much more that site councils can do and should do but are not involving themselves.

VOTE 10a.(6)

Advisory Vote: ABSTAIN

NO – M. Anderson, Hilts, Brown, Wassilie

YES – Gilman, N. Anderson, Germano, Mullins, Crawford

Motion carried.

POLICY REVISION:
(8:12:01 PM)

Mr. Stewart presented three options for revisions to AR 6146.1, Weighted Grades.

Mr. Nelson Amen, Kenai parent, stated that equal grades deserve equal ranking and reported that according to the admissions office staff during a recent college visit in Kansas, class ranking is the number one criteria used for student selection.

Mrs. Theresa Parson, Soldotna parent, acknowledged that there will be growing pains while implementing the recently adopted weighted grades system and asked the Board to remember that it was approved to encourage students to achieve their full potential.

Mr. Brian Hibberd, Skyview High School student, explained how the recently adopted weighted grades system is penalizing him by dropping his rank in class and asked the Board to consider the unintentional consequences caused by the new language. Mrs. Hilts asked whether the new weighted grades regulation had an influence over his decision to take an Advanced Placement class. Mr. Hibberd replied that he does not like language arts and signed up for the class only because he would get a weighted grade.

Mr. Brad Hibberd, Soldotna parent, stated that although the Board's intentions with the adoption of weighted grades regulation are commendable, they were acted on without a complete understanding of the consequences and encouraged the Board to listen to the administration's advice.

Miss Brittany Parson, Soldotna High senior class president, stated that she has a rigorous class schedule of that requires 3 hours of homework each night and added that she and other students are in favor of weighted grades.

Mrs. Sylvia Reynolds, K-Beach Elementary principal and former Soldotna High School principal, stated that she disagrees with equal grades for equal standing and that there is a mechanism in place that will not penalize students for taking rigorous courses.

POLICY REVISION:
(continued)

Mr. John Pothast urged the Board to follow the administration's recommendation not to use weighted grades and recounted his experiences with weighted grades in a former district in Arizona.

Mr. Dennis Dunn, KCHS principal, stated that he does not support weighted grades and suggested that the Board vote not to use them. Ms. Germano asked Mr. Dunn if he felt that it was fair to have valedictorians who are students who have taken a rigorous schedule and maintained a 4.0 grade point average (GPA) as well as students who have taken easy class loads and maintained a 4.0 GPA. He replied that he does not care whether valedictorians take hard or easy classes because there is no mechanism that differentiates in a manner that works.

Mr. Jed Watkins, parent, stated that he does not support weighted grades because it will hurt the very students that it is meant to help and suggested that each school choose their own valedictorian.

Miss Danielle Severson, Soldotna High School student, stated that valedictorians should be students who have worked hard either through weighted grades or some other selection process.

Mr. Jon Lillevik, stated that colleges consider transcripts, class rank, evidence of course rigor and recommendations when assigning scholarships and places great value to rank and rigor.

Mr. Pete Goggia, Soldotna High parent, stated that it is important that the District reward students for their extra effort and encouraged the Board to investigate the issue further before removing weighted grades from regulation.

Mr. Mark Larson, teacher and parent, stated that students benefit in college if they have taken rigorous classes, and reported that a number of college admissions offices recalculate each student's grade not using weighted grades so they can be compared equally.

Ms. JoAnn Hagen, KCHS parent, stated that if Option 3 is accepted it will be unfair to her daughter and will change her rank from Number 1 to Number 7 and asked the Board to consider Option 1 or Option 2.

Mrs. Elaine Larson, KCHS parent, suggested that the Board provide sufficient notice to the public when implementing a change such as the weighted grades regulation and reported on the difficulties in planning her daughter's four-year high school schedule.

Motion

Dr. Anderson moved the Board approve Option 2. Mrs. Brown seconded.

POLICY REVISION:
(continued)

Dr. Anderson stated that he is not interested in penalizing students who take a rigorous load of classes and were counting on a weighted grade for advanced placement classes. He asked whether there would have been an increase in enrollment in AP classes without the option of a weighted grade and what would happen if weighted grades were removed. He stated that Option 2 will help with the inequities of class rank.

