

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

February 16, 1998

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. John Kistler
Mrs. Shana Loshbaugh
Mrs. Nancy MacVie
Mrs. Melody Douglas
Dr. Donna Peterson
Mr. Justin George
Ms. Terri Woodward
Mr. Dave Schmidt
Ms. Barbara Vogel
Ms. Penny Tinker
Mr. Dale Bondurant
Ms. Patty Jolin
Mr. Paul Epperson
Ms. Barbara Eastham
Mr. Dave McCard
Mr. Ed Seims
Mrs. Becky Epperson
Mr. Lawrence Colston
Mr. Todd Syverson
Ms. Donna Kime
Mrs. Vicky Harrison
Ms. Jamie Shirts

Others present not identified.

CALL TO ORDER: Mrs. Gross called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mrs. Gross invited those present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Mrs. Mari-Anne Gross Present
Mr. Joe Arness Present
Mrs. Susan Larned Present
Dr. Nels Anderson Present
Mrs. Joyce Fischer Absent/Excused
Ms. Deborah Germano Present
Mrs. Debra Mullins Present
Miss Danielle Meacham Present/Arrived 7:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved as written with the deletion of Item 11f.,
Expulsion.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The School Board Minutes of February 2, 1997, were approved as
printed.

PUBLIC HEARING: Mrs. Gross invited those present to speak to the Kenai Peninsula Educational Support Association negotiated agreement. Mr. Dahlgren explained that HB 465 requires the District to conduct a public hearing prior to negotiating with any bargaining group. He stated that the Board has reserved from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. to receive public input.

Mr. John Kistler asked the Board to compare salaries in the private sector. He stated that most employers paid \$7 hour or less with no benefits. He recommended the Board start their negotiations by requiring a 50% employee copayment for health benefits.

Mr. Dale Bondurant, stated that he has been a union representative most of his life. He stated that he doesn't have children but he is willing to pay the price to hire good teachers. He stated that lowering teacher salaries just because others are not receiving a deserving salary is a very poor attitude. Mr. Bondurant stated that children are the future and deserve good teachers. He stated that he attended school in a small farm community and appreciated the teachers that he had as a child.

RECESS: At 6:30 p.m., Mrs. Gross called a recess.

RECONVENE: At 7:01 p.m., the Board reconvened in regular session.

Mrs. Gross extended an invitation to those present to address the Board regarding the Kenai Peninsula Educational Support Negotiated Agreement.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Mr. Arness 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 and might prejudice the reputation and character of any person. He explained that specifically, the executive session would address litigation, disciplinary actions and retirement. Mrs. Larned seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

RECONVENE: At 7:35 p.m., Dr. Anderson moved the executive session be adjourned. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

SCHOOL REPORTS: Mr. Paul Epperson, principal, Sterling Elementary, presented a visual overview displaying activities related to their school goals and the intervention that addresses each goal.

SCHOOL REPORTS (continued):

Mr. Epperson reported that the staff decided that too many students in Grades 4-6 were unable to read, and parents of special services students were unhappy that their children were not able to read. He stated that Dr. Boehmer, director of Special Services, assisted them in searching for a reading intervention program. He reported that the staff settled on a research-based program published by SRA called Reading Mastery.

Mr. Epperson explained that the reading intervention program has two components: Reading Mastery for Grades 1 to 3, and Corrective Reading for Grades 4 to 6. He stated that primary grade students need to learn to read and intermediate grade students need to read to learn. He stated that it is easier to concentrate reading intervention at the primary grades so students can read for a lifetime. Mr. Epperson reported that brain research strongly suggests that reading skills are best learned by age 10.

Mr. Epperson stated that in order to keep accurate data which is also meaningful to parents, an assessment instrument called Curriculum Based Assessment is used. He explained that the reading portion measures words read correctly per minute. Norms were created for Grades 2 through 6 for the fall and winter, and a spring norm will be completed before the end of school. He stated that the school considers a student "at risk" if he or she scores 50% below the median. All students that are defined "at-risk" by their score are referred to the reading intervention program. Mr. Epperson presented a graph showing a random sampling of second grade students' reading scores. He noted the significant improvement from the fall testing period to the winter testing period.

Dave McCard, first grade teacher, explained that Reading Mastery was designed as a pull-out program. After discovering that too many students were being pulled out of his class, he convinced Mr. Epperson to allow him to use Reading Mastery for all of his students. Mr. McCard explained that much of his school day involves reading, and he listed activities such as student journals, reading tubs, word charts, student read-alouds, sounding letters, research journals, clipping out words from newspapers and magazines and teacher read-alouds. Reading Mastery is a small but very important part of his school day.

