

KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
148 N. Binkley Street
Soldotna, AK 99669

December 1, 1997

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS: Mrs. Mari-Anne Gross, President
Mr. Joe Arness, Vice President
Mrs. Susan Larned, Clerk
Mrs. Debra Mullins, Treasurer
Dr. Nels Anderson, Member
Mrs. Joyce Fischer, Member
Ms. Deborah Germano, Member
Miss Danielle Meacham, Student Representative

STAFF PRESENT: Mr. John Dahlgren, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Patrick Hickey, Assistant Superintendent, Operations and Business
Management
Mr. Ed McLain, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
Mrs. Sharon Radtke, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Gary Jackson Ms. Trena Richardson
Mrs. Bekkie Jackson Mr. Greg Paxton
Mr. Sam Strange Ms. Lori Uponen
Ms. Terri Carter Mr. Clyde Folley
Mr. Mick Wykis Miss Kelsey Cusack
Mr. Lawrence Colston Mr. Garrett St. Clair
Ms. Traci Davis Miss Tess Caswell
Mr. Todd Syverson Mr. Sam Clyde
Ms. Carolyn Cannava Miss Ashley Waldrip
Mrs. Karen Mahurin Miss Robin Dover
Ms. Shana Loshbaugh Mrs. Rosanne VanRay
Ms. Marlene Byerly Mr. Joe Cannava
Mrs. Robin Nyce Ms. Bev Edwards
Miss Kristin Cannava Mr. Joseph Cannava
Ms. Terri Woodward

Others present not identified.

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Arness called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

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

ROLL CALL: Mrs. Mari-Anne Gross Absent/Excused
Mr. Joe Arness Present
Mrs. Susan Larned Present
Dr. Nels Anderson Present
Mrs. Joyce Fischer Present
Ms. Deborah Germano Present
Mrs. Debra Mullins Present
Miss Danielle Meacham Present

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved as written.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The School Board Minutes of November 17, 1997, were approved as printed.

SCHOOL REPORTS:

Mr. Gary Jackson, Principal, K-Beach Elementary, stated that his school had experienced much change this year with four new teachers. He stated that 15 of his teachers qualify for early retirement next year, and he expects another year of change. He reported that K-Beach Elementary's academic goals for the last two years were in the areas of math and writing. He stated that he was pleased with the writing results but math remains a challenge. He stated that this year art was added to the school goals. Mr. Jackson thanked the many parent volunteers and the PTA, and he listed the Student in Good Standing, Caribou Kid Award, Random Acts of Kindness and Spirit Days as activities sponsored by the school PTA. He stated that the school is involved with the Slikok Creek Project, cross-age activities and Critical Incident Planning.

Ms. Carter reported on K-Beach Elementary's campaign to select a state land mammal to represent Alaska. Clyde Folley, Kelsey Cusack, Garrett St. Clair, Tess Caswell, Sam Clyde, Ashley Waldrip, and Robin Dover told the Board about some of their memories while attending all of their elementary grades at K-Beach Elementary School.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

Lori Uponen, secretary, Sears Elementary PTA, spoke to the Board in support of the school nurses. She stated that the PTA feels that the nurses provide an essential and a beneficial service to the students. She noted that at Sears Elementary, Bekkie Jackson does everything from vision and hearing screening, TB tests, liaison between the school and the community, detection of communicable diseases and first aid in emergency situations. Ms. Uponen asked the Board not to reduce nursing services any further.

Terri Woodward, custodian, Skyview High, told the Board that the recent classes of freshman have been polite and clean, and she credited this change in behavior to the middle school staff and Mr. Syverson. She thanked Mr. Syverson and the middle school staff for the outstanding work they have been doing with the students.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS
(Continued):

Debbie Adams, president, Kenai Central High PTSA, expressed her concern over the reduction in nursing time at Kenai Central High. She stated that the nurse is only available a couple of days a week and, therefore, cannot be a part of the intervention team or teach health classes. Ms. Adams stated that having a female nurse at the school is essential since the counselors, PE teachers, and administrators are male. She told the Board that female students need to have someone to go to when they have personal issues to discuss. She stated that as more and more staff reductions are made parents are withdrawing their children from school; the District is therefore losing funds. She urged the Board to spend some time with the nurses during their daily work and see what they do before making any more staff reductions.