Motion

Dr. Anderson moved the Board approve an amendment to Option 2 that states, "If implementation of this system creates inequities during the first two years, counselors in conjunction with school principals, may make such remedies as are necessary to eliminate these inequities." Mrs. Hilts seconded.

Ms. Germano stated that she will not support the amendment because the Board would be creating more work for people who do not have time. She stated she is in favor of leaving the weighted grades regulation as is for the 2004-2005 school year and implementing Option 2 for the 2005-2006 school year.

Ms. Wassilie stated that the Board may be creating more problems because it would be left to the discretion of principals and counselors who would need to develop criteria for class rank. She stated that she is concerned that the amendment will compound the problem.

Mrs. Gilman stated that counselors are already overworked and should not be asked to fix inequities.

Mr. Anderson stated that he will support the Anderson amendment because it is not proposed as a long-term fix and will allow some anomalies to be resolved during the transition period.

Mrs. Brown stated that she will support the Anderson amendment even though it is open-ended and suggested that a letter of explanation be developed to accompany student records. She stated that discerning administrators in college admissions offices will understand what took place in the District. She stated that the amendment is reasonable, and that reasonable people work for the District and added that she does not think that it will become a quagmire. She stated that the amendment may not be needed because Option 2 stands on its own and allows for a correction for those students caught in the transition. She asked the Board to support the amendment.

Mr. Stewart clarified that the Anderson amendment requires counselors and administrators to make a determination where inequity remedies are necessary. Mr. Stewart asked the Board for District oversight on inequity decisions.

After confirming with the maker of the motion (Dr. Anderson) and the second (Mrs. Hilts), Mrs. Crawford announced that the amendment would include District administration oversight.

POLICY REVISION:
(continued)

Mrs. Gilman stated that the task of determining where there are inequities in the weighted grade system is overwhelming. She cautioned the Board against making Board policy based on individual situations but instead must consider all 10,000 students districtwide.

Ms. Germano agreed with Mrs. Gilman's concerns and stated that the Anderson amendment is the easy way out for the Board and not fair to the employees.

Dr. Peterson stated that class rank is a separate issue from weighted grades. She reported that the language in Option 2 has been researched specifically, with regard to weighted grades. Dr. Anderson clarified that weighted grades would not necessarily be used in class ranking. Dr. Anderson stated that the inequities surrounding weighted grades will be resolved within two years. Dr. Peterson stated that class rank will be affected by weighted grades but that there are individual inequities that can be addressed in class rank for the next two years that does not have to be addressed by the Anderson amendment and can be handled administratively.

VOTE ON THE N. ANDERSON AMENDMENT:

Advisory Vote - NO

YES - Brown

NO - Mullins, Gilman, M. Anderson, Germano, N. Anderson, Hilts,

Wassilie, Crawford

Amendment failed.

Ms. Germano asked when implementation would take place using Option 2. Mr. Stewart replied that the use of discretion would remedy situations as mentioned previously where students had taken college classes when AP classes were not available.

Ms. Germano asked if Option 2 should be adopted with a specific time for implementation such as with class of 2006. Mr. Stewart replied that the same issues will occur again next year. He stated that he is hesitant to recommend an implementation date because the District had weighted grades in place at the beginning of the school year. He recommended the Board either not use weighted grades permanently or decide on one of the other options and move forward.

Dr. Anderson asked whether it is fair to students to remove the weighted grades regulation when they planned ahead and took AP classes this year. He explained that students who were 4.0 students and took a harder AP class might not get an A which will substantially affect their GPA. He stated that with a delayed implementation the Board takes away additional grade points that the student was scheduled to receive by being willing to challenge themselves.