SCHOOL REPORTS (continued):

Mrs. Patty Jolin, second grade teacher, stated that students read 90 minutes each day and then participate in group "read-alouds" using whole language books. She stated that each year she would promote some students to the next grade knowing they were not prepared. She stated that since the implementation of the reading intervention program, students are proud that they can read. Ms. Jolin noted that students are transferring their new reading skills to their writing and spelling. She stated that with reading intervention students have word attack skills that are as good or better than some of her more advanced readers. She stated that test scores show an obvious increase in reading abilities because of Reading Mastery intervention which relates directly to decreased referrals to the Special Services department.

Jamie Shirts, special services teacher, explained that a typical reading intervention lesson would include sound practice, a sound game, reading sight words, rhyming words and reading short stories. She stated that there is also a lesson involving take-home reading for students to share with their families. Ms. Shirts stated that the Reading Mastery program systematically moves students from simple words to more complicated reading in the primary grades. She explained that the Corrective Reading program was chosen to use with intermediate level students. She stated that the program was designed for students who have developed phonetic errors or still cannot sound out words or attack text. She stated that, although the successes at the intermediate level may not be as dramatic as those at the primary level, the teachers are observing similar results in student reading skills.

Penny Tinker, special services and half-time sixth grade teacher, stated that she is using Corrective Reading in her classroom in addition to other reading strategies. She stated that she had several students who were poor to nonreaders. She stated that with the implementation of the Corrective Reading program five of those students have progressed from 14 to 60 words per minute. She stated that the parents have noticed a difference in their children's reading and attitude towards school. Ms. Tinker stated that the students have become excited and self-confident, and they see themselves as readers and capable learners. She noted that some students have asked to take their books home to share with their parents.

SCHOOL REPORTS (continued):

Mr. Epperson, recognized Sterling Elementary teachers, Vicky Harrison and Donna Kime, who were in attendance. He stated that he is very proud of his staff for taking the initiative to solve students' reading problems. He stated that their goal to have all students reading by the time they leave sixth grade was incorrect and that all students should be reading by the time they leave second grade. He noted that the issue of reading can be controversial but commends his staff for doing what is best for children.

Mr. Epperson stated that the Reading Mastery program has been successful because the staff decided to spend time on it, they located appropriate materials to use, they dedicated time to train themselves on the use of the materials, and they have a high degree of enthusiasm towards the program.

Mrs. Jolin concluded the presentation by introducing students, Charlie Sue Evans and Chazz Mykel Gourley, two of her reading intervention successes.

Dr. Anderson asked if Sterling Elementary would be willing to inservice District staff on their reading intervention program. He stated that if the School Board mandated the use of the Reading Mastery Program teachers would resist, but if it were presented by teachers who are successfully using the program, it might be accepted by others. Mr. Epperson stated that personnel from six schools have already visited Sterling Elementary to observe the program. He added that North Star and Soldotna Elementary teachers will be coming within the next couple of weeks. He stated he would be willing to consider inservicing staff on the Reading Mastery program. Mr. Epperson invited the Board to spend a morning at Sterling Elementary.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

Mr. Todd Syverson thanked Mrs. Gross for visiting Soldotna Middle School last week and welcomed her back anytime.

Shana Loshbaugh commented that she visited her daughter's high school for a counseling appointment. She stated that she was disappointed that parent evaluation feedback forms were not readily available at the office. She stated that when she asked for the forms, the reaction from the staff was one of dismay and confusion.

COMMUNICATIONS AND
PETITIONS:

Mr. Dahlgren announced that a letter was received from Sally Rule, president of the Juneau School Board, inviting the Board to a meeting on Friday, February 20, 1998, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss issues which impact large districts, and the meeting will be held in conjunction with the Legislative Fly-In.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS: Mrs. Gross presented an award of appreciation to David Schmidt, teacher, Soldotna Middle School, for being selected by the Soldotna Chamber of Commerce as the 1997 "Devoted Service to Young People and Youth Activities Award" recipient.

Dr. Anderson commended Mr. Schmidt on his accomplishments and stated that all of his children have benefited from Mr. Schmidt's music instruction. He stated that he was impressed that one-third of the boys at Soldotna Middle School are involved in choir and credited Mr. Schmidt for the large participation.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Mr. Dahlgren stated that Board members will be traveling to Juneau to participate in the AASB Legislative Fly-in, February 21-24, 1998. He stated that, in addition to planned activities, the School Board members will be meeting individually with legislators. Mr. Dahlgren wished them luck during their trip.

