



# SOUTHEAST ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## Board Report January 25, 2017

### Grant Reports

#### Alaska Housing Finance Corporation Kickstarter Grant

At the end of November, the district was awarded this grant in the amount of \$10,000 with the intent of upgrading the Thorne Bay gym lighting to LED lights. We are in the process of working with the grantors to initiate the project. While it appears we will not be able to use the grant to purchase the lights, we may be able to pay an electrical contractor for the installation. The LED lights will cost approximately \$7,900. LED lights last approximately 100,000 hours while the current ones last between 16,000 and 20,000. This should generate an energy savings of 60-75%.

#### Biomass Greenhouse Manual

Colter Barnes, Jonathan Fitzpatrick, Priscilla Goulding, and I are involved in a project with the Cold Climate Housing Research Center (CCHRC). We are proofreading and adding content to what will be “published” as an e-book for Alaska school districts. Our school greenhouses are featured along with a few other ventures around the state. This will be a professional publication with many terrific pictures of our students and teachers. The district has a contract with CCHRC for \$8,400 to provide the services.

#### SE Alaska Math Science Partnership Grant with Cheryl Bobo and Ellen Hannan

We have a number of teachers taking advantage of the opportunities provided through this grant:

- Using Robots in the K-8 Classroom – Lisa Cate, Christine Cook, Mike Congdon, Jessica Goldman
- Wolf study with hair boards—Lisa Cates
- Using iPads in Math, Language Arts and Art—Lisa Cates and Julie Vasquez
- AVTEC—Isaac Martin and Alan Schwab
- ASTE—Rachel Webb and Michael Congdon

Other opportunities include:

- Island-wide Deer Population Study
- STEM Leadership Academy
- 3-D Printer Training
- Little Bits Electricity Training
- Summer Institute

## **Major Maintenance**

New carpet: Thorne Bay school and gym foyer

New windows: Hollis School

## **Café**

Fixed costs, such as rent and utilities, are approximately \$2,000 per month. We could see a small reduction in these costs if the restaurant closed. There are many other costs including labor, maintenance, and food purchases. The base cost per day for a cook is about \$130. Daily cost for student workers starts at about \$100.

Last August, the café grossed over \$30,000, yet we still lost an impressive sum when all of the other costs were accounted for. In October, we changed our operations model and laid off all of the adult employees. We closed the café for a couple of weeks at a time when they were making \$600-800 per day in order to facilitate this change. Gross sales in the winter have been between \$250 and \$500 per day. Loss for October was \$14,000. Loss in November was \$5,500. Loss in December was \$1,700.

We have altered our operations to attempt to find a financially solvent model. The Culinary Arts class is deeply involved and I feel we are finally getting to a higher level of student involvement. We have simplified the menu so that students can do the preparation work. The new menu also utilizes items the Culinary Arts class and production kitchen generate.

Last year the Café operated with more adults. Our expectation is that it will operate with one adult and as many students as needed to function. During the winter, we have been operating with one student server. As patronage increases this summer, we will remain at one adult cook and increase student servers and workers.

We are looking at opening four days per week – Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday – with these fairly modest labor costs. Thursday is reserved for student fundraisers. Gross receipts for the student fundraisers have been between \$200 and \$850. We would like to offer Mondays as an additional fundraising day and open it to other community organizations. In the spring, we plan to open the extra building at the site for student products to enable sites to raise money.

I think this reduced staffing can work while getting our students more involved. We had many days where the café grossed \$1,000 this past year and I see no reason to think we cannot maintain a \$500 daily average once we move into spring. I consider the café to be an educational endeavor and I am willing to carry some costs.

## **Alternatives**

- Close the café for the winter
- Close the café forever
- Continue to have the café open two days per week
- Open the café for four days per week
- Increase day available for fundraising to two days per week
- Sell the café

## Port Alexander Water Quality

Improvements were made to the water lines at the school and a recent water test shows a dramatic improvement in water quality at the school.

## Vehicle Maintenance Position

### Labor costs (including temporary workers)

last fiscal year	\$164,000
so far this year	\$83,500

### Mechanic costs paid to external businesses

last fiscal year	\$6,000
so far this year	\$10,000

I do not think we can outlast the downward trend in education funding. With shrinking revenues, we are going to have to curtail some of our services. There are unintended consequences or every action and we need to understand each before we reach a decision. Bringing this up will help you to see the issue over the next month as we review our options.