POLICY REVISION:

(continued)

Ms. Wassilie stated that there are many issues tied up with weighted grades. She cautioned the Board that if the weighted grade regulation is rescinded, the Board will punish students who took AP classes in anticipation of the weighted grade. She stated that on the other hand by continuing with weighted grades the Board will punish those who planned out their high school course schedule four years ago. She asked how the Board can recognize rigor and assign credit for degree of difficulty in a way that is fair. She stated that it is fair to begin the weighted grades with the freshman class. She stated that taking an AP class is not a disadvantage and will show on the transcript.

Mrs. Brown thanked those who spoke to the Board and added that she supports the proposed revisions included in Option 2 because it is the most reasonable solution for the transition to weighted grades. She cautioned those present that as in any change there will always be those who are caught by surprise. She suggested that the school principal write a letter of explanation to accompany the admissions packet to the college. She stated that she hoped the Board will stay with the decision to offer weighted grades and to support Option 2.

Mrs. Gilman asked if students were already registered for classes in June when the Board approved the weighted grades regulation. Mr. Stewart replied that students were already registered for classes but could change their schedules. He stated that the students were told that the weighted grades option was not retroactive and noted that the unanticipated consequence is that students that take more classes than another student and yet each have the same number of AP classes, the student with the most classes is penalized. Mrs. Gilman asked whether there is data showing the number of students who chose to change their schedule as a result of the regulation adoption. Mr. Stewart explained that principals were told that if they wanted unallocated money they must offer an AP class and noted that the District has offered more AP classes than in the past. Mrs. Gilman commented that the Board has heard from some amazing students. She told the parents present that the Board approved the weighted grades regulation to encourage academic rigor and was never intended to penalize students who achieve at the highest level and graduate with 25 or more credits. She suggested that the Board approve Option 2 with implementation to begin with the class of 2008.

MOTION

Mrs. Gilman moved the Board approve an amendment to Option 2 which would begin implementation with the class of 2008. Ms. Germano seconded.

Mrs. Hilts noted that there was an increase in students enrolled in AP classes and they did so with the understanding that they would receive a weighted grade. She explained that the Board has been considering the weighted grades regulation for quite a long period time. She stated that the Board wanted to encourage students to challenge themselves by taking an AP class, and that by delaying action it will be unfair to those students who took an AP class this semester.

POLICY REVISION:
(continued)

Mr. Anderson echoed Mrs. Hilts' comments and reiterated the point that it is unfair to students to withdraw the regulation once it has been offered.

Mr. Tyson reported that more students enrolled in his AP history class, and now that they have experienced the amount of work involved will not be interested in taking any further AP classes unless they receive a weighted grade. He recommended that the Board continue with weighted grades for the current school year.

Mrs. Crawford stated that the Board needs to fulfill the promise that was made to the current class of juniors and seniors.

VOTE ON GILMAN AMENDMENT:

Advisory Vote: NO

YES – Wassilie, Germano, Gilman, Mullins

NO – Brown, Hilts, N. Anderson, M. Anderson, Crawford

Amendment failed.

Mrs. Mullins noted that the testimony has been split regarding whether to keep the weighted grades regulation. She asked the administration how the GPA will be calculated. Dr. Peterson explained that if a student earns an A in an AP class during the 2004-2005 school year they will receive 4.021 as the grade on their transcript and a student who earns a B will receive a 3.021 for the semester.

Mr. Stewart explained that the student will receive a cumulative GPA and if they have passed a semester AP class they will receive .021 added to their cumulative GPA and added that it mathematically equals a 5 point system and does not penalize students for the number of classes they have taken.

Mrs. Mullins expressed concern that the Board will complicate the weighted grades problem rather than solve it. She stated that she planned her children's four-year class schedule which included AP classes. She noted that the colleges reviewed and admitted her children based on transcripts, test scores and essays and not by class rank. She stated that students who have taken an AP class have not lost anything by taking a more difficult class, instead they gain knowledge that benefits them in their future. She cautioned the Board to carefully consider the regulation revisions and added that she does not want to find out that she has voted for something that will be more harmful. She stated that the Board has been discussing the issue of weighted grades for eight years and now that it has been implemented, the Board is finding out that there are problems. She stated that her preference would be to repeal the regulation.