Mr. Dahlgren announced that the next school Board meeting will be in Homer on March 2, 1998. He stated that he would not be present since he will be attending the AASA National Conference.

HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULING REPORT: Mr. Dahlgren, reported on the various types of schedules used at Soldotna, Skyview and Kenai Central High Schools. He summarized options that have been offered previously and provided a selection of new options such as a seven-period day, course blocking/course integration, collaboration with the Kenai Peninsula College, expansion of dual credit, night classes, open campuses, magnet schools, shared programs, distance delivery, study halls and apprenticeships.

Mr. Dahlgren noted that the Soldotna High School partnership with the Kenai Peninsula College in offering calculus has been successful. He stated that as certified diplomas are being developed, the issue of dual credit should be explored. He suggested that consideration be given to night classes that are compressed into a shorter amount of time. He noted that transportation is an issue that might exclude some students from participation in courses offered off campus. Mr. Dahlgren offered the report as information to be followed by a worksession with the Board for the purpose of seeking the Board's direction.

Mr. Dahlgren told the Board that Phil Biggs, Jim Bennett and Jim White are exploring enrichment classes for students to take via the internet.

HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULING
REPORT (continued):

Ms. Germano asked about interactive courses. Mr. Dahlgren explained that the idea had been explored in the past and the possibilities are there depending on equipment. Ms. Germano asked for a technology update.

Ms. Larned asked to have students and a counselor participate in a high school scheduling worksession so their viewpoints could be heard. Mrs. Gross asked the administration to arrange a worksession on technology and high school scheduling.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mr. Hickey presented the financial report of the District for the period ending January 31, 1998.

BOARD REPORT:

Mrs. Larned reported that she participated in the Village Fair held in Kenai and that quite a few people attended. She stated that Mr. Derek Peterson conducted a workshop on what students need to succeed. She stated that the main thing that impressed her was the different agencies that were represented. She stated that she would like to see them meet occasionally so that services are not duplicated.

Mrs. Mullins reported that she attended a committee meeting on staff recognition. She stated that she was disappointed that only two or three schools had submitted names of employees for recognition. She stated that she would like to see more schools submit employee names.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Items presented on the Consent Agenda were Extended Field Trip Request, Substitute Teacher Contracts, 1997-98 Teacher Appointment, Leave of Absence Request/Support, and a Resignation.

EXTENDED FIELD TRIP
REQUEST:

Mr. McLain recommended the Board approve an extended field trip request for seven Nikolaevsk High School students to travel to Washington, D.C., to participate in the Close-Up Program.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER
CONTRACTS:

Mrs. Radtke recommended the Board approve 19-day substitute teaching contracts for Patricia Linville, music, Seward Elementary; Dina Marion, kindergarten, Paul Banks Elementary; and Lisa Sova, physical education, Kenai Middle.

1997-98 TEACHER
APPOINTMENT:

Mrs. Radtke recommended the Board approve a teaching appointment for the 1997-98 school year for Willa deSousa, temporary (half-time) generalist at Homer Flex School.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
REQUEST/SUPPORT:

Mrs. Radtke recommended the Board approve a one-year unpaid leave of absence beginning June 12, 1998, for Kelly Gifford, curriculum secretary, Districtwide Curriculum.

RESIGNATION: Mrs. Radtke recommended the Board approve a resignation, effective at the end of the 1997—98 school year, for Jeffrey Harriman, principal/teacher, Hope School.

ACTION Dr. Anderson moved the Board approve Consent Agenda Items Numbers 1 through 5. Mrs. Larned seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATOR CONTRACTS: Mr. Dahlgren recommended the Board approve a listing of administrator and Central Office contracts for the 1998-99 school year. Mr. Dahlgren noted that there were vacancies at Hope Elementary, Soldotna Middle and Voznesenka Elementary Schools.

ACTION Mr. Arness moved the Board approve a listing of administrator and Central Office contracts for the 1998-99 school year. Dr. Anderson seconded.

Ms. Germano asked if there had been changes to the existing Central Office contracts. Mr. Dahlgren explained that a three-year salary schedule was approved last year and that benefit packages changed downward.

