

π KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Borough Administration Building
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

April 15, 1996

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

Mrs. Mari-Anne Gross, President
Mr. Joe Arness, Vice President
Mrs. Susan Larned, Clerk
Mr. Emery Thibodeau, Treasurer
Dr. Nels Anderson, Member
Mrs. Joyce Fischer, Member
Mrs. Deborah Germano, Member
Miss Aubrey Robinson, Student Representative

STAFF PRESENT:

Dr. Walter Bromenschenkel, Superintendent
Mr. John Dahlgren, Associate Superintendent, Planning,
Operations, and Technology
Mr. Thomas Thorpe, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
Mrs. Sharon Radtke, Executive Director, Personnel
Mr. Richard Swarner, Executive Director, Business Management

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mr. James Simeroth	Mr. Timothy Navarre
Mrs. Lori Cockrell	Mrs. Debbie Tupper
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Liebner	Mr. Ross Kendall
Mr. and Mrs. Larry Rockhill	Mr. Kenneth Meacham
Mr. and Mrs. Dillon Kimple	Mrs. Virginia Hallmark
Mrs. Mary Toutonghi	Mrs. Vickie Leach
Mr. Phil Biggs	Mr. David Dieckgraeff
Mrs. Lenora Johnson	Mr. Roy Shapley
Mr. Kurt Haider	Mrs. Karen Mahurin
Mr. Mike Wiley	Mr. Paul Fischer
Mrs. Cindy Thomas	Mrs. Jacquie Imle
Mrs. Diane Borgman	Mrs. Zada Friedersdorff
Mr. Steve Horn	Ms. Mo Sanders
Mrs. Sandra Ghormley	Ms. Marion Nelson
Ms. Melissa DeV Vaughn	Mrs. Lori Uponen
Mr. William Rolph	
Others present not identified.	

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Arness called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Mari-Anne Gross	Absent - Excused
Mr. Joe Arness	Present
Mrs. Susan Larned	Absent - Excused
Mr. Emery Thibodeau	Present
Dr. Nels Anderson	Present
Mrs. Joyce Fischer	Present
Mrs. Deborah Germano	Present
Miss Aubrey Robinson	Absent

- EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 5:04 p.m., Dr. Anderson 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. Mr. Thibodeau seconded.
- Motion carried unanimously.
- ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 7:30 p.m., Dr. Anderson moved the Board adjourn the executive session. Mr. Thibodeau seconded.
- Motion carried unanimously.
- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mr. Arness invited those present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved with the deletion of Item 10b, Approval of AVTEC Lease Agreement, the addition of a report from visiting Russian students, and separate consideration of the 1996-97 meeting dates on the Consent Agenda.
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The School Board Minutes of March 1, 1996, and the April 1, 1996, 5:00 p.m. Special Meeting were approved as written. The minutes of the 7:30 p.m. Special Meeting of April 1, 1996, were approved with a correction.
- REDOUBT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REPORT: Mr. Kenneth Meacham, Principal of Redoubt Elementary School, spoke briefly on his 458-student school. Students from Mrs. Griffin's class sang the "Eskimo Ice Cream" song which was followed by reports on the school's technology program, an explorer unit and student activities. Ms. Valentina Illinichna Sudina, Director of School Number 14 in Magadan, Russia, extended greetings from her school. Visiting Russian students, who are part of an annual student exchange program with Redoubt Elementary, concluded the school report performing two traditional Russian dances.
- RECESS: At 8:05 p.m., Mr. Arness called a recess.
- RECONVENE AFTER RECESS: At 8:10 p.m., the Board reconvened in regular session.
- PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS: Mrs. Mary Toutonghi, retired teacher, spoke on the need for children to acquire language development skills through appropriate channels utilizing all senses to learn. She noted some children have stronger visual systems where other children have stronger listening systems. Still some children need additional help because of their learning
- PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS (continued): styles. She commented that from her work at Sears Elementary School she was aware of the strong, hardworking staff and its center for early childhood education. She complimented Sears Elementary School on the many things it is doing right.
- Mrs. Deidre McCombs, Ninilchik parent, addressed the need for phonics and basic language arts skills to have a more prominent role in the current language arts curriculum used in the school district. She felt students would be better readers and writers if phonics played a more influential role in the curriculum. She noted that spelling scores within the district are low, and she felt the current language arts curriculum did not give the students the necessary skills to spell correctly. She noted that mediocrity should not be a standard.