POLICY REVISION:
(continued)

Mr. Anderson asked the administration if specific models that use the .021 system have been reviewed to see how it affects the students who voiced objection to the current system. Mr. Stewart stated that the proposed language does not solve the problems voiced by the Hibberd family. Mr. Stewart stated that college classes do not qualify for a weighted grade and warned the Board that they will be pressured to provide weighted grades for college classes, honors classes, vocational education classes that offer certifications, and others.

Ms. Germano reminded the Board that their obligation is to serve all students in the District and to focus on the larger picture and do what is best for all students.

Mrs. Brown stated that the District has done a fine job providing opportunities and educational options such as college classes and AP classes. She stated that she does not believe it is the obligation of the Board to make sure that there are no flaws or problems for any student. She stated that Option 2 is the most reasonable step forward and added that the Board will deal with any further problems as they come.

Mrs. Crawford stated that the Board had the best interests of the students in mind when they originally voted for weighted grades in June 2004. She stated that the language in Option 2 will alleviate most of the problems and provide the rigor that the Board wants to make available for students.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:

Advisory Vote – YES

YES – M. Anderson, N. Anderson, Hilts, Brown, Crawford

NO – Wassilie, Germano, Gilman, Mullins

Motion carried.

RECESS:
(9:38:58 PM)

At 9:38 p.m., Mrs. Crawford called a recess.

RECONVENE AFTER RECESS:
(9:49:20 PM)

At 9:50 p.m., the Board reconvened in regular session.

Dr Anderson was excused from the meeting at 9:49 p.m.

FY05 Budget revision:
(9:49:25 PM)

Mrs. Crawford announced that the Board will consider the postponed FY 05 Budget Revision.

Motion

Mrs. Gilman moved the Board approve the removal of FY05 Budget Revision from the table. Mrs. Brown seconded.

FY05 Budget revision:
(continued)

VOTE:

Advisory Vote – YES

YES – Mullins, M. Anderson, Gilman, Brown, Hilts, Wassilie,

NO – Germano, Crawford

Motion carried.

Mrs. Douglas distributed copies of the FY05 Budget Revision recommendation as considered by the Board on December 6. Mrs. Douglas announced that the revision is necessary to bring the budget from \$81.2 million to \$83 million due to additional revenue generated by increased enrollment. She stated that the expenditure budget was increased in the categories of healthcare costs, utility costs, summer school allocation, purchase of upgrade to deteriorating phone systems and to adjust the salary and benefits per the annual fall adjustment. She reported that the budget revisions include a recommendation for elementary reading curriculum, funds for the finance/payroll/human resources software and the remainder to be put in contingency. Mrs. Douglas summarized the amounts in the revised general fund revenue and expenditure budgets.

MOTION

Ms. Wassilie moved the Board approve an amendment to the FY05 Budget Revision by moving \$500,000 for the Reading Curriculum to the Contingency Fund. Ms. Germano seconded.

Ms. Wassilie stated that the Reading Curriculum will be addressed in next year's budget. She stated that the Board heard a presentation regarding the deteriorating phone system and the necessary financial software purchase.

Mrs. Brown stated that the amendment is reasonable and will support it.

Mrs. Germano asked whether the replacement of finance software will become a continuous cost to the District. Mr. White explained that the advantage will be that the finance software will operate on commodity-based hardware. He explained that the LX7100 computer purchased by the Borough was approximately \$300,000. He reported that the hardware purchased to operate the Discovery system (three servers) totaled \$18,000 and added that is the difference when buyers break out of the proprietary bondage into commodity pricing. Ms. Germano stated that the District will pay for the difference in the cost of software. Mr. White confirmed that the District paid \$300,000 for the Discovery System which included hardware, training, and software. He stated that he is unsure of the cost of the finance software and added that the District will need to purchase the software because it cannot continue to use the 20-year old software.

FY05 Budget revision:
(continued)

Dr. Peterson explained that within five minutes the new student accounting and records system was able to generate a report of the names of students and the schools of attendance for every child with a parent employed by Agrium. She added that within 30 minutes similar information was generated for each Agrium vendor. She noted that that information would not be available on the old software.

