



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education

148 North Binkley Street Soldotna, Alaska 99669-7520
Phone (907) 714-8888 Fax (907) 262-9132

2022 State Legislative Priorities

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District stands ready to work with the Alaska legislature to find the right solutions to fully implement the following priorities in order to support development of world-class graduates from our public schools.

- **Public Education Priority**

Section I of Article VII Health, Education, and Welfare of the Alaska State Constitution is clear: “The legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State, and may provide for other public educational institutions. Schools and institutions so established shall be free from sectarian control. No money shall be paid from public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution.” The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD) fully supports what our State’s founders promised all generations of Alaskans. An equitable and suitable public school system provides opportunities for the preparation of all Alaskan children for effective citizenship in our state and nation; as such, it is critical that public funds go to support public schools.

- **Timely, sustainable, adequate education funding plan**

The State of Alaska must provide timely, sustainable, adequate revenue for public schools in Alaska. This funding must be consistent, reliable and predictable to provide full funding to meet increasing costs and the diverse and significant needs of our students. Early notification of funding is critical for sound financial management, as well as recruitment and retention of quality educators.

- **Review and reconsider the state’s bond reimbursement program moratorium and ensure the existing state’s bond reimbursement program is funded**

Across Alaska, Educational Facilities are aging and many have significant maintenance needs. KPBSD encourages the Legislature to review existing needs state-wide. In the past, the Kenai Peninsula Borough voters have approved bond funding for school maintenance projects with the understanding that the state would reimburse an agreed percentage of the bond payments. Past reduction of this reimbursement amount is concerning and disrupts local budgets. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District encourages the legislature to continue to fulfill current obligations and to reinstate this necessary program in order to maintain, upgrade, and replace existing facilities.

- Positive School Climate, Social and Emotional Learning and Well-being**
 Social and emotional learning (SEL) and wellbeing is the key to providing a safe school environment, conducive to learning, and must be a high priority. With the high rates of domestic violence, childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACES) in Alaska, and in light of the collective trauma our students, families, staff, and communities have experienced due to the COVID19 Global Pandemic, school efforts towards meeting social emotional needs is more critical than ever. The state must provide financial support so schools can partner with local communities to implement comprehensive, culturally appropriate school-based mental health programs that support and foster the health and development of students.

Additional funding is necessary to enable schools to increase, recruit and retain more school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and mental health specialists. Funding is also needed to increase professional development opportunities for districts in planning and implementing interventions for students experiencing childhood trauma and other mental health challenges. Meeting the Social Emotional Learning needs of students is essential to the long term well-being of our students and ultimately of our communities.

The mission of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is to empower all learners to positively shape their futures.

KPBSD Board Members and Superintendent

Zen Kelly, President	Patti Truesdell
Debbie Cary, Vice President	Greg Madden
Jason Tauriainen, Clerk	Matt Morse
Mike Illg, Treasurer	Virginia Morgan
Penny Vadla	Clayton Holland, Superintendent

BOE Approved 10-4-2021

2022 Federal Legislative Priorities

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD) stands ready to work with the federal legislature to find the right solutions to fully implement the following priorities in order to support development of world-class graduates from our public schools.

- **Public Education Priority**

The KPBSD believes that public education is an indispensable component for strengthening the ideals of our nation's democracy and a necessary, unifying, and dynamic influence in American life. The public school insures the preparation of all children for effective citizenship in the United States. As such, it is critical that public funds go to support public schools. The State of Alaska and KPBSD are very supportive of school choice, as evidenced by providing accountable public, charter, alternative and home school programs. Similar to what is in the Alaska Constitution; we oppose any legislation that expends public funds through voucher programs, or indirectly through tax credits or related plans, to fund any religious or other private educational institution. Our district has always been accountable for all public funds received. In order for all children to be provided a fair opportunity to succeed, any educational entity receiving public funds should be held accountable in the same manner as KPBSD.

- **Positive School Climate, Social and Emotional Learning and Well-being**

Social and emotional learning (SEL) and wellbeing is the key to providing a safe school environment conducive to learning must be a high priority. With the high rates of domestic violence, childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACES) in Alaska, and in light of the collective trauma our students, families, staff, and communities have experienced due to the COVID19 Global Pandemic, school efforts towards meeting social emotional needs is more critical than ever. The state must provide financial support so schools can partner with local communities to implement comprehensive, culturally appropriate school-based mental health programs that support and foster the health and development of students.

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- **Funding of IDEA, Federal Title Programs and Accountability**

Since its inception in 1975, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has protected students with disabilities by ensuring access to a free appropriate public education. The Federal government was able to establish this program with a promise to provide States with at least 40% of the of the National Average per Pupil Expenditure.

While special education funding has received significant increases over the past 18 years, federal funding has leveled off recently and has even been cut. The closest the federal government has come to reaching its 40 percent commitment was 18 percent in 2005. The KPBSD requests that the promised funding level to implement IDEA is provided to states and districts as soon as possible so that all students receive the highest quality education possible in all of our schools and that the approximately 6 million students with disabilities in our country are able to fully realize the promise of IDEA.

With the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) implementation underway, the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District urges the United States Department of Education (USDE) to honor local control and avoid federal overreach while implementing ESSA. KPBSD also requests that federal legislators eliminate discretionary funding caps, to allow adequate investment in education, including full funding of the education programs authorized by the bipartisan Every School Succeeds Act. We also ask that the USDE honor the intent of the law and not attempt to create regulations that “fix” problems not addressed in legislation such as the “supplement, not supplant restrictions” and the insistence by USDE to require that a school’s performance be defined by a single designation.

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