

From the Superintendent

The approach of Alaska's 50th birthday is a time of celebration and reflection. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD) is a proud and important part of Alaska's history and future. A strong public education system is the backbone of democratic society. In KPBSD, an incredible commitment to educational excellence is seen throughout our schools and communities. The District has very high expectations for students and staff, alignment of resources and curriculum, and an attitude of continuous improvement.



Donna Peterson, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

Throughout this past year we have worked through site councils and other groups to determine the long-range plan for the District – exactly what should happen for students between now and 2012. Four categories emerged through the process: organizational excellence, improvement, responsiveness and sustainability. The emphasis will be on 21st Century learning skills for students, including innovation and creativity. Schools will move toward being more of an “experience” for students rather than a place they attend for a given number of hours/days. Individualized learning plans for students will be developed to maximize their choices and opportunities to graduate with both an academic diploma as well as a career certification.

None of these changes will occur without intense professional development throughout the organization. The newly formed Professional Development Steering Committee has been created through a year of review, discussion and assimilation of input from all over the District. The latest large-scale delivery of national expertise is in June 2008 with Alan Blankstein's Failure Is Not an Option presentation. KPBSD has long been known to be on the cutting edge of the best and brightest ideas; we are once again asserting that position through laser-like focus on high-quality professional development.

This year we also began the self-evaluation process outlined through the Alaska Performance Excellence model to determine how to improve our organization. Based on the Baldrige Model/Criteria, KPBSD will continue our participation in a review of all processes and procedures to determine how to improve customer satisfaction. This is an exciting format for examining organizational effectiveness.

Since 1959 when Alaska became a state, and 1964 when the Kenai Peninsula Borough was formed, education has continued to be an important part of the growth and success of both. Strong communities and lasting governments must have an informed populace – that's what schools provide. One of the first questions real estate agents and employers are asked when people consider moving here is “what about the schools?” It is with pride that we can say, “KPBSD schools are awesome and we can prove it by any measure you wish to use.”

Mission Statement

The mission of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, in partnership with its richly diverse communities, is to develop creative, productive learners who demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to meet life's challenges, by providing stimulating, integrated learning opportunities in a safe, supportive environment.



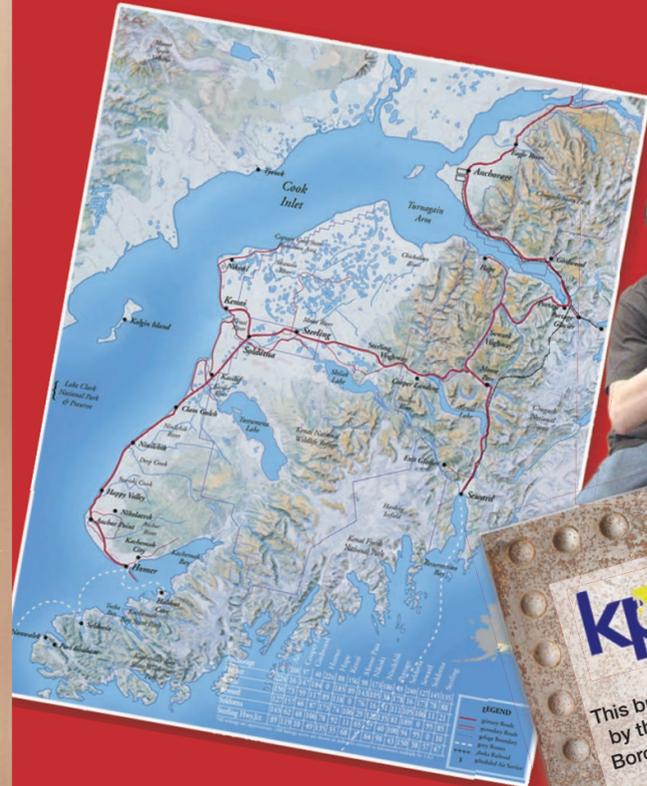
The Kenai Peninsula

The Kenai Peninsula Borough lies directly south of Anchorage, Alaska's principal population center, and is home to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District.