Ms. Germano expressed concern that the District will have a larger share of the cost than the Borough for upgrades to the new IP phone system. Mr. White stated that historically, the Borough has been carrying the District in many ways. He explained that the District administration offices and Borough offices have had a symbiotic relationship and added that the Borough qualified for a lot of purchasing power because the District joined them. He stated that if the District purchased the phone system alone instead of just the licensing, the District would have to purchase an operating system, networking environment, data base, and noted that it is packaged to be cheaper in large quantities than in smaller quantities. He reported that in the 1980s the School District and the Borough entered into joint long-range planning as well as joint planning for the purchase of the A6KX. He added that he is hopeful that the positive working relationship with the Borough can continue indefinitely.

Wassilie amendment carried unanimously.

MOTION

Mrs. Gilman moved the Board approve an amendment to the FY05 Budget Revision to "Hire 10 classroom aides at the cost of \$175,000 (1 semester) to serve for the remainder of the 2004-2005 school year. These aides would work in the 19 K-6 classrooms districtwide which were listed as having 30 or more students as of the November 15 Class Size Enrollment Report. The aide positions would be temporary and would serve as an attempt to reduce class sizes and meet the academic needs of students for the 2004-2005 school year." Ms. Germano seconded.

Dr. Peterson reported that during the second semester and next fall Title II aides have been hired for parallel block scheduling through a pilot project (Mt. View Elementary, Sterling Elementary, Redoubt Elementary, and Nikiski North Star). She noted that the aides were hired to address class sizes and assist in the areas of reading and language arts. Dr. Peterson announced that K-Beach Elementary was awarded a grant of approximately \$180,000 to be spent immediately.

Ms. Germano asked what criterion was used to place aides at schools. Dr. Peterson stated that the offer was made to all principals and will provide a copy of the pilot project. Dr. Peterson reported that principals were required to agree to submit a schedule and to be prepared to implement a parallel block schedule. Ms. Germano clarified with Dr. Peterson that the secondary schools that were over enrollment projection were not given staffing assistance for the second semester.

FY05 Budget revision:
(continued)

Mrs. Hilts stated that while she appreciates the intent of the Gilman amendment, it is not the Board's job to assign staff. She reminded the Board that the hiring and assignment of staff is already being done by the administration. She stated that each school may have a different staffing need, and it is not up to the Board to make that determination.

Mr. Anderson stated that he agreed with Mrs. Hilts that the Board does not want to micromanage. He stated that he has the utmost respect for the administration's motivation. He stated that the intent of the Gilman amendment is good. He suggested that Dr. Peterson send an email informing the Board about the Pilot Program so that Board member's concerns can be eased.

Mrs. Gilman stated that she is glad to hear about the parallel block scheduling at additional schools and noted that Mt. View Elementary has been block scheduling for the past 10 years. She stated that the Mt. View Elementary PTA has conducted fund raisers to pay for playground aides so that parallel block scheduling can exist. Mrs. Gilman stated that Mt. View Elementary has 5 classrooms that have 30 or more students. She stated she was expecting that the administration would spend the additional \$1.7 million on additional staff to meet the needs of the students. She asked why the District is getting additional money for 300 additional students if no additional staff is necessary. She asked how much clout the Board will have when asking for money from the Borough Assembly and legislature when the District has \$1.9 million in a savings account. She stated that none of the additional money from the increased enrollment will have been spent on children. She stated that teachers should have been hired during the first week of school.

Dr. Peterson stated that Mt. View Elementary has five classes that are over the staffing formula, 5 classes are under formula, and 2 classes that are at formula.

Mrs. Gilman reported that at the Kenai Area Schools Site Council meeting, parents stated that pupil-teacher ratios are the top priority to be addressed.

