

South Anchorage High School PTSO
General Membership Meeting
February 10, 2026
@Raven's Ring Brewing + OWL
Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Dr. Almon, Andy Holleman, Landon Forth (president), Luff (VP) Jennifer Wagner (treasurer), Amber Forth (Zoom), Aubrey Forth (Student rep), Shelley Cooper, Jennifer Torpy, Jyll Green (secretary), Carla Woods, Cristy Jensen, Azzie Gleason, Lilly Kim, Van Angel, Addy Gasser, Addison Bailey, Alivia Bailey, Sage Cha, Annika Schmidt, Gabbie Lee.

Apologies: Jayme Carr, Kim Landry.

1. *Call to order*- 6:08 by Landon Forth.
 - a. Andy Holleman is here tonight as a special guest.

2. *Special Guest-Andy Holleman, School Board Member*
 - a. Mr. Holleman is thankful for the invitation—he said as an ASD board member, he generally feels unwelcome at public forums.
 - b. First off, Mr. Holleman would like to clear up some misconceptions. So far, ASD is on budget for this year. ASD has accumulated a little more funding due to difficulties filling teaching positions.
 - c. Unsure what revenue will be next year until December 2026 when governor releases final budget. For planning purposes, they get a temporary budget based on legislative action in May/June. No one knows what the number will be right now.
 - d. The base student allocation was created in 2000(?). The intent was that this BSA would be modified due to inflation, but it never was. Therefore, special funding has always been required, and it was always made available. During COVID there was a lot of extra federal funding. During COVID the state funded schools only at the BSA. ASD has spent all additional federal funding that was available in recent years. Two years ago, the BSA was raised and last year they funded ASD only at the BSA. One year ago, there was a severe shortfall. They used a “fun balance” to offset. They are required to carry a 5% fun balance, and they cap it at 20%. This funding can be used for emergencies that come up (natural disasters, etc.). Last year they reduced the fun balance to the minimally required 5% and it remains at this level, so there are no additional funds available there to fill the voids. Classroom, support staff, administrative, building cuts are all anticipated. Lots of programs are slated to be cut-school sports, IGNITE, classroom sizes, etc. The school board will advise the school principal about the full-time equivalency he can staff for.
 - e. Dr. Almon weighs in on how this relates to South. At staffing, they are looking at a 5.6 teacher reduction (4 on general teachers and 1.6 hold back) which represents a 25% reduction in teaching staff at South. ½ of a counselor position will be eliminated. The school nursing program will be regionalized (school nurses will likely move around through the day). Of course, there are

concerns about how to respond in an emergency. There will be a 5% principal/assistant principal loss. No longer will have onsite tech support-tickets will be entered and IT will come around and fix things as they can. No more library aid. Sports will be limited to football and cross country (fall), basketball and Drama/Debate/Forensic (DDF) (winter), and track (spring). There is a proposal to try and fund some of the sports in other creative ways, so more to come. There are real concerns about being able to meet the minimum graduation requirements.

