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# Welcome to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

## Message from the Superintendent

We are pleased to present KPBSD's 2010-11 Annual Report. This publication is our opportunity to step back and review last year's accomplishments and highlights, celebrate our areas of excellence including students, staff and graduates, and share what we are planning for our new school year.

Our challenge to meet the learning needs of all our students is at the heart of what we do. Each school day more than 1,200 dedicated employees work hard to meet this challenge. Although you will see that we are making good progress and that most of our students are doing well, we recognize that more work needs to be done to help every student have success at school. We must do all that we can to ensure that a student's ethnicity, disability, language proficiency or economic status does not predict his or her academic performance. As a way to do this, we are more critical of our instruction, driven by our need to prepare our students for the world of tomorrow.

As we strive to expand our culture of continuous improvement, we work to sustain our effective partnerships that include strong family and community involvement. Together we can help our students take another step toward graduation.

I am honored to serve as KPBSD's superintendent and look forward to working with you in the coming year to do all that we can to make our students' experience at school as successful as it can be.

— Dr. Steve Atwater, Superintendent



## Strategic Goals Update

Last year, the District focused improvement efforts on two goals: increase student achievement through collaboration and increase student engagement through effective instructional practices. I am pleased to report that we made progress toward meeting each of these.

Our staff now devotes more time to sharing and analyzing their teaching strategies and, in turn, making improvements to better meet the learning needs of our students. We are also doing more to integrate technology into instruction and are more critically determining when a student is proficient in mastering the taught concept.

When you look at the country's highest performing school districts, you find that they avoid the temptation to endlessly chase the latest education discovery or newest program and instead, relentlessly pursue just a few improvement targets. This year, we will follow this approach by again focusing on collaboration and effective instruction.

We are convinced that by building our internal capacity we will be able to help our students move up the learning continuum. We took this year's first step of improvement in June when teams of principals and teachers met to analyze last year's assessment results.

The teams identified areas of weakness and began planning how to address these deficits. A comprehensive report of our assessment results will be released to the School Board in September as part of the annual Assessment Report.

## 2010-2011 District Goals

### Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

□ KPBSD will... increase student achievement by being responsive to individual student needs through structured collaborative practices districtwide with our richly diverse communities.

□ KPBSD will... increase student engagement by implementing quality instructional practices with embedded, 21st-century skills districtwide.





Sen. Lisa Murkowski meets with the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education.

## Board President Message

**A**s we move into the new school year, it is important, of course, to look back on where we have been. However, this year it is the intention of the board to look forward to where we would like to be. We are always mindful of the enormous responsibility placed upon us every time a family sends their child to our neighborhood schools. We must also be willing to identify and adapt to the changes that are occurring all around us on a daily basis. During the course of this new year the School Board and the District will be attempting to define and redefine what we consider to be the essence of a successful student — and, by extension, a successful district. We look forward to this very focused effort as well as to another successful year in KPBSD schools.

— Mr. Joe Arness, president, KPBSD Board of Education



Joe Arness



Marty Anderson



Sammy Crawford



Liz Downing



Suni Hilts



Julie Rang, student rep.



Lynn Hohl



Bill Holt

### Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education Goals 2011-12

#### The Board will...

- ... support the 2011-12 District Goals.
- ... review and revise Board Policy 0210, Goals for Student Learning, by December 2011.
- ... work with the district administration to implement recommendations of the curriculum management audit.
- ... continue to work with the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly to develop a long-term funding process to guide the local contribution to the school district.
- ... support and participate in the District Communication Strategic Plan.

### Board meeting schedule

2011-2012

July 11, 2011	7 p.m.	Soldotna
August 8, 2011	7 p.m.	Soldotna
August 17, 2011	<i>(Board planning session)</i>	
September 12, 2011	7 p.m.	Homer
October 17, 2011	7 p.m.	Soldotna
November 7, 2011	7 p.m.	Soldotna
December 5, 2011	7 p.m.	Soldotna
January 9, 2012	7 p.m.	Soldotna
February 6, 2012	7 p.m.	Soldotna
March 5, 2012	7 p.m.	Soldotna
April 2, 2012	7 p.m.	Soldotna
May 7, 2012	7 p.m.	Seward
June 4, 2012	7 p.m.	Soldotna
June 5, 2012	<i>(Board planning session)</i>	



Tim Navarre



Penny Vadla

# High achievement of students

## 15 Quest programs

The KPBSD philosophy supports a gifted program that provides alternatives for students dependent on their grade level, academic achievement, potential and social/emotional needs. The focus of all services is to help students grow and fulfill their potential with the goal of finding ways to support and advance a student's learning by providing appropriate daily challenges and experiences.