Mrs. Tana Hughes, Soldotna parent, spoke to the need for foreign language being taught to elementary school students. She noted that her family is hosting a visiting Russian student, and it has been a gratifying and learning experience for them. She encouraged other families to participate in similar experiences with foreign students.

Mrs. Pam Howard, parent, stated she inquired about the language arts program, and was informed of the methods used in the curriculum. She commented that her children have advanced well through this approach to reading and writing, and she felt they have better reading, writing and verbal skills than she did when she attended school and when phonics only was taught.

Mrs. Sandra Ghormley, Soldotna parent, spoke in support of the youth foreign exchange program both for education and world peace. She felt the exchange program should not be limited to high school students. She commented that on a recent trip to Russia, friendship was evident in the children despite language and cultural barriers. She requested the school board revisit their present policy related to foreign visits by younger students.

Mrs. Pam Nuccio, Kenai parent, commented on accomplishments of her daughter and foster child from the Sears Elementary language arts curriculum. She felt these educational advancements were most beneficial and she hoped the program would continue.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS
(continued):

An unidentified parent commented on difficulties encountered with the Ninilchik School whole language program. She noted she hired a tutor to assist her daughter with reading, although she excels in other subjects. She noted only three out of thirteen students in the grade read at grade level or above. She did not feel the district spelling scores were acceptable, and she felt these scores were related to the whole language curriculum taught.

Mrs. Karen Koester, Kenai parent, stated from her observations as a parent, she was pleased with the methods used in teaching the district's language arts program. She felt the variety of methods encouraged children to read and write. She also felt the current curriculum met the needs of students, and she expressed appreciation to her children's teachers, Mrs. Green and Mr. Hallett, in meeting the educational needs of all the children in their classrooms.

An unidentified woman encouraged the exchange program be opened to elementary students. She noted her family hosted a Russian student several years ago and her older children gained a grasp of the Russian language from her. She noted American and Russian families learn from each other, and she encouraged that these doors stay open through exchanges.

Mr. Barry Campbell, Kenai parent, stated he supported the youth exchanges, and commented he felt fifth and sixth grades were an appropriate age level for students to participate. He also commented that he was supportive of the Sears Elementary School reading program.

Mrs. Christine Hanson, Kenai parent, spoke in support of the reading programs in the Kenai schools. She noted her five students were honor roll students, and all were excellent readers and writers. She felt her children have the necessary tools from school to succeed.

HEARING OF DELEGATIONS:

Mrs. Jean Kimple presented the Board with an envelope of materials related to the Kids Voting Program. She noted this program was implemented in Costa Rica which has taught children the value of voting. Through this program, children study the candidates and issues and vote at the polls with their parents. The childrens' ballots are counted separately and reported like regular votes. She encouraged the School Board to support this program in the schools. She estimated the program would cost approximately \$6,000 - \$8,000, where many volunteers would be involved with the program. Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kodiak and Juneau have had success with the program.

HEARING OF DELEGATIONS
(continued):

Mr. Arness announced that due to the topic matter of their presentations, Mrs. Cockrell and Mrs. Uponen would be allowed ten minutes each for their presentations.

Mrs. Lori Cockrell, Kenai parent, commented she was concerned that from the previous speakers this was not a Sears against phonics issue; instead, it was a boroughwide issue for phonics in the schools. She acknowledged the time and efforts involved in developing the new language arts curriculum which is easier and more accessible for educators. She expressed concern related to the teaching method of whole language and felt reading isn't taught. Phonics is a method taught at intervals within the curriculum. She requested the curriculum go back to the basics and teach the systematic method of phonics. She was unsuccessful in playing a tape by California Superintendent Bill Honig, and paraphrased his ideas in which he apologized for teaching the whole language approach for ten years. She stated changes are taking place in Anchorage and other states to revert to the phonics approach. She noted that parents throughout the borough are requesting that more time be devoted to the phonics system in the language arts program, particularly the spelling area. She also requested the board send a survey to parents for their opinions on this.

