



Cooper Landing School Parent Advisory Committee

19030 Bean Creek Road • Cooper Landing, Alaska 99572-9704 • (907) 595-1244

Cooper Landing School PAC/Site Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

The mission of Cooper Landing School is to provide a positive learning atmosphere, placing the highest emphasis on academic achievement and service to the community, while maintaining a balance between school, family and community activities. This will be accomplished by meaningful communication and collaboration to utilize all available talents and resources.

Meeting called to order at 12:33pm

Roll Call

Susanna LaRock, Heather Harrison, Virginia Morgan, Heather Pearson, Rachel Sullivan, Tommy Gossard, Doug Hayman, Jessica Larsen, Laura Johnson

Approval of Agenda

Virginia moved to approve the agenda as written, Susanna seconded. All in favor.

Review and Approval of Minutes

No action items needed further action.

Virginia moved to approve the minutes as written. Susanna seconded. All in favor.

Addition of New Members

No non-members who were present wanted to be added as members.

District Budget Update

Pegge Erkeneff & Tim Vlasak of the school district addressed us by Skype regarding the district budget situation. They handed out printed flyers (PDF attached to minutes) with information.

In sum, the district has made \$7.9 million in reductions over the four several years, mostly avoiding cuts to classrooms. The district has also used about \$4 million from its savings funds in that time, so in reality the district has had about \$12 million less in funding in the past four years than where it started.

Projecting the budget for next school year, if we receive flat funding from both the state and borough we will have a \$3.3 million deficit, which means we will have to cut into classrooms. We can use another \$1.3 million from savings funds, but we will still have a \$2 million deficit. Alternatively, if the borough funds to the cap (max allowable funding), we would end up not having to make classroom reductions. The School Board has approved the district budget, and is asking the borough for max funding. (If we don't ask for max funding up front when transferring the budget to the borough, we can't ask for more later.) Currently, the borough is only talking about flat funding, not saying anything about max funding. The state budget is not final yet. The assembly has to set the funding floor (minimum funding) at one of the next two assembly meetings.

Regardless of how the funding goes forward, we don't expect any teacher allocation changes for Cooper Landing School. The district has tried for many years to hold small schools harmless. There is only so much efficiency you can do in a small school before you become ineffective, unlike a large school.

Having a budget deficit is a good thing in many ways, because it forces efficiency, but at some point cuts can go so deep they cause ineffectiveness instead of efficiency. We don't want to get to that point. Our district does really well in the state. When we get data that compares districts across Alaska, we do really well. But at some point if we keep cutting, we may lose that edge.

At assembly meetings, the borough doesn't want to hear from educators and district employees, but from parents and students. Even if you don't feel comfortable advocating, asking for a reliable funding stream and an earlier announcement of funding levels would be the things worth getting out of your comfort zone to advocate for. When the announcement of our funding levels is pushed back to May we lose good teachers who want a guarantee of a job next school year much before that. We are still respected across the state as a good place to work, but the teacher pool across the nation is declining, so the sooner we know, the sooner we can issue contracts, not wait to see if we have to cut.

Our assembly member is Kenn Carpenter from Seward. No one in the meeting knows where he stands on this, but it is worthwhile to ask him where he stands on the issue of school funding, and the use of the land trust reserve for education funding (it is specifically tied to the use of the land trust reserve). Others have stood up for small schools in the past, now may be our time to return the favor by being vocal for larger schools, even when the budget issues aren't projected to affect Cooper Landing School. It is helpful to share stories about our school and our district, sharing how it matters. Parents and schools need to have a voice in these budget issues, putting money where it matters most.

Pegge and Tim thanked us for what we do for our school as they signed off.

Virginia recommended being a part of Great Alaska Schools, which is an organized effort to advocate on the state level, because so much hinges on the state budget, which does not provide consistent and timely funding for schools either. The borough can't do it unless the state does it, too. One can sign up for email updates, etc, through Great Alaska Schools.

AI: Heather will draft a letter with Jessica's help, on behalf of the Site Council, to Kenn Carpenter, regarding asking the assembly for reliable school funding and an early announcement of funding levels.