The waters of the Gulf of Alaska and Prince William Sound border the Borough on the south and east with the Alaska Mountain Range rimming the Borough to the west. The boundaries of the Borough and School District encompass a total of 25,600 square miles. In comparison, the geographical area of the Kenai Peninsula Borough equals that of Massachusetts and New Jersey combined, while the Borough population is less than 1/400th of that same area.

Year-round recreational opportunities abound on the Kenai Peninsula: fishing, sightseeing, hiking, snow machining and cross-country ski trails are just a sampling of the outdoor recreation that is readily accessible for the outdoor enthusiast.

The Peninsula has one of the state's most diverse economies; major industries include oil and gas, commercial fishing, and tourism. The oil and gas industry accounts for approximately one-third of the Borough's labor force.



kpbsd
where kids come first

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by the Kenai Peninsula
Borough School District

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TRANSFORMING THE DISTRICT

Kenai Peninsula Borough
School District

ANNUAL
REPORT
07-08



2007-08
Kenai
Peninsula
Borough
School
District

Board of Education
GOALS

1. Review and evaluate Board bylaws and protocols
2. Facilitate completion of a long-range plan
3. Improve two-way communication with the public on substantive issues
4. Evaluate the delivery of education relative to size, populations and programs of each school

HIGHLIGHTS

- First large school district to make Adequate Yearly Progress per No Child Left Behind
- Obtained increased funding from the state through the Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force
- Peninsula Optional High School opens, providing a standards-based learning environment for students
- Implemented revised K-12 math curriculum and revised health and science curricula
- Completed District Long-Range Plan through 2012
- Instituted a program to reduce energy consumption at school facilities
- Implemented new human resources, payroll and finance software systems
- Installed IP phones at schools throughout the District to improve communication capabilities
- Offered free breakfast to students eligible for free or reduced-rate lunches at 16 schools in the District, and reduced-rate breakfast to any other student
- Installed wireless Internet connection between Voznesenka, Razdolna and Kachemak-Selo schools to significantly increase connection speed and capacity
- Completed first phase of the Alaska Performance Excellence Program
- Updated school Edline pages on the District's Web site, www.kpbsd.k12.ak.us

The Program

In a district as large and diverse as the Kenai Peninsula, meeting the needs of all our students takes constant attention – whether they're urban or rural, at a large school or small, high achievers or needing individualized support. The 2007-2008 school year saw continued advancement in this realm.

Two programs have been active in improving school climate in order to boost the graduation rate. The Quality Schools/Quality Students program was piloted in four KPBSD communities – Seward, Ninilchik, Nanwalek and Tyonek. The program assists schools and their communities in raising student achievement to meet or exceed state standards by linking a shared vision for education with successful practices. Project GRAD also was active in seven of the District's small

schools. Now in its fifth year, Project GRAD encourages high school students at risk of dropping out to finish school through an incentive program that guarantees college scholarships. Project GRAD had 31 graduates in 2008.

Progress continues on the new frontier of standards-based education. Conversion to a standards-based report card, which shows areas of student proficiency in content areas, expanded to fourth grade in 2007-2008. On a larger scale, Peninsula Optional High School completed its first year of operation. Students work in a small, high-tech learning environment that provides many opportunities for individualized projects and self-guided learning. Achievement happens as students demonstrate proficiency in content area standards, rather than spending a certain amount of "seat time" each semester in designated classes.

The District's curriculum review process ensures that academic instruction remains relevant, rigorous and in tune with state and federal requirements. Meanwhile, the Workforce Development Program was expanded in the 2007-2008 school year to prepare students for success in the working world after graduation.

The program enables high school students to get college credits at a reduced rate and work toward certification in a variety of fields that are recognized by

the National Center for Construction Education and Research. In 2007-2008, Workforce Development saw a 45 percent increase in participation. Courses are offered at the Workforce Development Center in Kenai, at Kenai Peninsula College campuses, at area high schools and through distance delivery to rural schools. Afterschool academies on plumbing, framing, welding, carpentry, marine fabrication and EMT certification were popular offerings, with 68 participants from Nikiski, Soldotna and Homer High Schools, the Workforce Development Center in Kenai, and Voznesenka, Susan B English, Ninilchik and Nikolaevsk Schools. A Certified Nursing Assistant class expanded to two sessions to meet growing demand, and a medical terminology class was offered for the first time at Soldotna High School.