- f. Mr. Holleman further discussed consolidation efforts of closing schools. When schools are consolidated, the funding goes down per student. This saves the states money as it reduces the allocation to ASD, but this exacerbates the ASD budget issue over time. In the first year they will save about \$1m, but the returns on that diminishes quickly over a few years.
- g. Further discussion on the BSA. They set up the BSA based on a factor. Anchorage is the least expensive place to live, so it is a factor of 1 where MatSu is 1.07 so they receive 7% more funding than ASD. It could be worth revisiting the BSA formula and factoring, but obviously many districts are opposed to this as it could reduce their funding. ASD asked ISER to do a study to see what the effects may be, but ISER said this report could be biased and they recommended the State order this report to avoid bias.
- h. The question is really what does Gov. Dunleavy want for education in Alaska? Dunleavy said he would like education to be privatized throughout the state. The legislation does not have a lot of hope for emergency funding for education. There is a lot of pessimism due to the price of oil.
- i. Landon asked Mr. Holleman to give a brief explanation of how the government funding is allocated. Mr. Holleman states essentially the BSA has always been funded, but it was just kept low for a long time. Though it was raised, it was insufficient. Anchorage School Board is hoping that legislation will agree to raise to BSA to adjust for inflation every year. There is a requirement for 2.6 mill rate of property values to go towards the schools in “organized” communities. The assessed property values in Anchorage have gone up significantly this year, therefore the budget for the schools will go up. Under the federal govt equity formula (Alaska is the only state who this federal law applies to as we are the only ones who accept federal funding), there is a misbalance of funding allocations between various neighborhood schools—this also reduces the effects that any local contributions might have as State funding would reduce funding inequity between communities. However, this hits the tax gap, therefore this is on the April ballot to approve a one-time \$11m fund to the ASD. This adds about \$12/100,000 in value and 80 positions. If you live and go to school in an unorganized area, the State funds 100% of the BSA where in organized communities, there is a formula between the Municipality and the State.
- j. Dr. Almon notes that Anchorage pays relatively little towards education in comparison to other communities in the lower 48.
- k. Mr. Holleman emphasized that the operational budget is meant to be spent every year -there should be no accumulation of funds/resources unlike other businesses.
- l. Landon Forth asked to clarify that the ASD board decides how to spend the funding allocation and has nothing to do with deciding the funding amount.
- m. Courtney Luff asked how cutting sports would affect the budget: this would save \$5m in funding according to Mr. Holleman. Cutting 25 nursing positions saves a little less than \$3m. The idea of closing Fire Lake and Lake Otis and perhaps another school would save \$1m per school and it has been proposed that these savings go towards sports (bringing back middle school sports), but this is only protective for a few years’ time and then we would be back to cutting sports unless other

funding came from the State. One of the students (Azzie) emphasized that South has a strong community and the students there will play sports in club teams regardless of losing high school sports. Mr. Holleman points out that some students will be able to continue to afford to play sports, but many of the ASD students cannot afford to continue in sports at a private level due to inequity. Courtney emphasized that middle school sports do a lot to build community and acceptance for those students and the ongoing effects of eliminating middle school sports may not be fully realized for years. Addison Bailey asked why eliminating sports saves so much money—Mr. Holleman states this is due to coaching, facility, and transportation fees. Addison asks if coaches are allowed to volunteer their time and Mr. Holleman states he does not advocate for making people work for free and there are legal implications to this (making it difficult to fire bad coaches, etc.). There have been discussions on recouping fees from spectators, participation fees, capping number of games, and facility use time. Mr. Holleman adds that he was impressed by the testimony from the South High wrestlers at the board meeting last night. Courtney asks a further question how cutting sports at ASD affects the rest of the state. Mr. Holleman emphasizes that student testimony to the legislature carries a lot of weight, more than parent testimony, but constituent influence is real and it can affect how legislators vote. He encouraged all the students to write letters on their thoughts on class size, elective availability, and sports. Mr. Butterfield states some people have been in office for a long time and makes a point that some legislators believe that starving public school funding is intentional and is aimed at moving school funding to a private system. Mr. Butterfield recommends going to community council meetings because local officials are listening to these meetings and paying attention and they are not well attended. Kim Leary states that Rabbit Creek Community Council meets this Thursday—meeting info is on muni.org.

- n. Mr. Butterfield wanted to discuss the Alaska Performance Scholarship. This pays students up to \$9000 a year to pay for students to go to college in Alaska which requires students to take four years of math and science (instead of the required three years) and hold a specific GPA (3 tiers). Next year we will not have enough staff to provide the classes needed to receive the APS—law only requires ASD to provide 3 years of math and science. Unless something changes, next year we are looking at a \$40m cut and the next year even more. Next year we are only .5 of a teacher away from not being about to provide the base classes required to allow students to even graduate—therefore correspondence courses are the only option.
- o. Mr. Butterfield asked Mr. Holleman to clarify “if a sports group raises funding, will that affect State funding?” Mr. Holleman said there is a way to protect that privately raised funding and not have ASD receive a reduction in funding from the State.
- p. Student asked if the ASD presented a large list of cuts for shock factor or hidden agenda. Mr. Holleman states the risk of all the cuts is real and there is no additional funding available. The ASD board will vote on a final budget by end of February, but the budget will be published in June, yet this is not final until December when the governor’s budget is released.
- q. Landon Forth thanked Mr. Holleman for his time and the lengthy valuable discussion.