□ **Mind-A-Mazes 2010** was held at Soldotna Middle School on Oct. 9. Sponsored by the KPBSD Quest Program and coordinated by Gail Moore, this problem-solving competition was attended by more than 200 students and coaches from schools all over KPBSD. Student teams demonstrated their solutions to two problems. Students designed and constructed a device using simple machines to meet the challenge posed in the Long-Term Problem. The Spontaneous Problem required on-the-spot planning and teamwork to design and build the tallest structure, using playing cards and paperclips that would support the greatest number of coins.

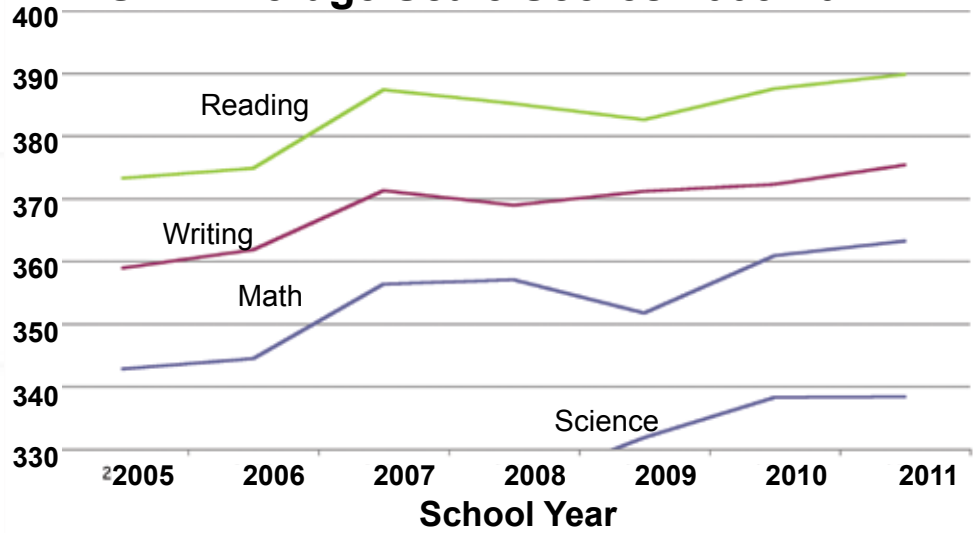
□ **The 2010/2011 Future Problem Solving competition** included challenges of scenario writing, community problem solving, individual problem solving and team problem solving. The Future Problem Solving program is coordinated by Sara Hepner, the program regional director and a retired KPBSD Quest teacher. The State Bowl took place in Soldotna and included 10 teams from KPBSD, as well as many out-of-district teams. KPBSD Junior and Intermediate teams that won first place are going with their parents or coach to compete in the International FPS Conference in La Crosse, Wisc.

### Adding up to fun

□ **The sixth annual KPBSD Middle School Math Meet** offered a challenging math experience to 84 students from 10 District schools April 1 at Homer Middle. The math meet, based on the national Math Counts competition format, was coordinated by Sara Reinert, math professor at Kenai Peninsula College's Kachemak Bay campus, and Suzanne Haines of Homer Middle School.

□ **The ninth annual Elementary School Math Bowl**, coordinated by Augusta Lind, took place May 5 at Seward Elementary School. Thirty-three teams of four to five students each, in grades three to six, tested their skills. The math bowl consists of three components: Math skills — problems that require a strong knowledge of basic math; team problems — multi-step word problems; and a lightning round. An honorary adult team, the Golden Numbers, consisting of Superintendent Dr. Steve Atwater and School Board members Bill Holt and Lynn Hohl also competed.

SBA Average Scale Scores 2005-2011



The "Calculating Coolness" team competes in the ninth annual Elementary School Math Bowl on May 5 at Seward Elementary School.

## Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders

Sixteen 10th- and 11th-grade students from across KPBSD were selected to begin the development of the Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders (KPNYL) program during the 2010-11 school year. The focus of the council is developing leadership skills, providing for community service and establishing contacts with other youth across the state.

The group was tasked with the development of their vision statement, bylaws, constitution and goals, as well as election of leadership. They gathered four times during the school year and were involved in a number of leadership activities. By attending Close-Up in Juneau, they had the opportunity to meet with leaders of the Kenai Peninsula Borough, as well as members of the Alaska Legislature, Gov. Sean Parnell and the leadership



KPBSD Native Youth Leaders students meet with Speaker of the House Mike Chenault, R-Nikiski, during a Close-Up trip to Juneau

of the Alaska Federation of Natives.