Technology continues to aid the delivery of quality, diverse instruction throughout our far-flung district. Distance delivery courses had an enrollment of 135 in fall semester 2007 and 195 in spring semester 2008. Distance delivery enables students anywhere in the District to take advanced-level courses or get caught up on a class that may not currently be offered at their school. Use of Smart Boards and other interactive technologies are spreading in classrooms and the District maintains one of the highest ratios of computers to students in the state.



KPBSD Curriculum Review

At the base of KPBSD's exceptional academic program is the six-year curriculum revision cycle. During the 2007-2008 school year, the newly revised K-12 math curriculum was implemented. The curriculum aligns to and expands upon the Alaska State Standards. While math was being implemented, the health and science curricula underwent the review and revision process. To view current curriculum guides, visit the District's Curriculum Department Web page.

Highly Qualified Educators

With the No Child Left Behind Act, school districts are responsible for showing that their teachers are highly qualified. In order to meet the federal definition of highly qualified, teachers must have a baccalaureate degree and full state certification, and show proficiency in the subject or subjects they teach.

Approximately 79% of KPBSD teachers have demonstrated highly qualified status in one or more content areas and about 73% of core academic classes are taught by teachers with highly qualified status.

Care Given to Improving Health

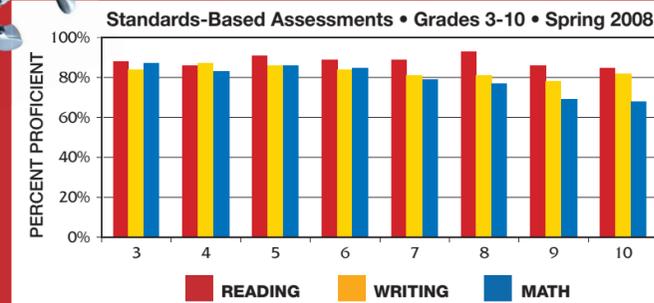
The health and wellness of the District's staff and students got a checkup in 2007-2008. The prescription for a healthier district includes many facets. An employee benefits manager was brought in to administer the District's health plan, COBRA program and to act as a consultant to the Health Care Program Committee. An updated health plan went into effect in December.

In January, the District unveiled its new Wellness Program. The Internet-based program provides a wealth of health and nutrition information and encourages healthy behavior with easy-to-follow, incentive-based challenges. Forty-one percent of District employees participated in the first challenge, "Healthy Lunch Club," and a weight loss of 558 pounds was reported by 126 of the participants.

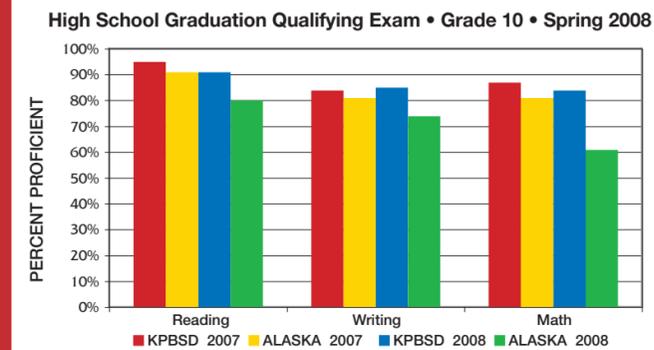
A review of the school Wellness Policy found many successes at the school level, such as the removal of soda and sugary drinks in elementary school vending machines and the limitation of those beverages in secondary schools; the elimination of using physical activity as behavioral punishment and unhealthy snacks as rewards; and that 100 percent of elementary schools have 60 minutes of PE a week.