HEARING OF DELEGATIONS:

Mrs. Bekkie Jackson, school nurse, Sears Elementary, expressed her concern over future funding of the Health Services Program. She stated that the nursing issue has become a very political one and that nurses feel that they are re-elected each year. Mrs. Jackson distributed packets to each Board member containing humorous campaign materials supporting school nursing. She urged the Board to recognize the importance of having nurses in District schools and noted that only 1.127% is spent on health services.

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

Mr. Lawrence Colston, president, KPEA, thanked the Board for filling the half-time position at Seward Elementary. He urged the Board not to replace school nursing staff with health aides. He stated that it is the level of expertise that is important when dealing with an injured or ill child. He stated that he could recommend other areas of the budget to cut rather than \$78,000 to reduce the level of expertise in the health services program.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Mr. Arness presented an Award of Recognition to Mr. Todd Syverson, Principal, Soldotna Middle for his recent 1997 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award; and to Ms. Carolyn Cannava, principal, Soldotna Elementary for her recent Alaska Distinguished Principal Award.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Mr. Dahlgren reported that he attended the All-State Music Festival on Saturday, November 22 at KCHS. He stated that he was quite impressed with the caliber of the talented young musicians. He thanked Ms. Renée Henderson for her efforts in coordinating the festival.

Mr. Dahlgren stated that the Homer Charter School had recently been awarded a grant from the state in the amount of \$144,995.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
(Continued):

Mr. Dahlgren announced that there will be a meeting with the administration, Board and local legislators on December 8 at 3:00 p.m. to discuss educational issues.

Mr. Dahlgren reported that he had invited the Borough Assembly to meet with the Board and administration on December 16 at 2:00 p.m. to discuss the District financial situation and the budget process.

Mr. Arness recognized that Ms. Barbara Jewell, former administrative secretary to the School Board/Superintendent, was in the audience.

NURSING SERVICES REPORT:

Mrs. Radtke presented a computerized slide presentation concerning the District Health Services Program. She presented a listing of top priority items including state and federally mandated items for which school nurses are responsible. She explained that the idea of offering no health services and relying on Public Health Nursing is not a workable option. Federal mandates, including Special Services IEPs and ADA 504 Plans, make it impossible not to offer some health services support. Mrs. Radtke described a day in the life of a school nurse, which includes administering medicines, conducting rapid eye exams, tending to ill students, conducting student health screenings and providing consultation with school staff. She presented a comparison of nursing services in the Anchorage, Kenai, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kodiak and Mat-Su School Districts. She listed several options for consideration such as restoration of the pupil/nurse ratio to the 1996-97 level, imitation of other Alaskan districts, remain as currently staffed, establishment of a new pupil/nurse ratio, replacement of a portion of the nurses with unlicensed assistive personnel, investigation of alternate funding, investigation of contracting out to village health aides, or dependance on outside agencies to provide health coverage. Mrs. Radtke commented that the best option is to reinstate the program as it has existed in the past.

FALL LEVEL TEST RESULTS:

Mr. Ed McLain presented a comparison of District scores to the average, or mean, scores of the Northwest Evaluation Association Consortium group for Grades 3-9 in language, math and reading.

FALL LEVEL TEST RESULTS
REPORT (Continued):

Mr. McLain explained that the tests were developed jointly by Northwest Evaluation Association and District staff. He stated that level tests are a tool to measure student achievement in a curriculum-aligned fashion. Mr. McLain noted that KPBSD students compare about the same with those of the NWEA consortium of schools except in the upper levels of math. Mr. McLain explained that the District tests do not include students who take algebra in the eighth and ninth grade, otherwise he would expect the score to be higher. Mr. McLain thanked Mr. Wykis and the principals for their efforts in coordinating and administering the test.

Mr. Arness asked how the test can be compared when it has been designed around the District curriculum. Mr. Wykis responded that the test is aligned with the District's curriculum goals. Mr. Wykis explained that test questions may be different in other districts that belong to the NWEA, but the questions are weighted the same; therefore, comparisons can be made with other districts.