3. *Approval of Minutes*

- a. October, November, December, and January meeting minutes were sent out via email for review. Still pending copies of financials from October and November. Kim Leary makes a motion to approve and Courtney Luff seconds the motion. All approved.

4. *Principal's Report*

- a. Mr. Almon had to leave early for a school basketball game.

5. *Teacher Representative Report—Kim Leary*

- a. Anticipates a lot of Tier 3 teachers leaving after this year. The first 5 will not be replaced due to the budget.
- b. Four grants to approve. First grant was approved via text record. Amy Habberstad on behalf of Mis Hemmingway requested funding for salads for counselor appreciation week (this was \$85). Kim makes a motion to approve this, Jyll seconds this, all approve. Second Ms. Habberstad requesting \$300 for treats for student recognition-wants to recognize freshman meeting 90% attendance, 2.7 GPA, and sophomores/juniors who improved their GPA over last year. Plan is to roll the cart (“on a roll”) and hand out treats. Kim makes a motion to approve \$300 and Courtney seconds, all approve. Third grant is new not previously discussed by test. Jocelyn Hemmingway requested \$301.89 because she received a duplicate check from PTSO and is asking to keep that funding and use for snacks for pre ESY (this is the club to support students at risk of failing), Kim makes a motion to approve, Amber seconds, all approve. Fourth grant from Shelly Cooper asking for \$200 to celebrate staff with staff goodies for mini baskets from the Sunshine Committee and the PTSO. The Sunshine Committee is willing to commit \$120, but Kim makes a motion to approve \$400 for teacher gift baskets, Courtney seconds, and all approved.

6. *Student Report*

- a. Aubrey is going to talk to Miss Cooper about finding her replacement for next year.
- b. Next meeting she would like to talk more about student PTSO reps moving forward.

7. *Officer Reports*

- a. President's Report
 - i. Reminder-three meetings before the end of the year, but election will come up in April. Needs to know who is staying and going-email Courtney.
- b. Treasurer's Report
 - i. We are doing well. Over budget on donations and membership and school store. Still have a lot of grant funds left-still have about \$22k. Mr. Butterfield will spread the word at the teacher meeting at lunch on Thursday.

8. *Committee Reports*

- a. Senior Events
 - i. Working on senior fun day and prom. Things are moving along. Will set up sign up genius for chaperones for prom soon. Prom is April 11.
 - ii. Graduation May 11.
- b. School Store
 - i. Everything is going great. Stocking up on things when they go on sale. Getting deals on base (\$3 for a 12 pack of Peace Tea!).
 - ii. Appreciation of the parent volunteers-well staffed.
- c. Spirit Wear
 - i. Nothing to report.
 - ii. Courtney reminded her that we will need spirit wear for freshman fair.

iii. Jennifer Wagner states we might want to do spirit wear sales for the basketball game and game night Feb. 20. Kim recommends selling them in the gym.

d. Membership

i. Kim states she has nothing to report.

9. *Old Business*

a. None.

10. *New Business*

a. March 24 is Freshman Fair-Courtney will need volunteers.

11. *Announcements*—Next meeting should be March 6, but Dr. Almon and Kim are not available. Motion to move meeting to Thursday March 26 at 6:00 p.m. at Ravens Ring Brewing. Will hold April elections at that time. Final meeting would be Thursday May 7 at 6:00 p.m.

12. *Adjourn*—Motion to adjourn by Jyll Green at 8:09 p.m. Second by Courtney Luff.

Treasurer's Report