Mrs. Brown stated that she supports the concept of the motion. She stated that families understand that the Board is trying to achieve an appropriate pupil-teacher ratio. She stated that, while the administration is doing what they feel is right, it is the Board's responsibility to oversee the budget. She explained that the Board needs to send a message through budget decisions that they want fewer students in the classroom. She stated that she does not feel that making budget decisions is micromanaging the District. She stated that she has been frustrated for a long time because she tried to address staffing issues and understood that the administration was to bring back a plan, but instead the Board received an explanation of how staffing assignments were made. She stated that if the Gilman amendment is approved, 10 aides will be placed in classrooms where there are 30 or more students.

FY05 Budget revision:
(continued)

Mrs. Crawford stated that it is unfortunate that health care costs have increased and fuel costs have increased, as well as insurance and more.

Mrs. Mullins asked the administration how they would implement the staffing increases as outlined in the Gilman amendment. Dr. Peterson stated that the administration would use information from the Class Size Report, look for classes over 30 students, hire instructional aides, train the aides, and assign them to a class. She stated that the consequences and the unintended consequences of the Gilman amendment are beyond any conversation that can be held in the context of the Board meeting. She explained that if she were a principal making decisions for next year she would configure the classes so that some of them were over sized. Dr. Peterson stated that the administration's intent was to address the need for staffing and do it well for next year. She noted that unallocated money was one way to address the staffing issue and not to include it in the formula. She stated that she is not sure that 10 classroom aides for the elementary schools is the greatest need.

Ms. Germano expressed concern that District money be spent well, and added that hiring 10 aides late in the year may be wasted resources. She stated that she does not feel that the Board is accomplishing what is needed.

Mrs. Gilman admitted that her amendment is not the perfect solution and that it would have been better to address the enrollment issue in August. She referred to a communication sent to Board members from the grandparent of a Sears Elementary student regarding the removal of a teacher from the first grade class. She reported that the grandparent stated that the message from the School Board is that \$50,000 couldn't be budgeted to keep the teacher at Sears and yet in January the Board can put \$1.7 million in a contingency account. She reminded the Board that the public wants more teachers in classrooms and asked for a better suggestion in lieu of the amendment.

Mr. Anderson asked Dr. Peterson how many aides have recently been hired with grant money. Dr. Peterson responded that 7 aides have been hired. Mrs. Reynolds explained that 21st Century grant money received by K-Beach Elementary is dedicated only to before-school programs and after-school programs. She stated that she has spoken to Commissioner Sampson about implementing some preschool activities and parent programs.

Mrs. Crawford stated that after visits with the schools and conversations with staff, the administration should be allowed to do their job. She observed that the Gilman amendment would be redundant.

FY05 Budget revision:
(continued)

VOTE ON GILMAN AMENDMENT

Advisory Vote – YES

YES – M. Anderson, Gilman, Brown

NO - Mullins, Germano, Hilts, Wassilie, Crawford.

Amendment failed.

Mrs. Gilman stated that the worksession presentations were helpful in explaining about the need for the IP phone system and the finance software. She stated that she cannot support the purchase of the IP phone system because it is not a cost savings purchase since the District will be taking in less money in e-rate subsidy. She suggested that next year's federal priority list include assistance with e-rate requirements. She stated that she is uncomfortable with spending \$400,000 for human resources and finance software when the Board has not asked the Borough Assembly and the Borough administration if the purchase is necessary from District funds.

Mrs. Mullins confirmed with Mrs. Douglas that the latest FY05 budget revision recommendation from the administration includes the cost of the phone system and the software in the Contingency Fund. Mrs. Douglas stated that either recommendation is acceptable.

Ms. Germano noted that \$181,800 for the purchase of the IP phone system is included in next year's budget. Mrs. Douglas stated the latest budget revision recommendation included the money designated for the IP phone purchase in the contingency fund and that if the Board decided to approve the latest revision, the FY06 budget would need to be adjusted. Ms. Germano confirmed that the money for the human resources and finance software has not been budgeted.

RECESS:
(10:40:50 PM)

At 10:40 p.m., Mrs. Crawford called a recess.

RECONVENE AFTER RECESS:
(10:43:03 PM)

At 10:43 p.m. the Board reconvened in regular session.