KPNYL members presented to the Title VII Parent Advisory Group, the KPBSD Board of Education and created a recruiting presentation that will be used at the beginning of the 2011-12 school year to encourage more KPBSD Native youth to join the council.

Five members will be involved in leadership opportunities during the summer, including a leadership institute at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Close-Up in Washington, D.C.

In 2011-12 KPNYL plans to kick off the year with a membership drive. Council members will visit KPBSD schools to meet with students interested in becoming a part of this leadership group.

# Schools score points in state sports

## Baseball

### State Championships

Soldotna High — tied for seventh place

## Basketball

### Class 4A girls state tournament

Soldotna High — tied for seventh, Academic Award (3.74 GPA)

### Class 3A girls state tournament

Seward — fifth place, Academic Award (3.79 GPA)

### Class 3A boys state tournament

Seward — fourth place

### Class 2A girls state tournament

Seldovia — sixth place



## Cross-Country Running

### 1-2-3A state girls championship

Seward High — second place

### 1-2-3A state boys championship

Seward High — second place  
Miles Knotek, Seward, fourth place  
Brett Chase, Seward, sixth place

## Football

### Small-schools championship

Soldotna High — champion, Academic Award (2.91 GPA)  
Kenai Central High — runner-up  
Homer High — tied for third, Sportsmanship Award

## Nordic Skiing



### State skiing

Bree Mucha, Soldotna, 10th-place, 7.5-kilometer classic  
Brett Chase, Seward, second Class 2-3A skiers  
MacKenzie Barnwell, Seward, second, Class 2-3A classic skiers; third, Class 2-3A freestyle skiers

## Soccer

### Girls state championships

Soldotna High — tied for seventh

## Softball

### Small-school state championship

Homer High — runner-up, Academic Award (3.46 GPA)  
Soldotna High — fourth place

## Swimming

### State swimming and diving championships

Kenai Central High women — Academic Award (3.91)  
Ryan O'Leary, Seward, men's outstanding swimmer; first place 50-yard freestyle; and first place 100-yard freestyle  
Winter Heaven, Kenai, first place 200-yard freestyle; and first place 100-yard butterfly



## Track and Field

### Class 4A girls state championships

Kenai Central High — Academic Award (3.89 GPA)

### Class 4A Boys State Championships

Tyler Spalding, Kenai, high jump champion, triple jump champion, discus champion

## Class 1-2-3A Boys State Championships

Seward High — first place  
Seward High — 1,600 relay and 3,200 relay champion  
Austin Gillespie, Seward, 400-meter dash champion  
Andrew Buchanan, Seward, 300-meter hurdles

## Class 1-2-3A Girls State Championships

Tessa Adelman, Seward, shot put champion



## Volleyball

### 3A championships

Seward High School — fifth place, Academic Award (3.63)

## Wrestling

### Class 1-2-3A state tournament

Nikiski — second place  
Voznesenka — Sportsmanship Award  
Joe Martishev, Voznesenka, 140-pound champion  
Kaden Spurgeon, Nikiski, 145-pound champion

### Class 4A state tournament

Hope Steffensen, Kenai, 103-pound champion  
Auston Tennis, Soldotna, 145-pound champion  
Mitch Wyatt, Homer, 171-pound champion



## KPBSD students shine

□ **Hannah Watkins**, a 2007 Kenai Central High School graduate, has been selected as a 2011-12 Fulbright Scholar providing the opportunity to study, teach and conduct research abroad. She is one of only 35 scholars selected from a national pool of 700 applicants.



Hannah Watkins

Hannah attends the University of Rochester, majoring in biomedical engineering with minors in biology and chemical engineering. She will study at the Institute of Biomedical Engineering at Imperial College in London, and will continue her research focus on delivery methods of chemotherapy.

□ **National Merit Semifinalists\*** — KPBSD had three students qualify as semifinalists in the 56th annual National Merit Scholarship Program for 2011: Alder Fletcher, senior at Homer High School; Ari Bennett, senior at Nikiski High School; and Angela Ramponi, senior at Soldotna High School.

□ **AP Scholar Awards\*** — Ten KPBSD students earned 2010 AP Scholar Awards, from the College Board's Advanced Placement program. About 18 percent of the 1.8 million students worldwide who took AP Exams performed at a sufficiently high level to also earn an AP Scholar Award.

