



# KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Office of Superintendent

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## M E M O R A N D U M

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**DATE:** January 3, 2007  
**TO:** Members, Board of Education  
**FROM:** Donna Peterson, Ed.D. *Donna Peterson*  
Superintendent of Schools  
**RE:** Kenai Conversation Worksession

Attached are the transcripts of the comments made during the Kenai Conversation public meeting on November 7, 2006. This information, the booklet distributed at the November 7 meeting of the written comments, and other comments made during the Board meetings on this issue, constitute the official public testimony. Additionally, several of you had visits to the involved schools, other correspondence and conversations, and personal observations regarding the situation. The purpose of the worksession on January 15 is to provide an opportunity for you to discuss anything related to the Kenai Conversation so that I have gathered as much information as possible prior to providing options to the Board in February.

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# Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

## Kenai Conversation (Verbatim Transcription)

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November 7, 2006 – 7:00 p.m.

Kenai Central High School  
9583 Kenai Spur Highway, Kenai, Alaska

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**SCHOOL BOARD  
MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mrs. Debra Mullins  
Mrs. Sammy Crawford  
Mrs. Lynn Hohl  
Mr. Bill Hatch  
Mrs. Sunni Hilts  
Miss Lydia Ames, Student Representative

**SENIOR MANAGEMENT  
PRESENT:**

Dr. Donna Peterson, Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Sam Stewart, Assistant Superintendent  
Mr. Glen Szymoniak, Assistant Superintendent

**Joe Arness:**

Good evening. Welcome to the Kenai Conversation as it is become known. I'd like to introduce the folks sitting here in front; if you don't know them, I expect probably most of you do. First these individuals on the long straight table here would be the central office administrators from the School District, beyond them and identified by their name tags members of the Board of Education, all the way down to the end, on this end is Sally Tachick the Board and Superintendent Secretary, my name is Joe Arness. I was pressed into service and I'm not entirely sure how... to moderate this meeting this evening but it should be an interesting meeting for all concerned.

The goal this evening is to provide these folks with an addendum to the packet that you all saw, I assume, outside the door of written comments on the subject would have been submitted with... verbal comments that you'd like to make on behalf of whatever side of the issue you happen to be on. Any of those comments you'd like to make this evening would provide the opportunity. There will be a transcript created of those comments this evening. Once that transcript is created it will be available; Sally Tachick would be the person to contact at the School District in regards to that.

Our format for this evening because this is a little unusual of a gathering as opposed to a Board of Education meeting where there is a time set aside specifically for public comments and then the meeting revolves around that, or goes on around that; the protocol will be just a little different than the one you picked up on the pink sheet at the top of the stairs. This evening will be dedicated entirely to your comments; we're going to try and limit the evening to two and half hours and we'll... kind of get a sense as the evening goes along. Were going to divide that two and a half hours

into two parts; because there are two questions on the table... very clearly for the Kenai community of this moment. The first part... the first half of the question revolves around what do we want education in the City of Kenai...Kenai general education area to look like five to ten years from now. Where do we want to be five or ten years from now? The second half of the evening then focuses down on to... what is it that we need to do or that we want to do for next fall to head in that direction? One of those is... obviously a policy kind of a question the other one is kind of a specific kind of question..."What's school going to look like in September?" I would encourage you all to bear in mind that the larger question here is... the general education community not necessarily specifically your school or your child... try and keep... keep in the format of your conversation the fact that there are other issues that weigh into this that need to be taken into account in order for an answer to be complete. I can't help but be reminded on today, election day, that there's an old adage that I always kind of refer to in my mind, two very reasonable people can take a look at the same set of circumstances and come to very different conclusions and that's okay and we need to try and remember that. Ground rules for this evening... this is a conversation not a confrontation, it's not a debate, it's a conversation. Unfortunately, owing to the time limits and the number of people, it's a one-way conversation tonight, i.e., you folks talking to these folks but it will begin the conversation that will return to you. If there are questions from the members of the Board or administration relative to something you have to say, you will be contacted about that but there will not be an interchange this evening, simply in the interest of time. I would like to ask everyone to remember when you are speaking you would like to be treated with respect and courtesy by the other members of the audience and when other people are speaking that you exhibit the same behavior... it's just common courtesy and... I think... that's all we really need... to do. No personal attacks, nor (inaudible) attacks or disparaging remarks relative to other programs... whatever they may be. Time limit will be three minutes; we made arrangements in advance with the various stakeholders, i.e., Sears Elementary, Mt. View Elementary, Kaleidoscope, Kenai Middle... that if they had a representative who wish to speak... kind of like a delegation then they would be given 5 minutes... we do have a couple of those folks signed up... we will see how the evening goes... I'm going to say at this moment... that we will try and accommodate... to allow you to speak on both topics but we're going to have to see how that... rolls because we do have a time limit. I'm going to ask... just for my sake and I guess for the folks up here as well, if we could... I assume that most people here are here... not necessarily representing but are affiliated with one of the organizations that I just

mentioned and I would like to... to just see who's who... this is not a democratic process per se where how many people are here from each organization has an impact but I'm just curious and I want to get a kind of a feel of the room for where folks are so anyone here who is parents, staff, or affiliated with Sears Elementary... please... raise your hand. Okay, see I was hoping that everybody would be in one place so I'd know where everybody was from... from Kaleidoscope School? Okay... Mt. View? Okay... Kenai Middle? Okay... and... any others that I... okay, the high school too? Okay, good, alright, and does Aurora Borealis have anyone here? Okay. We're going to get started. We're going to start out with...we have two people who were signed up in advance. One by Kenai Middle School Philippa Sonnichsen. If I butchered that I really apologize.

**TESTIMONY:**

**Philippa Sonnichsen:**

Thank you very much, my name is Philippa Sonnichsen. My address is 36855 Chinulna Drive, Kenai. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you tonight. I am proud to speak as a site council representative from Kenai Middle School about our vision for five years from now. First, since we are looking through a crystal ball, I predict that Kenai Central had just beaten SoHi at a hockey game and hopefully my younger son is enjoying his first year of college. But seriously, I believe in five years our community will have made the following decisions we will have chosen to do what's right in education for all our children instead of choosing legal options that permit us to do more for the "haves" in our society at the expense of a the "have nots". We will have rededicated ourselves to providing the best education for all the children in our community that our public funds can provide. We will have found that the only way to ensure that we do not segregate our children into groups of "haves" and groups have-nots is to provide families with the choices within schools rather than choices of schools. We will have found that diversity benefits everyone, children and adults alike. We will have concluded that the only way a small community can offer a comprehensive package or program at the middle school level including band, choir, art, industrial arts and sports is for all choices to be contained in one school. We will have determined that three schools spread the population of students too thinly for any of the choices to successfully prepare our youth for high school. We will have found that problems in the schools can be solved by everyone working together rather than by some opting to set up a separate system. We will have discovered more ways for parents to voice their discontentment with what is happening in our schools so that their concerns are quickly addressed. We will have found that students who come to school with the support of loving families who value a quality education are thriving in our public schools. We will have determined

that it is critical not to take money, programs, the attention of teachers, staff or administrators and the attention of adult mentors away from at-risk students so that they too can thrive in our public schools. We will have embraced concepts of kindergarten, which are to treat everyone with kindness and respect, to laugh and love at every opportunity, to be safe, and to do our best. Thank you.