Mrs. Douglas responded that the first year purchase of IP phones are included in the FY06 budget and if the Board approves the current motion the FY06 budget will have to be modified.

MOTION

Ms. Germano moved the Board approve an amendment to the proposed FY05 budget revision to move \$181,800 designated for upgrading the deteriorating phone system to the Contingency Fund. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

Ms. Germano noted that the phone upgrade is included in the FY06 budget. She expressed reservations about allocating money for software when the cost is not certain.

FY05 Budget revision:
(continued)

Ms. Wassilie stated that she will support the Germano amendment and expressed concern for the state of the District phone systems and noted that they continuously need repair throughout the District.

VOTE ON GERMANO AMENDMENT

Advisory Vote: ABSTAIN

YES - Brown, Hilts, M. Anderson, Mullins, Germano Wassilie, Crawford

NO - Gilman

Germano amendment approved.

Mrs. Hilts stated that she is also uncomfortable allocating \$400,000 for human resources and finance software when there are too many uncertainties. Mrs. Douglas explained that the money is reservation of funds for the software purchase and that when a recommendation has been decided, the administration will bring a report to the Board for review and consideration. She explained that if the administration is not far enough along by June 30 the money will go into the fund balance as an allocation.

Mrs. Hilts stated that if approved, the Board is setting aside a large amount of money at a time when the District needs money for staff to lower the pupil-teacher ratio. She stated that it will be hard to defend this decision if approved.

Mrs. Brown clarified that the approved Wassilie amendment and Germano amendment put the money into Contingency Fund.

Ms. Wassilie reported that the Borough has asked the District to take a 5% reduction in local effort. She stated that she would rather take care of the cost of the District's operations rather than ask the Borough to pay for it in hopes that the Assembly might consider rescinding the local effort reduction request. She cautioned that if the current computer software crashed, the District would end up spending large amounts of money to fix it.

Ms. Germano asked how the amount for software was calculated. Mrs. Douglas responded that she spoke to Borough colleagues who have recently implemented human resources and finance software, factored in price increases, and reached an estimated amount. She stated that hopefully the amount budgeted for the software is enough.

Mrs. Gilman clarified that the Borough has not asked the District to take a 5% reduction in local effort, instead they have asked what the District budget would look like with a 5% reduction.

Mrs. Gilman clarified that the current amended motion includes a Contingency Fund in the amount of \$406,000, in addition to the \$181,000 designated for the IP phone system and the \$500,000 designated for reading materials. She noted that the budget revision also includes \$400,000 for finance software.

FY05 Budget revision:
(continued)

VOTE ON AMENDED MOTION

Advisory Vote: ABSTAIN

YES – M. Anderson, Germano, Mullins, Wassilie, Crawford

NO – Hilts, Brown, Gilman

Amended motion carried.

FIRST READING OF POLICY REVISIONS:

(10:54:47 PM)

BOARD COMMENTS:

(10:55:27 PM)

The Board heard a first reading of various revisions to Section 4000 (Personnel) and revisions to BP 3311 (Bids).

Mrs. Gilman reported that she and Mrs. Christensen were invited to participate in the K-Beach Elementary spelling bee.

Mr. Tyson thanked Mrs. Reynolds for the K-Beach Elementary School presentation and added that he especially enjoyed hearing about the charity drive for the tsunami victims. He noted that Kenai Central High School students are also collecting money to give to the Red Cross for the victims. He stated that he felt that the fund raisers are a great way for students to not always think about themselves and instead put their energy into helping others.

Mr. Anderson stated that he was delighted to see the parent and student involvement in education. He reiterated earlier comments that the Board must make the best decision for all 10,000 students. He stated that the Board is trying to do what is best for students and hopes the community understands. He thanked the administration for the presentations during the worksessions held prior to the Board meeting and added that the information was very helpful.

Mrs. Hilts stated that she and fellow Board members worked hard and expressed appreciation for the amount of parent and student participation. She stated that her grandsons baked cookies to auction at the basketball game and raised \$90.