□ **AP Scholar with Distinction Award\*** (scored at least 3.5 on a five-point scale on all AP exams): William McDermid, Soldotna High; and Jason Baird, Homer High.

\*(Names reported from 2010-11 school year)

□ **AP Scholar with Honor Award** (scored at least 3.25 on all AP exams) — Alexander Kauffman, Soldotna High; Mark Walsworth, Homer High; and Tyler Wentz, Homer High.

□ **AP Scholar Award** (scored at least 3 on all AP exams): Jenna Jensen, Soldotna High; Angela Ramponi, SoHi; Jasmine Woodland, So Hi; Benjamin Blue, Homer High; and Corinne Ogle, Homer High.

# Meeting student needs



## Curriculum Management Plan



KPBSD has begun work on a comprehensive Curriculum Management Plan that provides the structure to ensure quality control of the curriculum and instructional process. The plan will help KPBSD obtain the educational and economic benefits of a coordinated and focused program for students, both to enhance learning, which is complex and multi-year in its dimensions, and to employ economies of scale where applicable. It will also provide a strong directional focus for instruction to facilitate the design, delivery and assessment of the curriculum.

We have policies in place that guide development, selection and adoption of major instructional materials. Future policies will provide guidelines for implementing, evaluating and revising the District's written curriculum for all content areas of instruction. Our work will also create the expectation and the context for well-articulated curriculum documents that contain aligned assessments to provide equity of instruction across the District.

The Curriculum Management Plan conveys the intent of the School Board and District leadership that guides the development, scope, alignment and evaluation of the written curriculum in all subject areas. The plan will link the budgeting process and outlines cyclical curriculum examination to assure students matriculate through the educational system prepared, upon graduation, to meet varied life roles.



## Response to Intervention

KPBSD uses the Response to Intervention (RTI) model to identify students of greatest need in specific academic areas. RTI is the practice of team review of student achievement data to identify needs for researched-based interventions that are implemented during the school day. This provides additional time and specific support for students to catch up academically in the identified area of need.

Frequent progress monitoring allows the team to reevaluate data and make decisions about focused changes to the supports provided, and to monitor success. The time and support needed for each student is adjusted based on student progress and targeted to meet the academic deficit. Maximum learning occurs when student deficits are specifically addressed. Many of our schools employ an interventionist who facilitates academic interventions and progress monitoring. Results show students are catching up.



Catching problems and addressing them early helps advance student success.

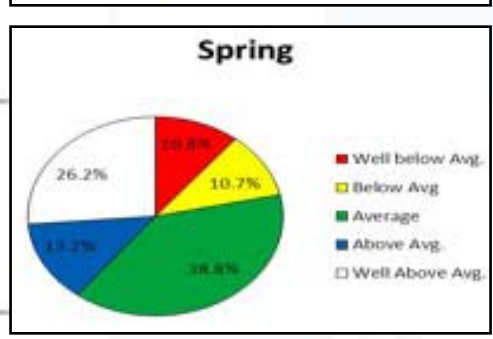
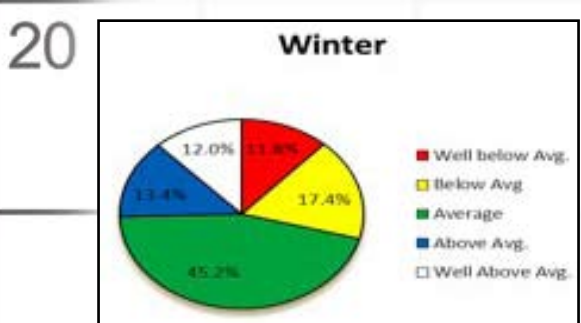
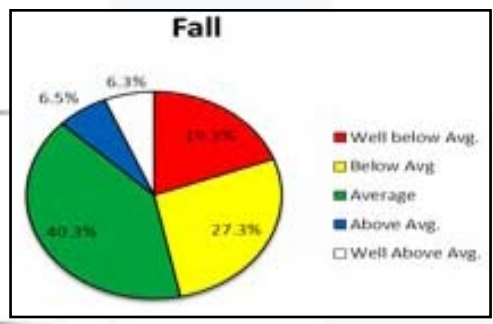


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2 S T A

5 **2010/2011 math computation data from Aimsweb**

Note: The target changes each period. Students must make annual growth plus catch-up growth for sections to change.