Ms. Germano asked what the District expects to see in the way of growth next year. Mr. Wykis responded that the District should see a line of growth in reading, language arts and math in Grades 3 through 9, and short-term growth from fall to spring. He stated that the benefit of the test is looking at growth over time. He explained that locator tests were taken this year and now the computer will determine the next test that will be given to each student. Locator tests will be given to each third grade student.

Mr. Wykis stated that the District was considering an exit exam for algebra students. The scores reported for ninth grade represent a small portion of the total population. He stated that most of the ninth grade students took only reading and language tests, although a few schools also chose to administer the math test.

Mr. Arness asked how the results will be used. Mr. Wykis explained that the school administrators received a copy of the preliminary results showing their school average and the District average. This will provide a comparison. Mr. Wykis stated that the real benefit of the test is looking at individual student scores and comparing them against the standard. He reminded the Board that some schools have such a small number of students taking the test that the results are skewed.

Mr. Wykis thanked the building administrators and assessment coordinators for their work in sorting, collecting, and administering tests to 6300 students.

BOARD REPORTS:

Ms. Larned reported that she had recently attended the Middle Schools Committee meeting. The Committee has been reviewing and discussing the model for a model school. She stated that she hoped to preserve funding for the middle school concept. Mrs. Larned reported that she had attended the World Language Curriculum Committee and that, in four days, they have nearly written the curriculum for K-12. Committee discussions have included the importance of exposing all students to another language in all grades.

Mrs. Fischer complimented the Calendar Committee for their efficient work developing the calendars for the next three school years.

Mrs. Mullins reported that she introduced herself at the November 18 Assembly meeting. She reported that Ordinance 97-72 dealing with handicapped access upgrades for Soldotna Middle School was introduced. She will attend the hearing on December 16.

Mr. Arness reported that the final meeting of the Math Curriculum Committee was held, and the Board should see a proposal after the first of the year.

Mr. Arness reported that, at the request of the Governor, he and Mr. Dahlgren had attended a meeting in Anchorage sponsored by ARCO. They listened to experts tell school districts how to cut the costs of doing business. Mr. Arness stated that two ideas had merit: use of District credit cards for purchasing and billing for information; i.e., ARCO-Alaska invoices ARCO International when research information is requested.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Items presented on the Consent Agenda were Leave of Absence Request/Support, Extended Field Trip Requests, Substitute Teacher Contract, and Leave of Absence Request Extension/Support.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
REQUEST/SUPPORT:

Mrs. Radtke recommended the Board approve a leave of absence request/support for Lisa Bismark, Special Services Assistant, Bartlett School.

EXTENDED FIELD TRIP
REQUESTS:

Mr. McLain recommended the Board approve extended field trip requests for twenty Homer High School students to travel to Paris, France, to experience first-hand the language and culture of the country; and for fifty Homer Middle School students to travel to Washington, D.C., and New York City, N.Y., to participate in the American Student Travel Program.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER
CONTRACT:

Mrs. Radtke recommended the Board approve a substitute teaching contract for Bev Wellborn, Grade 5, North Star Elementary.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST
EXTENSION/SUPPORT:

Mrs. Radtke recommended the Board approve a leave of absence request extension/support for Cheryl Samples, Personnel Specialist, effective January 3, 1998, through January 2, 1999.

ACTION

Ms. Germano moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Items Numbers 1 through 4. Mrs. Fischer seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

1998-99 SCHOOL CALENDAR:

Mr. McLain reported that the Calendar Committee met on November 18 and 24, 1997, to discuss and set calendars for the 1998-1999, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years. The Committee recommended the Board approve the 1998-1999 calendar and tentatively approve the remaining two years' calendars. The calendars were presented with beginning and ending dates as well as quarter and semester dates. For the 1998-1999 school year, teachers would begin August 19, and students would begin August 26. The ending date for students would be May 26, and the last day for teachers would be May 27. All of the calendars contain a winter break and a one-week spring break.

Mr. McLain thanked the Committee and introduced committee member, Ms. Katie Carmody, to speak to the Board. Ms. Carmody reported that the Committee worked on the calendars for two days, and she recommended approval.

