

# School District Better Budget Picture For Strategic Planning

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Last night the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly got a glimpse at what's been going on in the school district recently, and what's to come. The assembly has begun to tackle its strategic planning for the year, and education makes up a large portion of the borough's budget. During last night's work session Superintendent Stewart McDonald gave an introduction to the district's strategic plan, and how it might fit with the borough's.

The discussion was meant to be an overview, and the hope is to tackle the nuts and bolts of the education plan during the assembly's next work session. Still, McDonald addressed certain portions of the district's plan and made suggestions about how the process could be easier this time around.

McDonald said it would help if the borough could provide some sort of timeline for budget projections and how much funding the district could expect.

"To say maybe at the end of the third quarter, that would be a time the borough could say we think our minimum contribution could be this and it would be reasonably close to what it might actually end up being so that the deficit is small. Maybe we just come up with an agreement that we propose our budget based on a three year average, and if it changes, then it changes and we make revisions."

McDonald also addressed teacher contracts, and how the process has changed significantly this year. In past years, he said tenured contracts needed to be resolved by March 15.

"So that meant, long before we knew what our dollars were really going to be we had to commit to tenured contracts. And then we waited on non tenured contracts until much much later in the year. We had until May 15. Now all contracts are not required to be finalized and issued until May 15. Now, that puts the district at a disadvantage in terms of recruitment. So if we need to identify we have vacancies we're going to want to go out and try to recruit people, it's good to have contracts issued for recruitment purposes. But, for budget purposes if we don't know really where the money is going to fall and it's uncertain we do have the ability to wait longer this coming year than we have in the past. So that was a significant change."

Assemblywoman Carol Austerman was the borough's representative on the district's strategic planning committee and said she was pleased with how things were done this time around.

"I was very pleased that this

year's strategic plan was more forward thinking and not necessarily just a list of tasks that the school district has been doing for a long time. We did a lot of work to try to make it be shorter and more implementable and I do think that there are a couple of the strategic plan items, the big picture items, off of the school district plan that can easily just roll right into ours, especially the communication one."

The assembly will look at the district's plan in more detail during its next work session on December 3. The assembly rescheduled the work session to take place on that Tuesday to avoid Thanksgiving.