We purchased a number of vehicles at a low cost, which are now available for student transportation. While inexpensive to purchase, vehicles have a variety of other costs. One person in the shop cannot keep up with all of the needs **and** our bus fleet.

Reducing the fleet will impact student service. 15 years ago, we had maintenance trucks and two district-wide vehicles. Students did not know their peers at other sites and schools were far more isolated. Since then, we have encouraged remote schools to go to swim lessons, attend large numbers of activities at Thorne Bay, travel to other schools, participate in team sports at Thorne Bay, and go on field trips; we move large amounts of goods and individuals between sites. Our students are more connected and richer for it. Initially, we eased into trying to get a vehicle at every site and, before long, many sites were requesting multiple vehicles.

I have asked Mikael Ashe to propose a plan to reduce our labor costs. He is out this week and we will schedule a presentation for the next Board meeting. We cannot sustain the current labor costs. We have the fleet & transportation supervisor, several skilled and unskilled seasonal workers, and costs of vehicle repairs by external mechanic businesses.

1. We must reduce labor costs.
  - It may be time to hire our own mechanic. Those costs have been escalating.
  - That person would have less time for changing tires, etc. Will that really save much money?
  - Our fleet & transportation supervisor is also a bus driver trainer, which saves us the cost of outside service.

2. We will have to reduce the total number of vehicles. This reduces labor, parts and insurance costs.
  - Hollis and Thorne Bay are the only sites currently using a bus driver. We cannot get people to test in other communities. We have sites that want multiple vehicles for transportation because they do not have a bus.
  - Paying mileage quickly rises to staggering levels and we do not want students transported in private vehicles.
  - Repeated trainings for bus drivers is expensive.
  - When we use school vehicles, we are not paying a bus driver, which gets especially costly if we have to run a bus from Thorne Bay for a small school activity, including possible overtime, paying for a driver to sit at games or tournaments, etc.

### **Preventative Maintenance Site Visit**

We did not get this together in time to have it on the agenda as informational. It is included in your materials tonight. There were some modest issues brought up through the visit and those have been or are being addressed. Teri Willard could speak to it at the next Board meeting if you request additional commentary. Teri is out of the office for the next couple of weeks.

### **Laura Cooper Contract**

This was inadvertently left off of the Consent Agenda. Laura has moved to Thorne Bay School from Naukati to assist with coverage for a Science teacher who is out for an undetermined length of time. Laura had been on a 0.49 FTE contract at Naukati. This move requires an increase to her contract. It will be between 0.50 FTE and 1.0 FTE, depending on need. **I recommend approval of this contract under 9. A. 1 Action on Administrative Reports.**

### **9. A. 2. CEEA Membership Dues**

Earlier, we declined to pay these dues partly due to the expense. They have reduced the dues by 50%. While their focus is primarily on failing schools in the far north, they do seek legislative equity for small districts. **I recommend approval of the expenditure of \$2,000 for dues.**

### **9. A. 3. Classified Handbook Revision**

The handbook has been revised to include suggestions from the last Board meeting. **I recommend approval of the revision.**

### **9. B. 1. Student Board Representative**

**I recommend approval of this student candidate for the school board representative.**

### **9. B. 2. Audited Financial Statement**

Lucienne Smith will be available to review the report. The report is satisfactory and there are no issues that need attention.

**9. B. 3. Board Policy and Administrative Regulations 3300-3315**

**I recommend moving this item to a second reading to allow additional time for Board review.**

**9. B. 4. Board Policy and Administrative Regulations 3000-3290**

**I recommend moving this item to a second reading to allow additional time for Board review.**

**9. B. 5. Board Policies and Administrative Regulations affected by HB 156**

**I recommend moving this item to a second reading to allow additional time for Board review.** This adds to a long list of unfunded mandates by the legislature. It involves sex education, what we will teach, the manner in which speakers are utilized, and how parents are notified.

**9. B. 6. Agreement for Community Partner Funds for Hollis**

This agreement provides funds for playground improvements in Hollis. **I recommend approval of the agreement.**

Sincerely,

Lauren Burch  
Superintendent