**Joe Arness:**

Thank you. Just would request if you have a written statement such as that one, which is fine... if we could get a copy of it then we've got a double...Sally's been known to trip things up from time to time (laughter). If you could set it by the microphone that would be great. Thank you very much, And we have Garnet Sarks from Sears, I can't read my own writing.

**Garnet Sarks:**

Good evening. I'm Garnet Sarks and I'm a member of the Sears Elementary Site Committee and a proud parent of two; one kindergartener and one first grader at Sears... and... I thank you for your time and your presence, your concerns and your caring for being here and for everybody else that's also here because it makes such a difference and that's truly what its all about. We have a short-term recommendation... and our short-term for the 19... for the, excuse me, for the year 2007 and 2008 school year, is that Sears Elementary remains in its permanent location as a ... K-2 school. The Kaleidoscope grades, K through 2, remain in Sears Elementary building and the Kaleidoscope grades 3 through 5 be housed at Mt. View Elementary; and again these are short-term recommendations. Our long-term recommendation is that Sears Elementary remains in its current location at 549 North Forest Drive, exclusively as a K-2 neighborhood school. Some of the rationale of this all was... this proposal preserves a grade level... configuration that our site council vehemently maintains is our preference. In recent Kenai Conversation meetings many community members, parents, express that it reside in a Kenai area for what is offered exclusively in Kenai, Sears Elementary, K through 2, Mt. View 3 through 5, Kenai Middle 6 through 8 and Kenai Central High 9 through 12. Sears site council and the District support choices for parents. Sears Elementary is the only school in the Central Peninsula that offers a choice of a K-2 school. Man, what visionary we had years ago. Sears site council believes it is our responsibility to advocate for all the families by continuing to offer the option of a K-2 school. If Sears and Mt. View are consolidated they will lose the ability and space to continue many of the programs that enables us to support our students. By moving Sears to Mt. View we... will create a neighborhood school over 90% capacity causing a new problem for space. Since 1968 Sears Elementary has defined excellence in early childhood education Sears provides a developmentally appropriate,

nurturing, learning environment for all K through 2 students. Collaborative relationships are established and maintained with new families entering the school system. Sears Elementary staff consistently prepares students for transition into Mt. View to meet NCLB and AYP federal mandates as well as the District and state standards. Programs that might... that would be compromised if a consolidation occurs Sears staff shares a collective philosophy of early childhood education and implements research based instruction. The Sears Elementary curriculum is thoughtfully planned, challenged, engaging and comprehensive. High quality early education produces lasting benefits. Primary administration excellent and in K-2 programming requires an effective governs instituting ongoing K-2 program planning, career development opportunities and continuous program involvement... improvement, excuse me. Learning environment – Sears Elementary provides K through 2 appropriate and well-maintained indoor and outdoor physical environments. Health and Safety – age appropriate equipment and specialized nursing care for Sears Elementary students prevents hazardous practices and environments. Community relationships – reciprocal relationships have been established and maintained helping Sears Elementary to achieve our goals; Headstart, Central Peninsula Counseling Services, Salamantof, Nakenu, Kenatize, Study Buddies, Home-to-School Program, Kenai Performing Arts Society, Agrium Days, 4-H. Sears Elementary site council appreciates... your commitment to the children of our community. Thank you very much.

**Joe Arness:**

Thank you. Is that in a form you can leave for us? Thanks. Alright we have one other one signed up that will be at the beginning of the second half of the program so if I could...could I get a sense of how many people have in mind that they want to talk here in this first half just so I can get a sense of what we need to do. Okay. Well then what let's do is just help yourselves to the microphone and three minutes if you would identify yourselves at the beginning... maybe an address would be a good idea so if there is a need to contact you that can be done. Go ahead.

**Scott Walden:**

Good evening, thanks for the opportunity to be here. My name is Scott Walden and I live at 404 McKinley Street in Kenai. The past 20 years plus 20 years I've been involved with all the schools; both Mt. View, Sears Elementary, public education programs, PTA, site council, volunteers. I've done a lot of things for the schools and I'm very proud of that. I would look forward to seeing the Sears Elementary School remain as a Sears Elementary neighborhood school, Mt. View remain Mt. View Elementary School; the question is then how do we help the charter schools succeed? I believe the charter school system (inaudible) in spite of what I had heard

about some of the comments (inaudible). I am not an anti-charter school person; never have been; never will be. I believe that the charter system was established with good intention was established to give choice to the community for schools who would not otherwise have an opportunity for arts and sciences or whatever the program may be. I believe though that those charter schools; charter school system is established with a funding mechanisms intended to help them stand on their own two feet and to be successful in the community. I believe too that possibly the School District has been given an opportunity in those state statutes to help that charter school be established in the borough from its beginning and help it get standing on it's own two feet. I think that over time we've forgot the fact that was the... probably the role it was intended in the statutes was to help them get started, be successful the community (inaudible). As a method of choice of the community, it was never intended to be a mechanism to take up space I guess you could say (inaudible) in the neighborhood school or (inaudible) simply a choice to say... how we want to see our neighborhood schools looking in five years as it relates to... the shutting of a school or a consolidation of the school. I think that there is a place for us to fall through a successful charter school system in one area but, at the same time, I think it's important that we perpetuate the neighborhood school as the anchor for our community and I'd like to see in five years Sears and Mt. View both remaining those anchors in various points of our community or elementary school students and in five years I'd like to see a successful charter school system within the City as a choice. So I don't want it to be either or, I... I'm unhappy that it sometimes is the intention but I think it can be successful if we don't forget that our... role in this as parents and school board members and as administrators was to help those charter schools succeed to become a choice and not replace any of (inaudible)... and... I would also like to give you tonight a petition... that has been signed by over 300... 310 signatures (inaudible) that would like... the school to continue (inaudible) and once again I want to thank you for the opportunity (inaudible).