Mrs. Cockrell requested an additional ten minutes be allowed for Mrs. Debbie Tupper. Mrs. Fischer requested the time be extended. Mr. Arness ruled that the time limit had been set prior to the meeting, therefore, he would not allow the additional time.

Mrs. Lori Uponen, Sears Elementary parents representative, spoke in support of the reading program at their school. She noted the program included the teaching of phonics in an excellent manner. She added that she has substituted at other schools in the area and noticed that phonics is taught at these schools also. She commented there is lively discussion on the phonetic basis of spelling in the classes. Those students have advanced to become excellent spellers. She noted that the standardized tests referred to earlier do not reflect the efforts of excellent spellers and the class enthusiasm. She commented that the people she was speaking for do not want a phonics only program as they feel an integrated program with phonics, which is being taught at Sears Elementary and other schools, is quite acceptable. She requested the audience to affirm her statements, which was a large showing from the audience.

- SEWARD SBDM COMMITTEE: Mr. David Dieckgraeff, SBDM Committee Chairperson, spoke in support of a request for a one-semester leave of absence for Ms. Debra Burdick, Mathematics/Computer, Seward Jr/Sr High School. He commented there was a great deal of support for the request from the community. A letter was submitted in support of the request.
- SEARS ELEMENTARY PTA: Mr. Rick Cupp, Sears PTA President, told the Board their PTA voted unanimously in support of the excellence of their staff and teachers at Sears Elementary School, the belief in the curriculum and how it is applied to the students, and a belief in the channels available at the school in dealing with conflicts that arise at Sears. He noted a parent-teacher round table has been established this year to discuss concerns and issues at the school. The PTA felt they have an excellent staff, principal, and curriculum at the school.
- SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Bromenschenkel reported on excellent student performances where the Nikiski High School wrestling team took first place in state, a second place win for the Nikiski Volleyball team, and good representation for other wrestling activities in the state.
- Dr. Bromenschenkel presented a listing of KPBSD graduation dates and representatives from the School Board and central office administration who will be attending those ceremonies.
- Superintendent Bromenschenkel reported the second annual strategic planning update will be held at the Kenai Visitors and Convention Building in Kenai on May 1 beginning at 8:00 a.m.
- FINANCIAL REPORT: Mr. Swarner presented the financial report of the district for the period ending March 31, 1996.
- DR. ANDERSON EXCUSED FROM MEETING: At 9:15 p.m., Dr. Anderson was excused from the meeting.
- BUDGET TRANSFERS REPORT: Mr. Swarner presented budget transfers #311 through #511 for various schools and departments in the district. He responded to questions from the Board related to the budget transfers.
- RECESS: At 9:20 p.m., Mr. Arness called a recess.
- RECONVENE AFTER RECESS: At 9:30 p.m., the Board reconvened in regular session.
- CONSENT AGENDA: Items presented on the Consent Agenda were Approval of Extended Field Trip Requests, Furniture and Equipment List, 19-Day Substitute Teacher Contracts, Leave of Absence Requests/Support, 1996-97 Meeting Dates, and Resignation,
- EXTENDED FIELD TRIP REQUESTS: Mr. Thorpe recommended the Board approve extended field trip requests for eight Kenai Central High School students to travel to Mock Trial competitions in Pittsburgh, PA, May 8-12, 1996; for three Seward Jr/Sr High School students to attend national competition in Phoenix, AZ for the Business Professionals of America, May 1-5, 1996; and for 3-5 Soldotna High School students to participate at the National Career Development DECA Conference in Orlando, FL, April 27-May 1, 1996. A request for 4-8 Soldotna High School students to travel to Washington, D.C., April 27-May 4, 1996, to participate in Close-Up activities was also included for Board approval.

FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT
LIST:

Mr. Dahlgren recommended the Board approve the purchase of furniture and equipment for the Tustumena Elementary School addition in the amount of \$7,659.53.

19-DAY SUBSTITUTE TEACHER
CONTRACTS:

Mrs. Radtke recommended the Board approve contracts for 19-day substitute teachers Kathy Haley, Grade 3, Soldotna Elementary; Cathy Bilben, Special Education/Resource, Soldotna Elementary; Greg Zorbas, Physical Education, Soldotna Middle; and Roy Shapley, Grade 1, Sterling Elementary.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS/
SUPPORT:

Mrs. Radtke recommended the Board approve unpaid leaves of absence for the 1996-97 school year for Marty Ragan, Counseling Secretary, Nikiski Jr/Sr High; and Charles Gallien, Custodian, Kenai Central High.

1996-97 MEETING DATES:

Dr. Bromenschenkel recommended the Board approve a listing of dates for school board and administrative meetings for the 1996-97 school year.

RESIGNATION:

Mrs. Radtke recommended the Board approve the resignation of Lisa Whitney, Grade 4, Mountain View Elementary School, effective the end of the 1995-96 school year.

Mr. Arness noted Mrs. Fischer had requested separate consideration of the 1996-97 meeting dates.

ACTION

Mrs. Fischer moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Items #1 through #4 and #6. Mr. Thibodeau seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

ACTION

Mrs. Fischer moved the Board approve the 1996-97 meeting dates. Mr. Thibodeau seconded.

ACTION

Mrs. Fischer moved to amend the motion that the Board eliminate the September meeting in Homer and the May 5 meeting in Seward. This would leave one meeting in each community. Motion died for lack of a second.

ACTION

Mr. Thibodeau moved to amend the motion to move the March 17 meeting in Homer to March 3. Mrs. Germano seconded.

Mr. Thibodeau commented that, as scheduled, this would present a meeting conflict in approving the budget. He felt the budget should be approved at the regular meeting location.

Amendment carried unanimously.

ACTION

Mrs. Germano moved to amend the motion to move the Seward meeting from October 7 to October 21. Mr. Thibodeau seconded.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT:

YES - Arness, Germano, Thibodeau
NO - Fischer
ABSENT - Anderson

Amendment failed.

VOTE ON AMENDED MOTION:

YES - Arness, Germano, Thibodeau
NO - Fischer
ABSENT - Anderson

Amended motion failed.

ACTION

Mrs. Fischer requested reconsideration at the May 6 meeting.

DR. ANDERSON RETURN TO
MEETING:

At 9:42 p.m., Dr. Anderson returned to the school board meeting.

SABBATICAL LEAVE REQUEST:

Mrs. Radtke recommended the Board approve a sabbatical leave request for the 1996-97 school year for Allan Miller, Foreign Language, Skyview High. She noted the request was made for Mr. Miller to complete his Master's Degree and the employee will purchase the year for retirement. There would be no difference in cost to the Board than a leave of absence.

ACTION

Mr. Thibodeau moved the Board approve the sabbatical leave request. Dr. Anderson seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST/
CERTIFIED:

Mrs. Radtke recommended the Board deny a one-semester leave of absence request for Debra Burdick, Mathematics/Computers, Seward Jr/Sr High School. She noted that, in accordance with the negotiated agreement language, partial year or semester leaves of absence have not been granted since the 1990 negotiations. She noted the negotiated agreement language specified that leaves should be granted to all teachers equally. This language was written into the agreement because one half-year request had been granted, and at mid-year, two additional half-year leave of absence requests, which could not be filled, were made prior to the 1990 negotiations session. In an effort to uphold the negotiated agreement, she stated she could not recommend approval of the request.

