

# **Seward Schools Site-Based Council Meetings Minutes**

**October 10, 2013 6:30 PM**

## **Seward High School, Seward Middle School, Seward Elementary School**

**Present:** Dr. Steve Atwater, Raylynn Zweifel, Stephanie Cronin, Myla Liljemark, Jason Bickling, David Kingsland, Trevan Walker, Mica Vanbuskirk, Emily Brockman, Amy Hankins, Maya Moriarty, Reuben Miranda, Lynn Hohl, Heather McQuarry, Teri Mcknight, Celeste Elhard, Mike Moriarty, Katy Anne Scrivo, Robert Barnwell

**Meeting called to order: 6:35**

**Welcome:** Welcome to everyone present!

**Minutes:** Approved without changes

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

**Public comments:** none

**Special Guest:**

- Dr. Steve Atwater is here tonight to provide Site Council Training at 7:00pm.

**Middle School Student Report:** none

**High School Student Report:** Given by Emily Brockman

- Cross-country ended. Participants had a great time running at state. Matt Moore finished 4<sup>th</sup> in state. Boys' team received an award for having the highest academic average.
- Swimming and volleyball in full swing. There is a swim meet this weekend. Volleyball Regions will be held here in Seward Nov. 8-9.
- There are 19 members in Drama, Debate, and Forensics in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year running. Ms. Augusta Lind is the coach.
- National Ocean Science Bowl (NOSB) is starting up. Ms. Shoshannah Brasher is coaching this year.
- Football season ended. There were 22 kids who played this season. Seward played well this year and the team is building confidence. There were zero concussions for the season.

## **Old Business:**

### **City of Seward Construction Update**

**RE: Construction happening across the road from the elementary school.** Mica Van Buskirk mentioned there is a letter to the city manager from John Foutz included in the packet along with the agenda this evening. The driveway is going in directly across from the elementary school. They have to have that as an entrance but not all traffic has to enter/exit at that driveway. They are looking into alternative routes that could be used during an emergency at the elementary school. Perhaps a police officer could be assigned to that area during heavy traffic. Mica Van Buskirk is planning to talk to Sue McClure (Borough Assembly) to check on borough assistance regarding this issue.

## **New Business:**

### **By-Law Review**

The Site Council By-Law review is not quite ready to present to the board yet. It was suggested that a committee be formed and a work session held to review By Laws outside of the meeting time. It was suggested that principals be removed as voting members because site council is an advisory board to said principals. It was suggested that perhaps Roberts Rules should be implemented during meetings.

### **Site Council Nominations**

Site council applications for membership are available. Site Council would like more parental involvement especially at the middle and high school level. One application was received from a middle school parent. Board members asked principals to nominate prospective parents.

### **Middle School Configuration Review: Projected Enrollments**

Tabled until after Dr. Atwater's presentation

### **Reports from Administrator's, School Board Rep & PTA Rep**

#### ***Administrator Reports***

David Kingsland (Seward Elementary School)

- There were over 100 attendees this morning at the 2<sup>nd</sup> early morning reading program of the year.
- Native Youth Olympics, Boys and Girls club, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts have started.

- The school newsletter is being used to stress the importance of attendance. The school will hold school assemblies to recognize good attendance.
- Mind-a-Mazes, coached by Augusta Lind, will hold a school wide demonstration to show the student's projects. Teams compete in Soldotna this weekend.
- October 18<sup>th</sup> is an inservice day and the end of the first quarter. There will be no school.
- Oct 24-25 no school due to parent teacher conferences.
- Seward Elementary was rated a 4 star (out of 5) school by ASPI (Alaska Schools Performance Index). Schools rated below 4 stars need to develop a plan of improvement.

#### Jason Bickling (Seward Middle School)

- On September 20 a Representative from Leggo Robotics came to Seward Middle School to train teachers and parents on building and programming the robots.
- Steve Fink was hired as the Seward Middle School's Leggo Robotics instructor.
- Picture retakes are Monday
- We held the drama production Alice in Wonderland today. Elementary students attended the production.
- Soccer and cross-country just ended. Ruby Lindquist was borough champion in cross-country. The boy's team scored a goal in a soccer game.
- Basketball begins Monday and will be coached by Jenny Regis and Curtis Berry
- Mind-a-Mazes teams compete this weekend in Soldotna.
- Quest students will perform a murder mystery forensics investigation to entertain parents during parent teacher conferences in hopes to increase attendance. The school will schedule parents and send home reminders in a letter, and phone call with the intention of communicating with parents in multiple ways.
- The school could use more volunteers to manage library.