Here is Kenn Carpenter's contact information for any parents who want to contact him personally: Kenn Carpenter, P.O. Box 441, Seward, Alaska 99664, Ph: 907-350-5021, Fax: 714-2388, Email: kcarpenter@kpb.us

Principal's Report

Classified evaluations are complete. Mr. Gossard is certified, his evaluation is done differently. Mr. Hayman explained a bit about how they set evaluation goals at the beginning of the year. His evaluation is not quite done.

Healy School students are going to spend a night at our school on their return from a Homer field trip, on May 6.

The NAEP test data on student performance was recently released. On a state level, only 24% of Alaskan students met or exceeded certain measures in Language Arts & Math. This ranks Alaska at 49th out of 50 states. The data set is not granular enough to get district-specific information, but if it were more granular, KPBSD student data would probably rank us around the 24th in the nation. Regardless of our school district being better than average in the state, this data is not to be ignored. We have a lot of work to do.

Ms. Emilie is not returning next year – she has submitted her resignation. Mr. Hayman will be going through the process to hire for her position, hopefully he can get it posted soon, early in May, but will have to wait until August otherwise. Regardless, the new aide will be hired before school starts in August. He will invite other staff members and some PAC members to participate in interviews, but the final decision of the new hire is his. He feels very strongly about getting the best people. Mr. Hayman shared that he, in hiring at Tustumena Elementary, is much more capable of getting the best teachers in open positions when he can fill the position many months in advance – then he can get the best of the best candidates. Good candidates have their act together, and they want to have a new job lined up in advance, not at the last minute. (The soon-to-be-posted aide job qualifies for health insurance. Although it does not earn enough to be primary income for a household, it is a decent supporting household wage, with benefits.)

Teacher's Report

Do we want yearbooks this year? Cost is about \$12.50 each. Mr. Hayman's wife assembles them. Although we are not obligated to a certain number, we will impose a target of 10 in order to make the publication work worth it. **AI:** Susanna will put out an email today, asking for purchase commitments by Friday. The order has to be in around May 1.

April 20: no school

April 23-27: The performing artist Brian Hutton will be working with the students. He does performance, miming, projection of voice, theatrical skills. He has a good background with creating positive experiences, works with the students on personal development. He will be staying at Drifter's Lodge. (Thank you Drifter's Lodge!) **AI:** We are looking for dinner hosting or delivery to him on Tuesday and Thursday (Rachel Sullivan signed up for Monday, Gossard/Morgan family has Wednesday). The school will provide breakfast for him, and sandwich stuff for lunch. The students will do an end-of-week performance on the 27th. Do we want to make a big luncheon out of it? (No decision voiced about luncheon, perhaps implied agreement....)

May 2: Kindergarten orientation

May 4: Science fair at Moose Pass. 10 am arrival. Order hot lunch available. Depart at 1:30. Will be looking for judges among the attending parents.

May 7-11: Swimming at Seward each day. Looking for drivers. Mr. Gossard can take 7, need seats for 6 more each day. Lessons will start at 1, so the plan is to leave at 11:45 after an early lunch, have time to change and be in the pool by 1pm. If the weather is nice, they may leave earlier and eat lunch at the playground.

May 21: Kindergarten Graduation and Written & Illustrated Author's Tea at 1:30

May 23: End of school picnic at Hope School, we are in charge of side dishes

Treasurer's Report

\$5893.02 is current balance, reflects \$220 received from families for ski payments, still waiting on \$40 to be paid for skiing. Susanna is following up on those delinquent funds.

Snail-a-thon

The local UPS driver contacted Mr. Hayman about sponsoring the Equinox Run again, but not by name. Mr. Hayman thought they might have been referring to the Snail-a-Thon, so may have miscommunicated about the event. Regardless, the point is that the driver found sponsoring a Cooper Landing School event in the past to be rewarding and wants to do so again. **AI:** We need to clarify with the driver that the Equinox Run is not happening, but there may be other sponsorship opportunities, like the Snail-a-Thon, they can help with. (Not sure who might have this AI – who has contact info for this person?)

Regarding location of Snail-a-Thon, we did something different last year due to construction and to commemorate the new multi-use path. The question is, do we want to do the same this year, go back to the original Waikiki Beach location, or do some other modified version?