Mrs. Germano inquired whether the wording of the negotiated agreement related to leave of absence requests. Mrs. Radtke stated the negotiated agreement stated that all teachers would have to be treated equally. Therefore, if the teachers met the criteria for leaves of absence and one partial year request had been granted, all other partial year requests would have to be granted. She commented that some positions would be difficult to replace, i.e., speech pathologists, kindergarten teachers, etc.

Dr. Anderson stated this issue holds the Board to the current contract. He questioned whether this would bind the Board to the new contract. Dr. Bromenschenkel responded the district is currently in the middle of negotiations and it would be inappropriate to speculate what the new contract would hold. He noted this is a practice which was negotiated years ago.

Mrs. Debbie Tupper, parent, questioned whether the criterion established considered the classroom impact of the request, and whether another teacher would be available to fill the position before the request was granted. Dr. Bromenschenkel responded the issue was purely and clearly a labor relations issue that all employees would be treated equally.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
REQUEST/CERTIFIED
(continued):

Ms. Debra Burdick inquired if she taught part-time for the year if the same circumstances related to the negotiated agreement would apply. Mrs. Radtke stated that would depend on the configuration of the staffing, the principal's recommendation and instruction, and the personnel department's recommendation. She noted the half-time employee would need to know the effect of the benefits of such a hire. She commented that the problem appeared to be with the negotiated agreement.

Mr. Jim Simeroth, KPEA President, stated he was on leave of absence the year this was settled during the negotiations process, and did not know of the interpretation. He stated he would like to see Ms. Burdick receive the leave request since she intended to return to Seward. He also noted the association always has the right to grieve a situation if they felt it was necessary.

Mr. David Dieckgraeff, Seward SBDM Council Chairperson, stated Ms. Burdick taught several specialized mathematics classes, but her general mathematics classes for another semester could be taught by a substitute teacher.

Mr. Paul Fischer questioned whether partial leaves of absence have been granted to teachers who are elected to the state legislature.

Mr. Arness read a letter from the Seward SBDM Committee supporting Ms. Debra Burdick's semester leave of absence request.

ACTION

Mrs. Fischer moved the Board approve the denial of the leave of absence request as outlined. Mrs. Germano seconded.

VOTE:

YES - Anderson, Arness, Fischer, Thibodeau
NO - Germano

Motion carried.

ACTION

Mr. Thibodeau requested reconsideration at the next meeting.

POLICIES 6000/INSTRUCTION:

Dr. Bromenschenkel recommended the Board approve the policies series 6000, Instruction. He noted worksessions and two readings had been held prior to recommendation for approval.

POLICIES 6000/INSTRUCTION
(continued):

Mr. Jim Simeroth, KPEA President, commented on Policy 6114, Bomb Threats; 6141, Curriculum Development; 6146.7, Diplomas; 6155, Challenging Courses by Examination; 6158, Health Curriculum Opt Out Provisions; 6162, Regulations on Copyrights; 6164.4, Dealing with Time Out Rooms; 6164.5, Intervention Teams; and 6167, Vocational/School to Work Programs. He questioned whether there would be time for the Alternative School Program worksession at another time.

ACTION

Dr. Anderson moved the Board approve Policies 6000 as presented. Mrs. Fischer seconded.

ACTION

Mrs. Germano moved to amend the motion to remove policies 6158 (a) and (b), and exhibit 6158 (a) (b) (c) and (d). Mr. Thibodeau seconded.

Mrs. Germano commented the Health Curriculum Committee indicated they would like to add more to these policies. Dr. Anderson suggested the Board approve these policies and label the policies "To be revised."

VOTE:

NO - Anderson, Arness, Fischer, Germano Thibodeau

Amendment failed.

ACTION

Dr. Anderson moved to amend the motion to label this section "To be revised." Mr. Thibodeau seconded.

Mrs. Fischer commented there was a commitment made in the health curriculum when it was adopted, and part of the reason more people do not opt out is that they know the opportunity is there. She felt it would be inappropriate if it was removed. Dr. Anderson stated it was his intent that this would stay in the policy as is until or unless it is revised.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT:

YES - Anderson, Arness, Germano, Thibodeau

NO - Fischer

Amendment carried.