#### Treva Walker (Seward High School)

- The first annual Sea Hawk Color Run (replacing the Hawk Walk) was an overwhelming success with just over 200 runners participating. The school raised \$13,600. It was really fun. A huge thanks to committee and sponsors. We hope to attract more runners next year
- Emily Brockman, as a student council member, helped host a successful KPBSD borough student council conference which was held locally. Approximately 100 kids from the district attended. It was a busy week for student council as the conference coincided with spirit week and homecoming. Kudos to Chad Hinders the student council advisor, student council president Robin McKnight, and the entire student council. The junior class won best float in the homecoming parade. The football game was against Barrow High School.

- Wrestling began on Monday. There are 21 students participating. Coaches are Ronn Hemstock and Chad Hinders.
- The next eligibility check is the Monday after October 18<sup>th</sup> which is the end of the first quarter.
- This is an accreditation year for Seward High and we are looking for parent input. There will be a bank of computers available for parents to complete the surveys during parent-teacher conferences. Conferences will be scheduled for all freshmen. There will be three conference sessions on Thursday October 24<sup>th</sup> to accommodate parent work schedules: 8-11, 12-3, and 4-8.
- We are looking for a cheerleading coach.
- PTA garage sale will be held on October 26<sup>th</sup>. Donations welcome.
- October 30<sup>th</sup> is our next early release day. The previous high school collaboration was a success and we look forward to continuing the process

Question for David Kingsland: Are there any changes in the elementary FTE's?

Response from Mr. Kingsland: We just found out we are adding a 0.5 secretary, 0.5 custodian, and a Title I tutor targeting 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders.

### **Superintendent Dr. Steve Atwater's Site Council Training**

#### ***Presentation-***

Fiscal Year 2014 School Board Goals include:

- Systematically go through the school district budget and make recommendations on how to best reduce it.
- Design and implement an objective process to gather comparable student data across the country and emulate those districts that are most successful.
- Streamline contract negotiations (last round of negotiations took 15 months)

Strategic 5 Year Plan (adopted September 2012) has 3 focus areas:

- Academic Success
- Organizational Excellence
- Community and Family

Individual school improvement plans are tied to goals within the strategic plan

KPBSD is now a member of APQC (American Production and Quality Center). They will examine our current practices and help us become more efficient in

- Workers compensation
- Budgeting

- Instruction and technology integration

We are striving to make KPBSD a highly reliable organization

- Variance by teacher, school, principal should not affect student learning
- Balance district standardization
  - Freedom for schools to be innovative in “how” curriculum is taught
  - No choice in “what” is taught

ASPI scores across the district

- Majority of schools are 4-5 star rating
- KPBSD performed better than the other large districts in Alaska
- Boys in our district consistently underperform in writing when compared to girls (math scores are statistically the same for boys and girls). What can we do differently to close the gap?
- Graduation rate is greater than 80% which is an improvement

KPBSD Finances

- We are on an unsustainable fiscal path due to
  - Base student allocation flat for past 3 years
  - Increase in health care costs
  - Falling enrollment
- What we can do
  - Attend the budget meeting on November 7 to give public input on where to reduce at least \$1.24 million of current expenditures for FY15
  - Be critical of what is happening in our schools
  - Demand our children receive the best possible education we can afford
  - Communicate our positive results

State News

- New standards in place—testing on these standards begins in 2015
- New evaluations for teachers that include student learning data –begins 2016
- AYP replaced by ASPI
- Alaska received a state waiver from Federal NCLB

Federal News

- Adoption of Common Core
- States seeing significant drops in scores on new, more rigorous tests
- Sequestration

### *Site Council Training*

- Be efficient
- Have an outcome based agenda and minutes
- Create SMART goals
- Understand the role of Site council
  - Members represent more than self
  - Goals and agenda development
  - Help shape school culture
  - Collaboration
  - Designate representative for budget process
  - Be a voice for whole school

### *Discussion (Q&A with Dr. Atwater)*

Q: Do you think the focus on testing has hurt the development of arts in school which is necessary for development of the whole child?

A: We need to think outside the box. We need teachers across the disciplines to be teaching literacy which can free up time implement the arts.

Q: Does the new testing require a significant piece of the budget?

A: No, other than professional development to help teachers learn how to improve instruction.

Q: I am concerned about data mining. Are questions regarding family income, religious affiliations, etc. being mined from our kids? I know the P20 data base is shared with the government.

A: The purpose of the test is to determine proficiency of the students. The personal data has been collected in other ways (free and reduced lunch). The data is not shared.

Q: With common core, testing is supposed to take a dip. Will teachers be dinged for this on their evaluation?

A: Evaluation will be based on growth and not a set bar.