Achievement Profile



Alaska measures student proficiency in reading, writing, and math with the Alaska Standards Based Assessments, which are administered in grades 3 through 10.



Each section of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam must be passed by students to graduate. Students have their first opportunity to take the exams during the spring of their sophomore year and two additional opportunities each year following. The results are for sophomores only and compare state and district pass rates.

Adequate Yearly Progress

In 2001 the federal government implemented the No Child Left Behind Act as a way to ensure public school accountability. Since then, the U.S. Department of Education instituted the concept of Adequate Yearly Progress by schools. There are 31 categories in which every public school must demonstrate proficiency. Many of the categories are academic in nature while some guarantee a high level of participation within various subgroups. During the 2007-2008 school year, KPBSD experienced a major accomplishment – the District attained the status of making AYP in all 31 categories. This accomplishment is phenomenal considering that over 6,000 students of the 9,200 in the District are tested. We are the largest district in the state to attain AYP status.

Accountability

As the largest employer in the Kenai Peninsula Borough with a budget of over \$137 million, it is vitally important that there be safeguards to ensure the financial accountability of the District. To that end, several areas of the District were audited in the 2007-2008 school year, and all passed with flying colors. The District underwent its annual financial audits, as well as having its Pupil Services Department, Federal Programs and E-rate application audited.

To further ensure the organization, efficiency and accountability of the District, the finance, payroll and human resources software systems were upgraded in the 2007-2008 school year. The years of planning and months of training and hard work that went into this massive undertaking were rewarded with a smooth program implementation.

On the Horizon

Professional Development 2008-2009

During the 2007-2008 school year, a Professional Development Study Team evaluated the District's Professional Development Plan. The team was dedicated to the idea that the key to increasing student achievement is through quality professional development for educators. Based on the team's recommendations, an exciting new plan was developed for certified personnel with implementation scheduled to begin during the 2008-2009 school year.

The plan includes an organizational structure that provides opportunities for staff members to participate at a district and building level through the establishment of a District Professional Development Steering Committee and site liaisons. In addition to the new communication and organizational structure, the plan includes information on levels of professional development, professional development opportunities and delivery models, and also outlines an accountability process. The accountability process will be enhanced in 2008-2009 with the implementation of Professional Development Management Software. To preview the plan, please visit the District's Professional Development Web page.

New Initiatives

KPBSD is pleased to begin phasing in a programmatic staffing formula in the 2008-2009 school year, which will provide students with expanded opportunities. At elementary schools, the 4th-6th grade pupil-teacher ratio will be lowered to 1:24 and interventionists will be added based on the size of school to help catch and address learning problems early. Middle schools also get interventionists, as well as expanded Read 180 staffing and added electives, like art and vocational education. High schools will see more counselors and more electives. At small schools, interventionists will be added and pupil-teacher ratios will be adjusted based on the size of school. In all over 40 teachers will be added to the District.

In addition to improving the educational structure at the primary and secondary levels, KPBSD wants to ensure kids are prepared before they ever set foot in a classroom. To that end, the District provided the Headsprout early reading program to all incoming public school kindergarteners prior to the 2008-2009 school year. The highly regarded Internet-based program uses a fun, researched-based format to teach phonics and other basic reading skills.

OneStop Web site

KPBSD is pleased to debut its new online OneStop Student Portal at <http://onestop.kpbsd.k12.ak.us>. The goal of the Web site is to organize student-related resources in a central location for ease of access by students, counselors, teachers and parents. This Web site includes information on scholarships, enrichment opportunities, Workforce Development, Tech Prep, distance education, Jump Start, workplace experience and summer opportunities. The site was compiled during the 2007-2008 school year and is ready for use in 2008-2009.

The entire District Web site, www.kpbsd.k12.ak.us, will have a new look in the next school year. The Web site is a primary means of communication for the District, so it is vital that the site be as accessible and easy to navigate as possible. A comprehensive redesign will make the site more functional by speeding up loading times and improving the search functions. Content will be reorganized to help the flow of information. A new background color and larger font size will make the site more readable on laptops and smaller monitors, and for those with vision challenges.