POLICIES 6000/INSTRUCTION
(continued):

VOTE ON AMENDED MOTION:

YES - Anderson, Arness, Germano, Thibodeau

NO - Fischer

Amended motion carried.

CANCEL MAY 20, 1996 SCHOOL
BOARD MEETING:

Dr. Bromenschenkel recommended the Board cancel the May 20 School Board Meeting because three graduation ceremonies are scheduled for that date.

ACTION

Mrs. Fischer moved the Board cancel the May 20 meeting. Mrs. Germano seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

SCHEDULE TECHNOLOGY PLAN
REVIEW:

Dr. Bromenschenkel requested the Board schedule a worksession to review the district's technology plan. He presented a calendar of events for May, 1996.

The Board concurred they would review the technology plan in a worksession to be held on May 4.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

Mrs. Debbie Tupper, parent and school volunteer, stated some phonics are in the curriculum and that Sears Elementary teachers have "bought into" the language arts program. She stated, as a parent, she wanted the continuum in the resource book to be valid and felt there should be more accountability to the curriculum. She requested the Board investigate a heavier phonics approach in the language arts curriculum.

Mrs. Vickie Leach, Soldotna Elementary PTA chairperson, commented parents had expressed concern about reading and writing, and she was not supportive of the Success In Reading Program. She stated many parents had concerns about the reading program.

Mrs. Lori Cockrell questioned what was the next step for her to get answers by expressing the concerns of parents. Mrs. Fischer inquired what she really wanted done. Mrs. Cockrell stated she felt the reading program was alright, but had real concerns with the writing program. She felt phonics should be taught in a structured situation for writing and spelling. Mr. Arness responded that she had been heard, but things do not happen in a day. There were numerous issues to consider and the Board could discuss the situation in a worksession, possibly with the assessment report. It was noted the assessment worksession would be held on June 1.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Mrs. Fischer stated she was impressed with the manners of the Russian students.

Mrs. Fischer commented she would like the votes of individual board members recorded in the News In Brief.

Mrs. Fischer stated she was sad to see the situation deteriorated to the issue of Sears versus those who support phonics. She stated she had heard from the community which had concerns there was not a heavier emphasis on phonics in the curriculum. She noted she had read information on whole language by Ken Goodman, but was frustrated from the literature when she found it was debunking the phonics approach. It was her impression from parents that they want rules and reasons to reading, although she recognized children learn differently. She expressed appreciation to Mrs. Cockrell for her efforts.

Mrs. Germano commented she looked forward to the assessment worksessions to address some of the concerns expressed at the meeting.

Mrs. Germano questioned why the food services budget was increased by 2%, but a program had been eliminated. Mr. Swarner responded increased participation was anticipated in the food services program.

Dr. Anderson commented he was impressed with Skyview's program honoring students of the month. He added the program recognized students not only academically outstanding, but those with best achievements of performance. He urged other schools to use a program of this nature.

Dr. Anderson stated he left the meeting to deliver a baby where more than normal methods were needed to make the delivery. In the same manner, he stated it was a mistake to get away from memorization even though there are different ways to teach reading. He did not anticipate that the Board would revisit the whole language curriculum, but would like to see that reading and writing improve. He felt a melding of methods should be encouraged.

BOARD COMMENTS (cont.):

Mr. Thibodeau commented he was pleased to see the check signatures had been changed. He stated he was pleased with district wrestling championships in the state. He commented the Russian students did an excellent job at the meeting. He noted the mission statement was missing from the board packet. He questioned when the Board would receive the new budget. Mr. Swarner responded the document is now available.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 11:17 p.m., Mr. Thibodeau 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. Dr. Anderson seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 11:24 p.m., Mr. Thibodeau moved the Board adjourn the executive session. Dr. Anderson seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN:

At 11:25 p.m., Dr. Anderson moved the School Board Meeting be adjourned. Mr. Thibodeau seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mrs. Mari-Anne Gross, President

Mrs. Susan Larned, Clerk