**Tony Lewis:**

My name is Tony Lewis. I live at 613 Cedar in Kenai and... I have the privilege of being on the academic policy committee for the (inaudible). I guess my vision for five years is that we don't have to have anymore meetings (laughter) since I've been meeting to death over this last... but I truly appreciate the opportunity in the Conversation and the... this is the atmosphere that we have tonight is truly a conversation (inaudible). Truthfully through my dream in the future, even 5 years is that... that we are all getting along well, figuring this out and that we've all... realize how important we are in this community... in that... I... believe it is important to have

choice... I agree that... with some of the comments I've read in the... packet and some of the things I think I heard tonight that's what I'm concerned about charter schools... My problem is consistency over the last couple years and it hasn't been the different demographics in charter schools compared to... the neighborhood schools... in my community five years from today would be that limiting... I ran some numbers and it's not... it's not a pretty picture... I would love if our charter school had more of the disadvantaged kids than... the neighborhood schools. We need to figure out... I think as a community and as a group, how we could do that... I don't think getting rid of... charter school... for Kaleidoscope in the next five years is the way to do it... I think there are other ways to work together to make sure that we have choices... that we have programs... for everyone and... in that we also have a diverse population of kids in all of our schools. To me that's what we really want to work towards; that's what we need to attain... and... the other thing is... about where... is Kaleidoscope going to be in five years... I've heard a lot of times about the importance of K-2 school... I truly believe that... I have... I always loved having a K-2 school but that's (inaudible)... I think the reason I got involved in the politics of the charter schools is to help maintain that... unfortunately I feel like we had tried to... do some things... and we... its been... made very clear... that Kaleidoscope is not wanted at these neighborhood schools and if we can change that atmosphere maybe it can work... but it's been a couple years and it... it hasn't gotten any better. There's enough blame for everyone, and I am not trying to assign blame to anyone here but... can we make work in two different schools? I don't think so at this point and so... I think Kaleidoscope needs to have one building and whether that's... whether that's in a School District building or we have to build our own building but that's... I think it... it's a big decision that the school board has to make and it has to look into where the finances...where truly is the best for this community for education. Thank you very much.

**Margaret Gilman:**

First off I want to say thank you very much for traveling to Kenai tonight for this very important discussion. What do I want schools in Kenai to look like in five years? First off, I want schools to be safe and as a parent I want to know that my children will be valued and well cared for. At the elementary level I want a low PTR in classrooms so teachers are able to meet the needs of individual students. I want a rich curriculum with the particular emphasis on developing literacy. We need library services that enrich that curriculum. I want music education that is integrated into the classroom unit as part of classroom instruction. Wouldn't it be great to let every kid learn piano and make that connection between music and mathematics. Our own elementary schools need a comprehensive physical education

program with an emphasis on lifelong health. At the middle school level I would like a team approach that is adequately staffed so that teachers actually have the time and opportunity to collaborate about students and their programs. We need continued emphasis on math skills and literature to expand on the literacy focus from the elementary. Kenai Middle School should be able to offer a full menu of exploratory classes so that kids can get a sampling of what their interests may be. This should include art, shop, home ec., choir, band, technology, and foreign language. Kenai Central High School should continue to be developed as the crown jewel of this city. It is an opportunity to showcase our amazing kids and what we as a community have invested in them. We need an emphasis on English, math, science and social studies so all kids in Kenai can graduate with a diploma. In addition, we need a rigorous honors program for college-bound students. This includes advanced classes, choir, band, art, and foreign language. Additionally, we need a reinvigorated vocational educational program that will prepare students for the numerous jobs in construction, the oil industry, and other service industries that are certainly going to be available when they graduate. Alaska needs qualified workers and Kenai Central High School is the perfect place to begin that training. The college-bound vocational classes should not be an either/or proposition as it was in days past. Research shows that today's kids will change jobs and sometimes careers five or six times in their lifetime; they need the opportunities provided by a full-menu classes. You'll notice that a common element which is included in all the schools as outlined is the inclusion of music, art, libraries and physical education. All of these subjects are necessary to develop cultural literacy today's students need as they prepare for the future. You may be asking yourself, "Great idea, but how are we going to pay for it?" The answer is that schools in Kenai have been starved and slashed for so long that some have even began to think that music and libraries are extras. It should (bell sounding) be noted that even during the era of the great depression schools in this country still taught music and art because the communities valued it. Our community of Kenai values these important subjects as well. As a school board you are faced with the difficult decision about what the configuration of the schools should look like in Kenai for the next year. A dramatically declining school age population in the Borough is forcing the necessity to do things differently. A simple statistic from my own family is that when my oldest started in kindergarten at Sears in 1995 there were 160 students in her class; when my youngest started at Sears in 2005 there were only 80 students enrolled in her kindergarten class. We cannot continue with the status-quo, under populated schools desperately struggling to provide a comprehensive education. Please remember that the

immediate decisions you make now will have a tremendous effect on the future. It's my hope that you'll be striving to achieve the future goals for Kenai schools as outlined as you make your decisions about the upcoming year. Thank you.

**Megan O'Neill:**

My name is (inaudible) I have a daughter who attended Sears, Mt. View, Kenai Middle and now she's in high school. I also work as a tutor at the Kenai Peninsula Youth Facility; so I know a lot about at-risk kids. I grew up in the 60's and I'm dating myself. Segregation was a big issue and my look for five years from now is not to have a segregated community which is what I foresee. What we need to do is when our community (inaudible) is to have neighborhood schools which... emphasize cultural, social, and economic diversity. Our kids need to be raised (inaudible)... we don't want to have (inaudible) we don't want to have "have" and "have-nots". The population right now says that what we need is a K-2 school, a 3-5 school and a 6-8 school. We need our kids to be together, all of the great ideals aren't science. Every single kid deserves that, not just the kids whose parents are going to advocate for them. What about the kids who don't even get dinner? Who's advocating for them? That is the school board's role and responsibility. You have to look at the big picture and what we need to do is provide for those kids too and they need the same education. I realize the School District is in a very tough strait and some of my best friends have decided to take their kids out of the regular Sears School and that's their choice but what I'm seeing is our resources are getting depleted so what we need to do is put all of our resources together and provide the best education we can. We need to integrate the best ideas from Kaleidoscope and the other charter schools into our schools so what I envision in 5 years and for now is for our community to have healed itself and have one school for K-2 kids at Sears; one school for 3-5 at Mt. View and one school at KMS because unlike what some people believe it could have a tremendous impact also on high schools; because our kids will have been raised together and they feel good about each other and they won't feel like they came from two separate worlds. Thank you.

**Angie Challans:**

(inaudible) I'm just a parent. I have three small children ages 7 and 6 and 4. I grew up here and went to school here from Sears all the way through Kenai Central. I am opposed to separating or merging the schools together but I don't feel that Kaleidoscope and Sears can't function in the same building together either. I happen to know of (inaudible) my opposition of that, I don't understand why they can't work together as in the same buildings like we have and why it is so important that they be separated, merged and take away the milestone of moving on to the next grade out of Sears into Mt. View for the kids; so to me it's just... I don't think it's a

need, I don't think its something that needs to happen and I think that's taking something (inaudible) and it's a specialized school for those grades and I like that atmosphere and the kids are comfortable in it too and I just wouldn't want to see it happen (inaudible).