Dr. Anderson asked what discussions were held concerning ending the semester in January rather than December. Ms. Carmody responded that teachers and former teachers on the Committee felt very strongly that there was more instructional time and benefit to students to end after the winter break.

Ms. Germano asked what the feedback was from high school students and parents. She stated that students and parents have expressed to her that instructional time is lost because it is spent reviewing for final tests and that they like ending the semester in December. Ms. Carmody stated that the student representative on the Committee also liked ending before the winter break but the Committee felt that more weight should be given to the teachers' recommendation if instructional time could be gained. Ms. Carmody explained that if the semester ended in January, the second quarter would be considerably shorter and there would be less instructional time, especially with Christmas programs and other activities surrounding the winter break.

1998-99 SCHOOL CALENDAR
(Continued):

Mr. McLain explained that five teachers or former teachers spoke in favor of ending the semester in January. He noted that one parent felt that since all teachers on the Committee felt strongly about ending the semester in January then the committee should follow their advice. Mr. Arness asked about feedback from the schools. Mr. McLain answered that Committee members reported back from their colleagues or building principals that they would like to have the second quarter end after winter break.

ACTION

Dr. Anderson moved the Board approve the 1998-1999 calendar as presented and give tentative approval to the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 calendars as presented. Mrs. Fischer seconded.

Ms. Germano stated that she would like to see feedback from the communities about ending the semester before winter break.

Mr. Dahlgren clarified that last year was the first year of ending the semester before the winter break. A previous committee decided to try ending the semester before the winter break and recommended the same calendar for the next year, with the understanding that feedback would be solicited. Mr. Dahlgren told the Board that, instructionally, the teachers did not like the shortened thirty-eight day quarter and that the curriculum director and teachers felt that students were getting short changed. He stated that, while students enjoy having the winter break to themselves, it didn't make sense to have a seventy-day semester and a ninety-day semester.

VOTE:

YES - Anderson, Arness, Fischer, Germano, Larned, Mullins
Advisory Vote - NO

Motion carried unanimously.

SOLDOTNA MIDDLE SCHOOL
FACILITY RECOMMENDATION:

Mr. Hickey reported that the administration's recommendation to relieve overcrowding at Soldotna Middle School is to initiate the planning phase for a prototypical middle school and ultimately construct the facility. A worksession was held prior to the November 17 School Board meeting to discuss solutions to the overcrowding situation. He asked the Board for direction on how to proceed.

ACTION

Dr. Anderson moved the Board approve a directive to the administration to present the Board with options for an adequate addition to Soldotna Middle School. Ms. Germano seconded.

SOLDOTNA MIDDLE SCHOOL
FACILITY RECOMMENDATION
(Continued):

Mr. Todd Syverson, principal, Soldotna Middle School, urged the Board to continue to aggressively pursue a solution for the eight portables.

Ms. Fischer asked the administration if they could combine Soldotna High and Soldotna Middle to create a high school complex and change Skyview High School into a middle school. Mr. Dahlgren explained that Skyview High could not accommodate a middle school program with its present classroom space. He further explained that the core area contains many vocational rooms such as an automotive shop, wood shop, etc. In Soldotna Middle School, there is only one vocational room and more classrooms. Mr. Dahlgren stated that combining both high schools would amount to a population in excess of 1200 students, which could not be accommodated by either of those two facilities. He stated that Soldotna High was designed for 800 students and, at one point, had 900 students with nine portables. Mr. Dahlgren reported that Soldotna High can realistically accommodate 700 students, and Soldotna Middle School can accommodate 400 students. Therefore, the District would not gain anything by reconfiguring the local secondary schools.

Motion carried unanimously.

HOPE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
RECONFIGURATION:

Mr. Dahlgren recommended the Board approve a request from the Hope Elementary Site Council to reconfigure Hope Elementary from Grades K-10 to K-12. Mr. Dahlgren informed the Site Council that the staffing would remain the same based on student enrollment, and the high school program would be more self-directed.