The most popular option proposed was to start at the Baptist Church, go to Senior Housing, and return to the Baptist Church. Using the Baptist Church facilities was so nice last year, with the covered picnic shelter, tables and outhouses already set up, no need to shuttle food, everything clean already, trash cans on site, etc. Doing just an out and back is simple, comes to 4 miles when going to Senior Housing.

One of the hard parts of using the new paved path is the inappropriateness of having bikers and walkers/runners sharing the path at the same time due to safety concerns, because of the out-and-back nature of the event on the narrow paved path. The kids love to bike and this really takes the heart out of it for them.

In discussion, we decided that a staggered start alleviates most of the shared use problem, letting bikers go first by a few minutes. By the time the bikers are returning on the second half, the walkers have spread out considerably, and they are passing each other face-to-face instead of any bikers coming from behind. This seemed to assuage concerns, so a staggered start seems to be the accepted solution.

On the same day as Snail-a-Thon, May 19, CLES is doing a big open house from 12-4. If we do it on the multi-use trail again, ending at the Baptist Church, everyone is in the same area, the end of the Snail-a-Thon is close to the CLES hall, and we thus contribute to each other's events instead of competing. Perhaps we can even coordinate with CLES to do a larger event with them? There is great potential for it

all working together well. (After some investigation, we discovered that Carrie Williams is in charge of the CLES event.)

AI: Heather will contact the church about using their facilities again. Susanna will sign up mile checkers again. Virginia can help that day, but won't be available beforehand. A lot of the assignments and workload will depend on what CLES wants to do/their willingness to coordinate and share events. Heather will talk to Carrie about logistics of coordinating together and what might need to be done by the PAC – she will be in contact as needs are identified. Heather also said she would put out feelers to local businesses for donated items. Last year Jon James Construction contributed ice cream coupons to Wildman's, Laura seemed to suggest they may consider doing that again.

Safety Trail/Bypass

The question was brought up if it would be appropriate for the PAC/Site Council to submit comments regarding the Sterling Highway Milepost 45-60 Final EIS. Do the issues pertain enough to us as an organization that we should comment in the PAC's name? It was decided that yes, there are pertinent issues with traffic, safety path protection, etc, that directly impact the school staff and students, and some of the bullet points from APC could certainly be put in a letter from PAC as official comments to the final EIS.

AI: Comments are due April 16. Virginia will put together a draft letter, send it to Jessica, who will put it before the PAC in an email for feedback before officially submitting.

Art Camp announcement

To be held July 31-Aug 4, getting students back in routine prior to school! They will need to pack a lunch each day. Hours are from 10:30-2, with a 30 minute lunch break. Art show will be held on Saturday 5-8pm. Fee is \$50/student, which is really just cost of materials. To help keep the cost down, Mr. Gossard lends non-expendable things and Laura brings them back. Note that she indicated that minimum age is 7 years old, but any Cooper Landing School student who has finished Kindergarten may do it, even if they are still 6, because they have all worked with Laura. If at any point during camp a student is not participating well, she will text and the parent can come pick them up. This year she is requiring some parent help, two shifts a day, from 10-12 or 12-2. Their shift will be truly useful and valuable, not just filling space. If a parent can't help during these hours, they can donate snacks for the art show or offer some other kind of significant contribution. Cooper Landing School students and families need to register right away, as we get first choice and there is limited enrollment. Cooper Landing students must enroll and pay by May 1 or they may lose their spots.

Fund Raising

Softball concessions will be done in the same way again this year as last year. Carrie & Cheryle may be the ones to contact. Softball dates are May 31-Jun 9. We need to know what days are open and get on the calendar for doing concessions at least one night, if not two. **AI:** Heather will check with Carrie when she calls about Snail-a-Thon/CLES coordination.

Regarding using funds for planning a trip: Mr. Gossard's main concern is that if something comes up on short notice, can we discuss it at that time? The answer is yes, we can plan by email at any time if he gets word of an outstanding trip opportunity.

We did discuss that if a trip is pretty expensive and the PAC fund won't quite cover it with the base \$20 student contribution we usually require, that we can set a higher contribution. In this event, scholarships should be a consideration, as we don't want any students left out of a trip because their family cannot afford a higher student portion. We can also always consider higher contributions for skiing if needed.

Next Meetings

August 15: officer's meeting to review bylaws – all invited

August 29, 12:30pm: first general PAC meeting of school year with elections

Adjournment at 2:00pm