**Rhonda Crawford:**

My name is Rhonda Crawford and have a daughter at Sears, Mt. View, and son at KMS and I wasn't able to attend the previous two meetings so hopefully (inaudible) totally ridiculous. I would like to see K-2 (inaudible) high school. I haven't (inaudible) adjust to (inaudible) under staffed charter schools would (inaudible) so... could we not use that to provide additional transportation and to maybe Tustumena who is only at 27% capacity. Or Nikiski Elementary if that fell through (inaudible) we would not have (inaudible) available to us that would (inaudible) collective pick up.... drop off site for students whose parents... who cannot transport them. I just hope that we can think out of the box and maybe not put so much pressure onto Sears and Mt. View, I would hate to see them it become overcrowded and I don't like the segregation that I'm seeing at Sears... I hear people say the "haves" and "have nots" and... I see that and I don't think that its fair for children who attend public school to not have the same things that the charter school does and to have that existing in the same building at this time I don't... think that that's fair and... this is my third child in Sears and I've had greatly enjoyed all the staff and the atmosphere and I hope that we can keep that going. That's it.

**Chris Holmes:**

I have a little bit of a cough. My name is Chris Holmes and I have two girls that attend Kaleidoscope and we have one that will come into the school system in a couple of years. It took an awful lot of time... for me to determine what to come up here and say tonight and... even now I'm very nervous and... I think we're all in a very awkward situation. The thing I want to make most clear as I stand here is that just because I opted to send my children to Kaleidoscope does not mean that (inaudible) other schools in the area but (inaudible) that we are all important and we all have great things to offer. In truth, I think it's a fantastic opportunity to live in this area in regard to education, we're not limiting because there are few options instead, we can actually take a look at each child individually as parents and choose what... the best option is for each of our children. I think that a lot of the dysfunction in the community is because of choice. just... I think we all choose where we're going to shop, where we're going to buy our gas, we may choose to attend this Baptist church on this corner instead of this one on this corner; we don't say to any people, you shouldn't be here because you take money from my program instead we invest our time and effort into making the program what it is and I think that's happening in the schools... as well. It's not to say that other schools

aren't equally desired, and aren't working, equally as well for those who choose them, I just don't think that it should be said that Kaleidoscope is a hindrance to the community because those who don't make it their choice think so. As a parent of two children who attend Kaleidoscope and one who will follow, I would like to see Kaleidoscope grow to the extent of the original written charter request. I would expect that the growth will incur at a safe and steady rate so that the program survives and continues for some time to come. We've been invited here tonight to voice our opinions on what the Kenai area should look like in a way of available education next year further down the road within 5 years. I'm hopeful we don't allow this evening to become a podium for removing Kaleidoscope as an available choice in years to come. Rather than being afraid of what Kaleidoscope will do to other schools by taking their students I think the focus should be on what each individual school will do for the students they have. We allowed many other charter schools and private schools to exist without the conflict that Kaleidoscope is experiencing right now. Why? Because of I think it is because their time of change has come and gone. I will hurry. It was difficult in the beginning but it passed; the dislike and envy of Kaleidoscope too shall pass if only we made a swift decision and allow everyone involved to move on. It is my wish that Kaleidoscope be given the opportunity and the space that will allow the entire program to exist under one roof. As a parent I believe there is an advantage to my children having each other nearby... I would appreciate making fewer changes in where they will attend through their early education. Last paragraph, I swear. I also believe that it is in the best interest of the employees of all schools in the area that Kaleidoscope be given their own space. It's very evident that the neighborhood schools feel personally attacked by the creation and existence of Kaleidoscope. It makes me sad. It isn't meant in any way as a complaint against where we are housed now I simply think that Kaleidoscope be given their own space would allow other neighborhood schools to move forward with their programs and will allow Kaleidoscope to do the same without the constant underlying competition that seems... will remain as long as Kaleidoscope is housed in any other program. I don't mean any disrespect to any of the programs around here, I just happen to think that Kaleidoscope offers my children a great program and I feel it would be enhanced by being allowed to exist within one building.

### **Cary Graves**

My name is Cary Graves. I live at 5450 King Salmon Drive and I have a 9th grade daughter at Kenai Central. She attended, Sears, Mt. View and Kenai Middle School. I feel like she got a great education in all these three schools. The reason I came here tonight is kind of to summarize on page... of the handout. Sears and Mt. View have about 40% of kids

eligible for free lunches Kaleidoscope has about 14% and I realize nobody intended for that to happen, it's an unintended consequence but I feel like it is an important issue and that it leads to economic segregation for school children and my vision of our school system is that the public schools should be a melting pot where kids from all economic groups, intellectual groups, whatever groups, all go together at the same school and that's my concern is that this is leading to economic segregation and I think that's a... that's not something we should envision for our schools so... I... would envision keeping a... the current Sears at K-2 and Mt. View as it is and the Middle School as it is and, if necessary, keeping Kaleidoscope to share those facilities so that all our K-2 kids in Kenai at least go in the same building so that there is some degree of a community melting pot. Thank you.

**Joe Arness**

Anyone else? Let's take a two-minute stretch and then we'll forge into (inaudible)...

(inaudible) second half of this little gathering...let's see if we can't reach in and find a nerve. I suspect maybe you will... this will be the one where you could place yourself in the position of the folks on the stage you can say... and here is the current circumstance and I won't outline (inaudible) I'm sure (inaudible) probably know better than I do. Here is the current circumstance... now what do we do... what is this school going to... system of schools going to look like come September 1st ... of this coming year and I would like to invite you to weigh in on that question if you'd like. To begin with we have, as I said in the beginning... in the very beginning we have.. the Kaleidoscope School has Misty Hamilton signed up to speak to this issue.

**Misty Hamilton**

Hello, my name is Misty Hamilton. I am the APC chairperson for Kaleidoscope School of Arts and Sciences and I would just like to thank the school board for the opportunity to speak here tonight and thank Dr. Peterson for all the work she's done on the Kenai Conversation. Kaleidoscope School of Arts and Sciences is a community of leaders made up of students, teachers and parents working collaboratively to create the best learning opportunity as possible for each student. The mission of Kaleidoscope is to develop responsible citizens and life-long learners to integrated, collaborative approaches to arts and sciences by providing connected, meaningful experiences with the attention to the whole child. Our curriculum is built around conceptual key points and integration of arts, music, reading, language arts, math, and science. In order to fulfill our mission statement that it is necessary for our schools to be in a facility that will accommodate our full population. Our enrollment projection for next school year is a 196 kindergarten through 5th grade.