Mr. Dahlgren stated that Hope High School students have not been successful and have either dropped out or their families have moved from the community. Current students would not be affected for two years unless families with high school aged children move into the Hope community.

Ms. Germano asked whether students would have the option to participate in the boarding home program if a high school program were available. Mr. Dahlgren replied that students could not board out if Hope School is reconfigured to include a high school program.

ACTION

Dr. Anderson moved the Board approve the request from the Hope Elementary Site Council to reconfigure Hope Elementary from Grades K-10 to K-12. Mrs. Larned seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

FIRST READING OF POLICY
REVISIONS:

The Board heard a first reading of BP 1321, Solicitation of Funds From and By Students and AR 5123, Promotion/Acceleration/Retention.

Mr. Hickey explained the history regarding a fund raising activity at West Homer which had received prior approval from their site based council. A member of the community objected to the company offering the fund raising opportunity. Mr. Hickey explained that the majority of companies that offer fund raising activities are for-profit and that these corporations exist to assist school districts in raising money.

Mrs. Fischer concurred with Mr. Hickey but was concerned that nonprofit organizations, such as the Food Bank and United Way, would not be allowed to solicit funds within District schools. Mr. Hickey explained that the most restrictive language was deleted. That language required that all activities to be only those dealing with non profit organizations. Activities would be permitted by both nonprofit and for-profit organizations, subject to local site-based council approval and the concurrence of the superintendent.

Ms. Germano commented on the use of the term "non-partisan" and stated that it is a term that can be used loosely. Mr. Hickey agreed but noted that he specifically left the term as part of the original language. He stated that he was hoping to use the least restrictive language in the policy and leave those decisions to the site-based councils.

Mr. Dahlgren stated that changes to AR 5123 were made at School Board request. Dr. Anderson stated that he had suggested the changes as a result of conversations during the Certified Diploma Committee meeting. He stated that after discussing the issue of retention with others he was told that most problems came from parents who wanted their child retained. Dr. Anderson suggested that a change also be made to BP 5123 under the section titled, Retention. He suggested that BP 5123 read, "Retention may be considered when the student has not acquired appropriate and necessary skills and knowledge. Alternatives to retention shall be considered."

FIRST READING OF POLICY
REVISIONS (Continued):

Dr. Anderson further recommended that the stricken paragraph in AR 5123 be kept and the following sentences be inserted: "Acceleration shall be considered only with the approval of parents. Retention and disputed promotion, normally requires parent concurrence. The District, however, retains the right to either retain or promote, if such concurrence cannot be reached." He added that the words, "or acceleration" should be inserted after the word "retention" in the first sentence.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Mrs. Fischer suggested to those present that they lobby District legislators, the Governor, and other state legislators and recommend that nursing funding be placed outside the school foundation unit. She stated that there are two issues involved, an education issue and a health issue and that districts should not have to decide between hiring teachers or hiring nurses. She reminded those present that it is also an election year. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and happy holidays.

Ms. Germano asked the Board to talk about future housing of the Homer Flex School. She expressed her concern over the lack of space for thirty students. She also stated that the Homer Charter School is interested in the small building at the Homer Intermediate School and asked whom they should contact.

Miss Meacham wished everyone a happy holiday and thanked K-Beach Elementary for their school report.

Mrs. Mullins stated that she had attended the Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee meeting two weeks ago. She stated that there was a lot of public testimony, and the legislators asked communities and board members to provide their opinions. She urged those present to contact all state legislators and let them know that the KPBSD is suffering financially. She stated that she and her family chose to live on the Peninsula because of the educational opportunities for her children, and she does not want to see that jeopardized.

Mrs. Larned expressed her appreciation for the K-Beach Elementary School report and the innovative ideas used to reward positive behavior. She welcomed Mrs. Barbara Jewell. Mrs. Larned wished those present a Happy New Year and hoped that their New Year's resolution would be to call or write state legislators concerning funding for education.

ADJOURN:

At 9:32 p.m., Mrs. Fischer moved the School Board Meeting be adjourned.
Dr. Anderson seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mrs. Mari-Anne Gross, President

Mrs. Susan Larned, Clerk

The Minutes of December 1, 1997, were
approved on January 5, 1998, as written.