## **Middle School Configuration Review: Projected Enrollments**

Jason Bickling on next years expected enrollment at Seward Middle School-

- We are currently in a dip in enrollment
  - 100 kids when Mr. Bickling came to Seward now down to 81
  - If 6<sup>th</sup> graders do not move up to middle school, next year
    - Seward Middle School enrollment expected to be 74
    - Would result in 4 FTE
    - Will not be able to offer any electives
    - Will not be able to field athletic teams
- Community Input
  - In a community survey, 73% of responders elected to move the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the middle school
  - Two Site-Based Council votes showed support for moving 6<sup>th</sup> grade up
  - Site-Based Council and PTA wrote a letter to school board to recommend the move
- Expectations if 6<sup>th</sup> grade moves up to Seward Middle
  - Enrollment estimate is 118
  - 7.5 FTE (when enrollment surpasses 100 students FTE equation changes)
  - Increased course offerings (electives)
  - Increased athletic opportunities

We want our kids to have a consistent K-12 education in Seward. Kids at the middle school need to busy, active, and explore in order to figure out who they are.

David Kingsland on next year's enrollment at Seward Elementary School-

- The number of kindergarteners has increased in the last couple of years so even if the 6<sup>th</sup> grade moves up to the middle school the number of specialists (library, PE, music) will remain the same

### **Small school funding formula**

Lynn Hohl stated that the small school funding formula does not appear to be working. We should be focusing our efforts on changing this formula. Small schools are struggling to offer electives like music. Hopefully the new small school funding formula will level the FTE. Ms. Hohl commented that she is not in favor of this move and there are other configurations that may work better.

Jason Bickling stated that even if the funding formula is changed we still will not be able to field athletic teams, band, etc. It will not solve all of our problems or provide students with the

greatest possible opportunities. Moving the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the middle school would provide more opportunity.

Q: What is the negative of this transition?

A: Mica Van Buskirk responded that there is concern regarding the exposure younger kids will have to older kids. Data shows that student performance drops when they transition to a new school.

Maya Moriarty stated that we (Site-Based Council) have been discussing this issue for an entire year. We held two votes that were in favor of the transition and sent our recommendation to Dr. Atwater and the board. The discussion on this issue should be over. The decision has already been made.

Alan Nickell agreed that Site-Based Council should no longer be discussing this.

Robert Barnwell commented that as a community we are still sifting through this. We can at least discuss it. There is more nurturing at the elementary school but Seward Middle is a great school and I think this will work. I respect the administrator's decision in this.

Mike Moriarty commented that we already put out a survey to the community and 73% were in favor of the move. There were two site council votes in favor of it. PTA voted in favor of the move. There may be some who disagree with the decision but the voice of the public has been heard and should be listened to. It's time to move on.

Q: What is the next step?

A: (Dr. Atwater responded) I make a recommendation to the board and the board votes on it. We want this vote to take place sooner than later so schools can plan for it.

David Kingsland commented that the School Board charged us to look at the issue again now that we have enrollment numbers.

Mike Moriarty commented that we need to pay attention because the silent majority should not be outweighed by the vocal minority.

Dr. Steve Atwater commented that the School Board says there is enough opposition to bring the issue back to the table.

Katy Scrivo commented that she does not understand the resistance. I work with the kids who will be affected by this and they want to move.

## **School Board Report**

Lynn Hohl (School Board member)



- I was re-elected as a board member
- We are hoping to hold a meeting to establish a youth court in Seward –this came from the Seaview Community Center
- Representative Paul Seaton is looking for schools that are willing to commit to the 1-1 initiative. This initiative would provide every student with an iPod. There needs to be buy- in from the entire staff for it to work.
- The next board meeting is on Monday
  - Nikolivisk is adding a debate, drama, and forensics team
  - Trevan Walker is the new vice president of KPSAA

### **Closing Comments**

Maya Moriarty commented that the PTA garage sale is on November 2. Donations are welcome and can be dropped off Friday from 2-3 at the back entrance. Volunteers wanted (volunteers get first dibs!) Donations can also be dropped at Hertz Rental Car.

Imagination Library in October. If you know of any families with little ones tell them about it.

Land Trust Meetings are held at Lydia Peterson's office.

Seward Middle School is looking for donations of fishing gear for a fund raiser.

Treva Walker mentioned that the King-Of-The-Mountain wrestling tournament will be held at Seward High School on October 25-26

Mica Van Buskirk asked if it is ok to add board members email addresses to the Site-Based Council newsletter. The members responded that the school email is ok to add. Mica requested recommendations for the newsletter content.

### **Council Remarks**

Next meeting will be held on November 14.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:10PM**