Our charter states that we must remain in Kenai during our formative years. The Kaleidoscope APC is obligated to our parents, the school board and the State to meet standards set in our charter. We have concerns about the ability of Kaleidoscope to meet these requirements while living in shared space. The policy for sharing a building with a neighborhood school does not allow our school to make important daily and long-term decisions to support our school mission. I would like to take a moment to explain some of the unique aspects of Kaleidoscope. We have a carefully constructed, meaningful curriculum; this is the cornerstone of our school. All subjects are taught with rigor and depth and are carefully interwoven to create meaning. Teachers plan collaboratively and have a strong knowledge of materials as well as the State's standards in each area of curriculum. We have an emphasis on arts and sciences. Arts and science are the focus of the curriculum and the vehicle for which most of our curriculum is studied. We have a hands-on science lab that every child, K through 4 is involved in. In a science lab students use the scientific method to learn how to work, think and experiment like a scientist... microscopes and a variety of equipment, supplies and materials facilitate their learning through experiments. Real life learning occurs daily at school by investigating the world through science. All students participate in music that supports the development of creative and critical thinking as well as language development. Children regularly use instruments in their music class along with learning to sing, learning movement and developing rhythm. Regular performances including drama are scheduled so students can demonstrate all they have learned through these combined skills. Teachers work collaboratively to create a curriculum that integrates all the subjects by themes and explores them in depth in order to meet standards and objectives for each subject. The arts and sciences are infused meaningful ways into this instruction. Family and partnerships are of the utmost importance in maintaining a high standard of academic success and sustains the school in providing a wide range of experiences for students in the classroom and the community. Children are immersed in complex life-like learning situations and experiences. Students are given frequent opportunities to explore ideas, concepts and skills through the "being there" experience. Artistic and creative opportunities provide learning experiences to connect the body, mind, and senses. Children do not learn with their mind alone but also through active engagement of their body and senses. A walk through Kaleidoscope shows enthusiastic students engaged in learning. Respect, collaboration, and cooperation are taught in every classroom. Students have a sense of ownership and purpose in their learning. It is our hope that when making your decision you will give serious consideration to allowing

us to have a facility that would house our entire population for the 2007-2008 school year. Thank you.

**Joe Arness:**

Well, I will ask again... how many people are planning to offer observation in this section? Just a show of hands (inaudible).

**Philippa Sonnichsen**

We believe that our community values and equal quality education for every child in Kenai. We believe that reincorporating Kaleidoscope into Sears and Mt. View is the best option for providing and equal quality education for every child in Kenai. We believe that public education is about what is best for all the children in our community. One of the goals for Kaleidoscope was to provide an education for and I quote; "A heterogeneous population that mirrors the demographics of the community". Our site council presented statistics on Friday prove that this has not occurred. Another telling statistic is that while only six Kaleidoscope families were provided with Christmas gifts, clothing and dinners by the Christmas Drive program last year; 24 Sears families were assisted in this manner. The impact of Kaleidoscope is that Sears and Mt. View are now educating the greater proportion of students with economic and educational disadvantages. Our community have learned from the Kaleidoscope experiment that diligent efforts will not prevent this undesired outcome and because of the negative impact that Kaleidoscope has imposed upon our traditional neighborhood schools we believe we cannot allow Kaleidoscope to operate as a separate entity but the Kaleidoscope experiment has also shown possible positive outcomes. With the charter school funds have that been dedicated to Kaleidoscope teachers have been trained in Integrated Thematic Instruction and Total Literacy. With these funds classroom equipment and supplies to support this pilot program have also been purchased. The framework for this program is in place; no matter where the program is located and how it is funded in the future so our proposal is to reincorporate the teachers and staff from Kaleidoscope back into Sears and Mt. View and bring this choice of education back with them. Then, once a representative cross section of our students has been educated using the model and philosophy chosen originally by Kaleidoscope our community can evaluate its effectiveness and decide whether to enlarge the program within Sears and Mt. View, continue to operate as a choice or address its deficiencies indicated by ongoing assessment and NCLB testing. Kaleidoscope is accountable to their sponsor the KPBSD school board. Should the school board decide in opposition to our recommendation we urge the school board to move Kaleidoscope out of Kenai. When my family moved to Kenai in 1997 we were in impressed with the education that our children were given at Sears; they have since benefited from

attending the traditional neighborhood schools in Kenai and are now in the 10th and 8th grades. During this time student enrollment has declined in our community and yet now parents can choose to send their kindergartners to one of three schools; it just doesn't make sense to respond to a decline in student enrollment by opening up more schools. We are expecting another decline in enrollment next year and allowing Kaleidoscope to further expand into the middle school grades in the coming years would have serious negative consequences for KMS students including a change in staffing formula and loss of programs. This is an example of a perceived benefit for a few at the expense of unintended negative consequences for the majority. We do not want this to occur to the students in the school that has had an exemplary record in educating community's children. We urge the school board to do what is best for all the children of our community, whether rich or poor, with learning disabilities, with behavioral disabilities, with physical or emotional handicaps or without the need to utilize special services. We expect all our students to receive a quality education in grades K through 8 and we expect all of them to have them presented with equal opportunities to succeed. Thank you very much.

**Joe Arness**

Can you leave that one as well? For those of you who don't know... I... realized during break that Dr. Anderson is not sitting up here, he is, however, sitting in the back of the room anticipating the birth of another student for our School District... (applause) ...(inaudible) he likes to stay close to the door. Alright, ah... again... want a show of hands just... just so I can get an idea of how many folks were going to have here if you want to... talk during this segment? Okay, so if I can know one of the group, go ahead... would you like to be first up.

**Mim Updike**

Hi, my name is Mim Updike, Box 2247, Kenai and I'm also on APC Board at Kaleidoscope. I just wanted to address the "have" and "have not" issue that seems to be coming up... Kaleidoscope was first started as a magnet program; it is... we wanted a heterogeneous population; well they were given referrals by the teachers and that's how they got their students. Well since then the referrals have stopped and... if the parents could not act then the teachers are the ones who need to be the advocates for these students and that's what Kaleidoscope relies on. That's my opinion on that and also I think Kaleidoscope is a great program. I think it needs to continue to fulfill its charter and I think it would be best for all of it maybe if we do have our building and other schools can... keep the status quo also but... I think its time for us to have our place. Thank you.

**Tony Lewis:**

Hi... Tony Lewis at 613 Cedar. If I... had to stand in front of

you a year ago I would be... I'd be... a strong advocate for... having this little campus that... at that the Kaleidoscope having K-2... school K-2 at... at Sears and 3-5 at Mt. View and we have been discussing this issue for many years at Kaleidoscope and... been thinking about the future of it. A couple years ago worked on a 5-year plan and we discussed this very issue at that time. We had... we weren't all set in one way, we definitely had a lot of parents... there's... parents that were interested in trying to keep it because we like that that K-2... we like K-2 in this... in this community; we like (inaudible) choice and... I have been an advocate for that. It is, unfortunately though in the past year, it's been made very clear that we are not welcome as a charter school in the neighborhood schools and as a result I think everybody has done, actually to this point, has done a very good job of making sure that it hasn't floated over to the classroom. I think that might change though if this... if... it continues. It is... I mean I'll be blatant, it's... ugly at the... schools and I feel like as somewhat as a leader of Kaleidoscope... I feel like I have failed; I'll... tell you that honestly, I think that... I'm not sure what I could have done different but I still feel like I have failed; like that was our responsibility... it was all our responsibility to make this work. It hasn't worked... I don't know how it can work unless... people tell us that they really want this in their school. I don't know how it can work and I think that's unfortunate, I think its sad commentary but I think that's where we live right now. So, you have a... big choice I think, I mean... what... are you do for Kaleidoscope? You... and for... these schools. Do you change what Kenai has had for so many years in K-2 and 3-5 and combine them together... which is, you know been... you know uproots our community or do you try and keep us separate in a K-2, 3-5 and we are at two different schools or do you... do you essentially then allow Kaleidoscope or... is Kaleidoscope going build its own building? And I think that may be what... if you tell us that the only option is to... is to have split campuses, I honestly believe that... there's a lot of people, a lot of parents and a lot of support at Kaleidoscope for... building our own building and if what people have said is true, we get extra money from the State, part of that it should be towards a building and we have offered and tried to figure out a way to get that back to the School District because we realize what a great deal it is to have be in a... public school... but we do... I think have that money; we need to work on that but then what you... what do you end up with? You end up with... Sears which is in half empty building and Mt. View which is in a half empty building... is that good for schools... you know, can you support that fiscally, so... it's a very difficult issue... I... you know, obviously I don't think that Kaleidoscope should just go away; I think that we are... we have established ourselves; we have a lot of support in this community and will continue to

