

# Lake & Peninsula Borough Assembly & School Board Joint Meeting

*April 9 – Workshop Overview & Purpose*

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## Why We Are Here

This meeting is an opportunity to begin a conversation about how the Borough Assembly and School Board might work more closely together.

In many smaller communities across Alaska, these two bodies—each with different roles and responsibilities—often operate separately. Collaboration does happen, but it is often informal, dependent on relationships, or driven by specific issues rather than ongoing structure.

At the same time, there is growing recognition—both in Alaska and nationally—that more intentional communication and coordination between local governing bodies and school districts can lead to stronger outcomes for communities.

This creates an opportunity:

To explore whether a more intentional, structured way of working together could strengthen communication, alignment, and shared impact in Lake & Peninsula.

This meeting is a first step in that exploration.

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## How This Meeting Came Together

This conversation emerged through a series of discussions over time, including:

- Conversations between district leadership and Borough Assembly members
- Dialogue during previous work sessions
- A shared recognition of both challenges and opportunity

Across those conversations, several themes surfaced:

- Both the Borough Assembly and School Board are working toward the wellbeing of the same communities
- There are ongoing challenges—particularly around funding, communication, and alignment

- There is interest in exploring how these two bodies might work together more effectively

As reflected in conversations:

“We’re all part of the same system, but we’re operating individually a lot of the time.”

“It’s taken years to even get us in the same room together.”

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## Preparation for This Meeting

Kameron Perez-Verdia was invited to facilitate this conversation. He currently serves on the Anchorage Assembly, previously served on the Anchorage School Board, and works across Alaska, especially in rural communities, facilitating conversations with boards, assemblies, and community groups.

In preparation for this meeting, he spoke with members of the Borough Assembly, School Board, and district leadership to better understand perspectives across the system.

The insights from those conversations helped shape both this meeting and the accompanying briefing document.

Several themes consistently emerged.

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## What We Heard

### 1. A Shared Commitment to Community and Kids

There is a deep, shared motivation across both bodies:

“I’m always for kids and community—those are the things that matter most.”

“If we’re not investing in our kids, what are we even doing here?”

There is strong alignment around:

- Supporting families
  - Keeping communities strong
  - Ensuring children can grow and succeed locally
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## 2. Real Challenges—Especially Around Funding

Many conversations pointed to funding pressures as a central issue:

“The biggest issue right now is money. Everything comes back to money.”

“As funding gets tighter, that conversation just keeps coming back.”

At the same time, there are different perspectives on:

- What support looks like
  - How resources are allocated
  - What is possible within current constraints
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## 3. Communication Gaps and Misunderstandings

A consistent theme was the need for stronger communication:

“We spend so much time in separate rooms.”

“Just not enough talking to each other and figuring things out together.”

Some also noted:

- Misunderstandings about decisions and funding
  - Limited opportunities for direct conversation
  - A sense of operating in separate “lanes”
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## 4. Desire for Better Collaboration

Despite challenges, there is strong interest in improving how the two bodies work together:

“There’s definitely an opportunity... to work better together.”

“It would be really valuable to have regular joint meetings.”

There is openness to:

- More regular communication
  - Shared conversations about key issues
  - Developing aligned goals or priorities
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## 5. The Need for a Shared, Local Vision

Several people emphasized the importance of stepping back and looking at the bigger picture:

“We need a shared vision for public education... one that reflects our communities.”

This includes thinking about:

- The future of schools in the region
- Community sustainability
- How education connects to jobs, housing, and long-term viability

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## What This Meeting Is (and Is Not)

**This meeting is:**

- A starting point
- A space to reconnect around shared purpose
- An opportunity to listen and understand different perspectives
- A chance to explore what working together more intentionally could look like

**This meeting is not:**

- A decision-making meeting
- A place to resolve all current issues
- A deep dive into specific policies or disputes

As one person put it:

“This feels like a starting point—not the solution, but the beginning of something we need to continue.”

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## Looking Ahead

The goal of this meeting is to explore whether there is interest in:

- Continuing this conversation
- Creating more regular opportunities to meet together
- Potentially planning a future session (full board + assembly) to:
  - Build relationships
  - Identify shared priorities
  - Develop a stronger foundation for working together