Ms. Wassilie stated that she enjoyed the K-Beach Elementary Report. She stated that she attended Operation Santa Claus which included Moose Pass Elementary School, Hope Elementary/High School and Cooper Landing Elementary School. She thanked Mrs. Gilman for the clarification regarding the Borough's request for budget information with a 5% reduction. She thanked Mr. Tyson for the comments about reaching out and caring for others and putting it in perspective with the issue of weighted grades. She thanked parents and students who spoke about weighted grades. She stated that after conducting research regarding weighted grades, the universal requirements for college admissions is SAT reasoning, essays, and secondary school records. She stated that she hopes there is minimal impact on students with the

adoption of Option 2. She told those present that the students and parents who spoke should be assured that their students will do well when applying to college and added that there are lots of scholarships available.

BOARD COMMENTS:
(continued)

Ms. Germano thanked Mrs. Reynolds and the students for the K-Beach Elementary presentation. She asked those present not to forget the local communities when donating to charitable activities. She reported that the Homer area Share the Spirit volunteers assembled 165 Christmas baskets and noted that it was more baskets than in the past. She stated that the needs were for blankets, pillows, fuel, and heat. She expressed appreciation for the money-raising efforts for the tsunami victims and reminded those present not to forget the local needs and predicted that they will continue to grow.

Mrs. Brown stated that it is rewarding when people take the time to speak to the Board. She expressed concern that there is a certain amount of disconnect between the District and the communities. She stated that the real value of site councils is becoming lost and noted that it is harder to get volunteers to serve. She stated that she is disheartened that the Board cannot seem to lower the pupil-teacher ratio. She stated that if the Board really wanted to lower the pupil-teacher rate they could make the necessary decisions. She stated that the District needs to continue to foster the best relationship with the Borough so that the District can try to do business in sync. She reminded the Board that the Borough must pass a budget that includes the School District budget. She stated that the decisions the Board makes should not be interpreted as micromanaging the business of the District. She stated that the Borough can vote down the Board budget and reminded the Board that the job of the Assembly is to consider the District budget. She asked the Board to carefully consider the finance software purchase and added that she would rather see the District work with the Borough for the purchase so that more money can go into the classroom.

Mrs. Mullins thanked Mrs. Reynolds and the students for the K-Beach Elementary presentation. She commended the students for demonstrating the courage to stand in front of the Board and audience and speak. She observed that the testimony from parents and students regarding weighted grades was split for and against as well as among Board members. She recalled when the issue of weighted grades first came to the Board for consideration and noted that the administration's recommendation was against implementation. She stated that the reason the Board is in a mess because they voted against the advice of the administration and added that she is willing to take the punishment. She thanked the administration for their work developing recommendations and acknowledged that the Board's responsibility is to also listen to the public. She stated that the students who testified and showed interest in the

weighted grades issue will find a life outside of high school and added that there is potential in all students.

BOARD COMMENTS:
(continued)

Mrs. Crawford expressed appreciation to Mrs. Reynolds for the K-Beach Elementary presentation. She thanked the Board and administration for their hard work during a very strenuous, grueling meeting. She noted that the Board tries to make the right decisions and yet doesn't have all of the information. She acknowledged that the Board is not perfect but wants to do what is best for students. She announced that the AASB Legislative Fly-in will be held on February 12 through 15 in Juneau. She reported that the topic for the Fly-in is "Declaring Children Alaska's Top Priority" and credited Mrs. Hilts for the idea of the topic. She announced that she will attend the February Fly-In and the April Fly-in along with Mrs. Mullins. She added that she would like Mr. Tyson and one other Board member to attend the February Fly-In and asked members to notify her if they wish to attend.

ADJOURN:
(11:15:58 PM)

At 11:15 p.m., Mrs. Mullins moved the School Board Meeting be adjourned. Ms. Wassilie seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Sammy Crawford, President

Mrs. Debra Mullins, Clerk

The Minutes of January 10, 2005,
were approved on February 7, 2005
with corrections.