have that support. So I... hope you can find us a space, if not you know I understand too and we will... make it work and we just all need to move forward and that's why I hope by this time next year that everybody is moving forward, whatever direction it may be and we're putting this behind us and so we can all go back to doing things in the classroom. Thank you very much.

**Kristine Schmidt**

Kristine Schmidt, 513 Nash Avenue. I'd like to speak to the questions on page 1, can... on educational system where each student can reach his or her highest personal potential and are there too many transitions between our traditional schools and I believe there are. Our daughter arrived in our family in third grade and that very year was deprived of the opportunity to attend Sears Elementary, our neighborhood school because Sears went K through 2 that year; she had to be bussed across town for half an hour to an hour drive to Mt. View, where she was then in the youngest class; then she was in the first group that did not get to finish 6th grade at Mt. View but had to be the guinea pig class at Kenai Middle School. That was an extremely difficult transition for her starting with the early morning hours of... middle school and be... again being the youngest class at the school. I...support a neighborhood K through 6 school; while I understand that parents like the K through 2, 3 through 5, 6 through 8 model I believe that... every three year transitions are very hard on the kids and we should be focusing on the kids not what parents want. I also ask that you consider flipping the school day between the elementary and junior high, high school kids so that the older students whose body rhythms make them night owls can learn more effectively. The early morning hours are very hard on them. Thank you.

**Jean Kudyba**

My name is Jean Kudyba, I live at 200 Hamilton Court and I'm a fairly new member of the... Kenai Peninsula community here. I want to tell you how confusing it is for a new person to come into this community and not... and... feel like you've made the right decision. I have three children at Mt. View and... I put them in public school that I... I'm... guessing that this is the best thing for them; only later do I find out that there's other choices and to listen to Kaleidoscope it... sounds glowing to me; it's like why wouldn't want my child there, that sounds wonderful. Well, why aren't we offering that to... all children? Why aren't we just doing the best for the kids... though... the last one who spoke... talked about a K through 6 situation which sounds very appealing to me... my girls are in 5th grade, going to go into 6th next year, I'm not thrilled about them going into middle school situation, with a 6th, 7th and 8th grade setup; I don't think 6th graders belong with 7th and 8th graders, so that's all I really wanted to say; just my confusion (inaudible). Thank you.

**Garnet Sarkis**

Hi, I'm Garnet Sarkis, 110 Birch Street. Parent of two little boys at Sears Elementary and I... think we can make it work... I mean the... everything can adjust. I think that we all need to be supportive of one another. I think that this community and this city is phenomenal. I'm excited to be here. I'm excited to be a part of it. I'm very... anxious for the future. My boys are... as I've been told many a time by many people, numerous backgrounds that they're definitely all boy. I'm excited about the choices and the chances they have. I'm excited for the growth they're going to have. I think that... each stage in their life is very important. I think it's real important to have stepping stones because that's what life's all about; when we get out of elementary school, primary school, elementary school, junior high, high school...

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(Garnet Sarkis continued – side 2 of tape)... generations and I think we... I think we even start on some third your generations...going through Sears; it's amazing the growth in the community... effort that they all have... and you can see and talk to people there are in different stages of lives; I've talked to people that are... they're much older, like myself and... in the middle and the beginning and it's quite exciting to listen to all them and the different things that they look forward to; listen to little kids talk about the... second grade bicycle rodeo... my boys were beside themselves waiting for summer to come... spring to come so they could do that at Sears. I would hate to see... us lose some of the things that our children... boys seen and heard from other kids that they're looking forward to taken away. Why should... I think that... growth is great; it's scary, I'm uncomfortable sometimes with it but I think its okay but I don't think that we should have to lose something to (inaudible) and I would hope, in all your decisions and your thoughts and your... time that that becomes part of your... goal too is to realize that... this is a community that needs... vision and we need to keep the advance... we got the edge on a lot of... people and places, let's continue to do that. I want my boys to have that, I want them to be Kenai partners; I want that (inaudible) and I think it is possible. Thank you so much for your time.

**Cindy Thomas**

My name is Cindy Thomas and I live at 525 Robin Drive in Kenai and I promised myself I would not speak tonight (laughter) however, my conscious won't allow me to... leave tonight without putting the point across to you that... Sears and Kaleidoscope staff and personnel do not walk the hallways and spit on each other... I ... it makes me sick to think that would be the impression that the community has. One of the reputations of... Sears Elementary before... before Kaleidoscope started, was the family atmosphere that we have and the openness that we could share thoughts, feelings, and (inaudible) further education in that whether it

was contradictory to somebody else in the building; it didn't matter – it's an open environment to do that and today it still is. I will say that there is tension but there is not a day where I could not walk down the hallway and smile at the people or the other staff members. I currently work with Sears staff... and I... don't hold back my smile from Kaleidoscope staff (inaudible) they're in my building and I do not want you to leave tonight with the impression that we act that way; it's unprofessional and it... has no place in any building or anywhere.

**Emma McMillan**

My name is Emma McMillan and I came here with no intention to speak whatsoever but I am a parent of a kindergartner at Kaleidoscope and I thought I was making a great decision to send my child to Kaleidoscope and I too... like everyone saw the ad on TV and thought, "Woo, what is this? Hmm, I need to investigate" and I did and I thought I made the best decision for my kindergartner and I don't want to point fingers but when I just heard this woman say, do away with Kaleidoscope and integrate her back into a... school here in Kenai... I live in Soldotna so what do I do with my kindergartner now that she's fostered these relationships in Kenai? So, I guess I'm here to acquire a lot more knowledge and... I guess figure out what happened in the years prior because I... second Cindy's opinions and I have to give my "hats off" to Mr. Cook and Mr. Wykis just because when I walk through that front door every morning, I don't feel that... I feel like me and my daughter are welcome in that building... and I'm just scared... to know that that might go away and... I don't know what the answer is but I'm anxious to... see how it all turns out. Thank you.