Motion carried unanimously.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST/SUPPORT: Mrs. Radtke presented a one-year unpaid leave of absence request for the 1998-99 school year for David Tourtellot, custodian, who is currently on an unpaid leave of absence. She stated that the administration did not recommend approval since this would be his third year. The Board has never granted a third-year unpaid leave of absence.

ACTION Ms. Germano moved the Board approve the administrative recommendation. Mrs. Larned seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

MATH CURRICULUM: Mr. McLain recommended approval of the proposed District K-12 math curriculum. Mr. McLain thanked Dr. Peterson, administrators, teachers, students and members of the public who worked on the math curriculum.

ACTION Mr. Arness moved the Board approve the proposed math curriculum. Mrs. Mullins seconded.

Ms. Germano asked whether the October 1998 inservice on the math curriculum would be the only mandated training for staff.

MATH CURRICULUM (continued): Dr. Peterson explained that the curriculum will be presented to the staff at each school. She stated that staff inservice will be conducted this spring with materials available during the summer.

Mr. Arness stated that, although some things had been changed from the current math curriculum, he was disappointed that it did not change as much as he had hoped. He stated that he felt there is a legitimate argument to be made for people who are immersed in their own subject; i.e., language arts teachers should write math curriculums with help from math teachers. Mr. Arness stated that the proposed math curriculum is similar to the existing curriculum.

Motion carried unanimously.

1998-99 INSERVICE DATES: Mr. McLain recommended the Board approve eight inservice dates for the high schools and ten inservice dates for the elementary and middle schools for the 1998-99 school year. He stated that high schools may apply to the District Instructional Office for up to two additional inservice dates (for a total of ten days) based on school site development plans and needs.

Mr. McLain stated that a memo detailing plans for each inservice was included in the Board information packet.

ACTION Mrs. Larned moved the Board approve the 1998-99 inservice days as presented. Mr. Arness seconded.

Ms. Germano asked whether legal holidays were counted in teacher contract days. Mr. McLain explained that five legal holidays are counted in addition to the 180 days of instruction and that the inservice days are counted with the required 180 days. Mr. McLain noted that, excluding inservice days, there are 170 days of student contact. He explained that Memorial Day is not included as a holiday for teachers and that either Labor Day or Memorial Day usually affects the school calendar, but not both.

Mr. Dahlgren noted that parent/teacher conference days are included with inservice days so that students are not out of the classroom as often as in the past.

Dr. Anderson asked why holidays were chosen as inservice days. Mr. McLain answered that parents requested the inservice committee to try, whenever possible, to match holidays with inservice days. Dr. Anderson expressed concern for students being out of school four days in a three-week period.

1998-99 INSERVICE DATES
(continued):

Ms. Germano thanked Mr. McLain for scheduling inservice days during holidays. Mr. McLain explained that parent-teacher conferences will be half-day conferences and half-day inservice days or full-day conferences depending on each school's needs. Mr. McLain noted that administrators requested some flexibility in regard to staggered evening conferences, thereby allowing parents to visit two or more schools.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

Mr. Kistler asked the Board to solicit input from communities and educators regarding school board policies and how they are being implemented at each site. He also stated that he felt students should be trusted to bring their report cards home rather than the schools mailing them. He suggested that the Board attach a survey card to each report card to be completed by the parent asking how they felt the school board policies were being implemented at their school.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Ms. Germano thanked the administration for their hard work and expressed appreciation for the positive climate of School Board meetings this year.

Ms. Mullins commended Mr. Epperson and his staff for the challenge they have undertaken and their goal of requiring each child to be able to read by second grade. She stated that it disturbs her to think there are sixth grade students that cannot read.

Dr. Anderson echoed previous comments concerning the Reading Mastery program. Dr. Anderson stated that he agreed with Mr. Kistler's statement on trusting students to bring their report cards home, and he also felt that high school students should be trusted to handle their own medications.

Mrs. Larned concurred with comments made concerning the Sterling Elementary reading program and added that she was equally impressed that teachers were giving up their personal time to work on the reading program. She reported that she will be one of three Board members traveling to Juneau for the legislative fly-in and hopes to bring back some positive information.

Mrs. Gross stated that she also enjoyed the Sterling Elementary report and looks forward to positive news in all District schools regarding early readers. She added that she feels intervention should start at an early age.

ADJOURN:

At 8:58 p.m., Dr. Anderson moved the School Board Meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Larned seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mrs. Mari-Anne Gross, President

Mrs. Susan Larned, Clerk

The Minutes of February 16, 1998,
were approved on March 2, 1998,
as written.