**Megan O'Neill**

My name is Megan O'Neill, (inaudible)... I'd just have a few points, first of all I was... I knew a lot of the people at the Sears staff when initially they began... a charter school idea and I believe that all of those people's... hearts were in the right place. What they wanted to do was actually try to... increase the enrollment...of Sears and expand the programming and develop a lot of concepts that were already happening at Sears. The whole idea of multi-age, the arts, all of that really already existed in many forms at Sears. The problem happened when actually the charter school exists because, again, my whole theory about... in our case, social possibly even racial segregation. Charter schools have been around for a while and if you look on the internet and I did a bunch of studies for the last several years, it's not unique; segregation is not unique to Kenai charter schools. If you look throughout Arizona, California, North Carolina, there is social and racial segregation everywhere; it may be that the charter schools are... predominantly black and lower income, or they might be predominantly white and higher but the bottom line is, unfortunately, charter schools promote

segregation... and that's what my biggest concern was. Public funded schools, which Kaleidoscope and Aurora Borealis should not be allowed to... intensify economic and... social segregation; they have. They didn't mean to but they have... so we have two classes of students... I believe therefore... with the District suffering from declining enrollment, we should... consolidate rather than expand programs. We do have an open school policy so the kids could still go to Sears. Therefore, to provide the best education for all students in Kenai I recommend the schools should begin reintegrating the teacher, staff and classes at Kaleidoscope back into Sears and Mt. View beginning next fall and complete integration by the fall of 2008. Thank you.

**Gwen Johnson:**

Hello, I'm Gwen Johnson. I live at 1523 Stellar Drive in Kenai. Once again, I wasn't planning on speaking here; I'll speak in other places but usually not in a public forum. I've had the unique opportunity of having my daughter go through the Kenai School District; she graduated this spring and my son started his educational system at Redoubt Elementary because of the kindergarten and then transferred to Kaleidoscope for a couple years and then this year he's at Redoubt so I don't know how many parents have had that opportunity of kids going back and forth so I feel that I can speak on... the professionalism at Sears and Kaleidoscope is outstanding. I sensed nothing last year or the year prior with the combination of the staffs. I had talked to a lot of the teachers that when the program at Kaleidoscope started, it was to help meet a unique funding need at that particular building. I am discouraged to hear tonight about the tensions that are existing at the schools amongst the staff. As a parent I am sure these teachers continue to act in a professional mannerism I've talked with Mr. Wykis; he said if I ever hear a parent saying... you know something derogatory please send them to me and I will hold my promise to that as I would to Mr. Dawson or other... Mr. Cook. I would like to see the current building status the way it is, K through 2, 3 through 5 and 6 through 8. I don't know how to address the problems that... we're hearing about this evening. I don't know if that should be a School District issue or... school board issue or if that should be a... administrative issues that need to be worked out in each building. You know my son is offered some unique opportunities and... for that I am blessed. Thank you.

**Marty Zoda**

Hi, my name is Marty Zoda, 1107 2nd Avenue, Kenai. I've had a student educated by the school over at K-Beach. It's not the greatest atmosphere for a kindergartener. My kid as this lady was saying, did have trouble with elementary students (inaudible) pushing in the hallways. That's not great for little kids so we moved to Kenai to get them out of

that atmosphere; so they could be in a primary, then a secondary to the middle school. Now, all of a sudden it's wanting to be combined so that the charter school would have Sears Elementary. I'm not against the charter school but... why should the younger students... per se, have to be... crammed into one school when it's not a good atmosphere for small children. I think part of a school where... they take Nikiski Elementary and then they opened North Star... they split us up. When I started my 7<sup>th</sup> grade year in high school, or junior high, that's when Nikiski High School opened up. There's a lot of students that were picked up and moved. It's not fair to people to be having to be moved from school to school when you lose your contacts with your friends and you've gotta think besides academically you have to think about how these students are to develop socially... and that's one of the big things. Thank you.

**Joe Arness:**

(inaudible)

**Tina Stamer:**

Hi, my name is Celestina "Tina" Stamer. I work for the School District. I work in the schools so I see a lot, hear a lot... feel a lot and I'd like to just... (inaudible) on staff... I feel that there's (inaudible) everybody (inaudible) and I'm (inaudible) kids too... we could learn a lot to quote... "we could learn a lot from crayons, some are sharp... some are pretty but some are dull... sometimes have weird names and all are different colors but they all have to live in the same box."

**Marnie Jensen:**

My name is Marnie Jensen, 2905 Schooner Circle. I too grew up here, went to Sears, Kenai Elementary, Kenai Junior High, Kenai High School, graduated. I love Sears; we started out 2 kids... in Sears; it was a wonderful experience. I would not change that for the world. Kaleidoscope started, I was encouraged to enroll my kids in Kaleidoscope because of the collaboration, some of the funding, some of the... arts and sciences collaboration with Sears; so I did that. Now I am totally thrilled, my kids love it! I... they love getting up in the morning, they love going to school, not saying... if they did K-2 at Sears they wouldn't love it just as much but we do love the program, they are thriving and I just... I... too... now that I've been in the schools a few years feel... that so much transition... is a big thing, it was hard for me... not to say... it may not be hard for my kids but it's hard for me and just... to see them be able to be in one spot, K through 6, I think it's fabulous... you know when I... was... first starting out in kindergarten it was... what do we do there? So many things to do, what do we do? Do we do a K through 6 that... you know, K-Beach and drive... do we do Sears and then have to switch to Mt. View and... so that's always been my mind... but now that we're at Kaleidoscope... I mean, we wouldn't change.... I hope that you will seriously consider somehow to

give us space that we can grow... I don't want to see anyone else hurt too, I know that... it's a tough decision, it's... hard for everybody but... I... for me and my family and my kiddos I just really would love to be able to grow with Kaleidoscope so thank you for your time.

**Joe Arness:**

Going twice.

**Brian Heath**

(inaudible) How many people out here can... (inaudible). How many people out of there are members of the PTA? Good... thanks... how many people volunteer at your kids libraries? Very good, I want to take... encourage everybody to take all your energy... from this meeting and do something really positive for your kid's school, whatever school they're in. Go out, volunteer in your kid's classroom, volunteer at the community library... get in there and get... do something... do something good, do some positive... we got some positive change that's some good investment in this community; that's awesome. I'm glad to see that everybody's out here because every person in here is concerned about your kid's education and that is... that's a good thing. The next thing... maybe not so popular here... my kids go to Kaleidoscope, just happens to be the school that I choose that works best for my kids, they love it. If that wasn't an option for them we'd find something else, maybe we would be in Soldotna, maybe we'd be... home school, who knows; it doesn't matter because I know that in 10 years I'm going to have... two of my kids are going to be in college... I want to give them the best opportunity whatever... if I gotta to go to the dark side of the moon to get the best education... so they can get into a good college and get a good education, get a good start on life, that's where I'm at... I'll do anything and I know most of you would do the same thing... but unfortunately I know that I got to give my kids a good college education cause they're going to go to college and they are going to do what 80% of the kids... that graduated from the schools on this Peninsula, they will leave and they will never come back here and I truly think that's unfortunate cause I think we need to do... everything we can right now to make this... an incredible place that kids actually... want to graduate from school and have jobs and live in this community because right now... we're not doing that because I know that most of the people that I graduated with they're gone, they're living in Minnesota they're living in, excuse me, Arizona, they live somewhere else because people have made the hard, tough decisions to make this a place that's... awesome and I want to encourage everybody to make those hard decisions; make those tough... unpopular decisions and try harder and make this... place awesome.

**Joe Arness:**

One more.

**Dena Cunningham**

(Inaudible) My name is Dena Cunningham. I live at 37100 Angler Drive, Kenai. Good evening school board members, Dr. Peterson, and District staff, thank you for providing the opportunity for the Kenai community to come and share our ideas and concerns with you. The decision before you regarding space allocation for Kenai area schools is a very difficult one. I'm sure you have and will continue to read and have many opinions as to the best solution for all involved. Regardless of what you decide tonight, tomorrow, or months from now with respect to the allocation issue, I believe there is a deeper rooted problem that needs to be addressed, it is that issue which I would like to address. Our community is hurting. Kenai is struggling with changes and challenges that have arisen from the introduction of charter schools to our community. I have watched and listened over the years and there has been a definite shift from a close, tight-knit community to one that is fragmented and at odds with each other. For example, I have employees who come to work so stressed out about where to send their child to school. I hear teachers from one school bad-mouthing teachers from another school. I have spoken to a substitute teacher that doesn't want to sub at Sears anymore because of the tension and hostile atmosphere that she feels between Sears and Kaleidoscope staff. I hear kids blame things that have gone wrong on, quote, "those charter school kids". I have had a child from Aurora Borealis tell me and my children that he or she goes to the "smart school"; that his or her school is so much more advanced than traditional public schools and that his or her class won't allow the "dumb kids" from another schools to go there. I have even spoken with local business owners who say, "I won't donate to a charter school". Problems and concerns have come up and been left to fester with no real solutions. I'm asking you, the school board, to acknowledge these very real problems that are dividing the community of Kenai. Something has to be done to correct the inaccurate information, the hurt feelings and the overwhelming sense of "it is them against us" and help Kenai heal. We cannot go back to before there were charter schools but we can work to fix what is not working and move forward to strengthen our schools... and rebuild stronger educational system that benefits all students. The ball is in your court. Please do not continue to ignore the problem and hope that it fixes itself, it will not, and ultimately not only our children but our whole community will pay the price. Thank you.

**Chris Holmes**

I just coming up really quick... I didn't plan on talking again but... it's a big joke around our school that I live in a little bubble (laughter) and that... I just seem to think we can all make it work and we can exist in... that no solution is going to be come to easily but... at some point the decision is going to be made and everybody is going to move on and we're all

going to get together. I'm here to tell you that... I just want tonight to end on a more positive note than that and I've not heard that stuff... and... maybe some of those things exist but I can tell you that... even knowing that there's the possibility that Sears may end up at Mt. View or Mt. View may end up at Sears or Kaleidoscope, may have to find their own building, all those things considered, we all get along. There are tough days and it is not always easy... but everybody in that school, kids, teachers, parents, put a very conscious effort into making it work and we're all here tonight because we want it to work for everyone... we know the decisions aren't going to be easy but we know it's not personal and we know everybody just is out for the best interest of their children... and that's what we're all here for so rather than end on a bad note I think we should all end on a really positive note and say good job for everybody being here tonight just... good luck with your decisions, we know it can't be easy. Thank you very much.

**Joe Arness;**

(Inaudible) I don't remember...did you speak once in this half? You spoke in the first half? Okay.

**Anita Heath**

My name is Anita Heath and have 3 children in Kaleidoscope... I just had a couple points I wanted to make. I think my first point is that... and correct me if I'm wrong, every child that applied to go to Kaleidoscope Charter School was accepted, we actually... made lots of decisions to try to make sure that that was the case. We... embrace all children and so I don't want anybody here thinking that... we pick and choose because we don't and... my children... I liked the idea of Kaleidoscope because of what the education system is based on, but I did have a kindergartener that went to Sears last year and we had an awesome experience at Sears and actually the only reason she went to Sears is because the other two were at Kaleidoscope and I was thrilled with the outcome of both schools and I felt like that all three of my children got what they needed and had excellent teachers. We... live in Soldotna but we choose to drive our children to Kenai because of the choices we have here for our children's education and... I'm here just to advocate for choices for parents and I know for some people... maybe they don't feel like people should have so many choices and maybe some people are overwhelmed by all the choices but... from my standpoint I am so happy to have choices because each of my children are individual and as are all children and I feel just... I just feel great every day knowing that I can make the best choice for each of my children and I just hope that maybe we can do something to continue to allow parents to have many choices and do it in a... the best way possible whatever they can (inaudible).

**Joe Arness**

So, you know I'm going to editorialize for just a minute. Dr.

Peterson's heart is racing real hard right now... but... I have to say this, I'm a member of the community alright... I used to be affiliated with these folks but I'm not... I used to have kids in the school system but I don't... used to go to school in these walls, I used to go to school in all these schools back in... that's not true because Sterling Sears didn't even know where Kenai was when I would have been in that school; that's old news. I've read the packet, I've read all this information, I sat and I've listened to you folks this evening and... the way I'll close this meeting out is going to contradict what I'm about to say. The solution of this problem is sitting in this room and it's not on this stage folks... you are the heart and soul of the educational community in Kenai. You can solve this. I'm... absolutely convinced after I've listened to you, you can solve it. You don't have to go to the Board and a group of administrators and ask them to referee this conversation, you can make your own recommendations and having sat on this Board and dealt with this administration for many years, my sense is that you could come to something that looked like a logical, legal, reasonable... circumstances that these folks would probably be happy because then they wouldn't have to make, quote "a good choice". The solution is sitting right in here and I would encourage you to take the next month to talk amongst yourselves, talk to your agencies and... your site councils, talk amongst your school administrators and say, "what can we do, what can we suggest, can we work this out". Now, it's back to the script... (inaudible). I want to thank you all for coming tonight. I'm impressed by the turnout and I'm impressed that you folks cared enough to monitor and... follow along with what's going on in this conversation. Something is going to happen... everyone knows that, it's a question of what's that going to be? The information has now been gathered, it will be compiled, it will be... taken to a worksession of the Board where the Board will have the opportunity to sort of kick these ideas around, talk about the alternatives and then a... formal recommendation will be made, certainly that would find it's way to the newspapers and... assuming that you didn't hear what I said, these folks up here will decide what education is going to look like in Kenai... but, I'm heartened by the fact that you're all here and by the things and the thoughtful presentations that you made tonight and I thank you all for coming. Have a good evening.