**Technology impact**

With KPBSD's recent efforts to provide additional technology equipment to all schools also comes an increased emphasis on active student learning. Within the past two years, KPBSD has placed 374 SMART Boards and added 617 new computers in classrooms, bringing the total computers in the District to about 6,800.



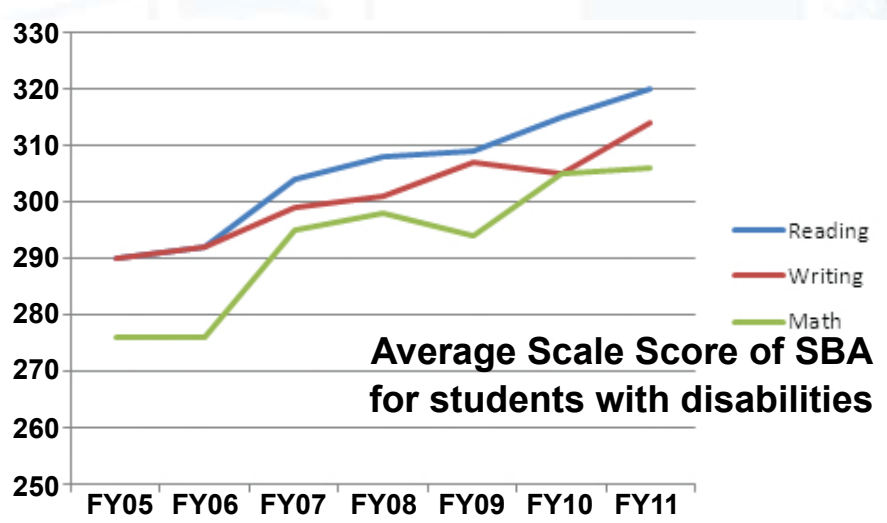
The additional technology has resulted in teachers having the ability to prepare lessons based on real-time current facts, resources and news, as well as tools to integrate resources, such as visual media, into daily learning experiences. These tools also support student interaction and control over their own learning as they team with their teachers in exploring supplemental resources that are available to support the District-approved textbooks and materials.

Professional development is an integral component of implementing any new technology. KPBSD strives to ensure that teachers understand the scope of the technological tools and the importance of establishing time to explore learning with their students, rather than using that valuable time to plan teacher-driven lessons.

**Special Education**

The KPBSD Pupil Services Department believes that all students will reach their individual potential to be productive, life-long learners, who possess strong social skills and are healthy members of our community. KPBSD Pupil Services provides a solid educational experience to all pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade students needing specialized services in our 44 schools. We are committed to using evidence-based instructional practices and programs for all students in need of academic intervention.

Yearly, students with disabilities in KPBSD continue to make strong gains on the state standard-based assessments and rank at or near the top among all school districts in Alaska. We believe in developing strong partnerships with our families and community organizations in order to achieve positive student outcomes.



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# Portraits of our personnel

## MaryLynn Barnwell, fifth grade, Seward El



As MaryLynn Barnwell knows, the standards of good teaching can be applied anywhere — in Seward, Bristol Bay, Venezuela or the Caribbean. Yet for Barnwell, one of those standards is all about the specific location you're teaching in.

Barnwell is integrating the iTREC! (Iditarod Trail in Every Classroom) place-based service-learning program into her fifth-grade classroom at Seward Elementary.

"The important part is taking what's in your local environment and using it as a basis of instruction for your students and

taking it a step farther, utilizing all your community partners and giving back to them in some real, meaningful way," Barnwell said. "And I totally believe in that. Kids can relate to their environment because they live there, and then you take it to being productive in the community, so that's really powerful."

Two years ago Barnwell's class toured around Seward, studying the environment to choose an area they could help enhance and protect. They chose Scheffler Creek, a salmon stream running from Mt. Marathon Bowl toward the boat harbor and along the original Iditarod Trail. Except the stream didn't have many salmon in, so the class set about learning why.

"Once a month we walk over and collect water-quality samples. We also do observations and pictures and pick up garbage and keep it clean," Barnwell said. "They really, really like being outside. They really like being involved and taken seriously. I think any one of my students could tell you what good water quality is and what's supposed to be in a salmon stream and what shouldn't be. The most powerful point is they're learning how to contribute to society. They're really being part of a bigger thing that they feel very strongly about."

Barnwell certainly knows about bigger pictures in education. She's done adult nutritional education while working with social services in the Aleutian and Pribilof islands; she and her husband, Robert, taught for four years in Venezuela; followed by a year of home schooling their three daughters while traveling the Caribbean on a sailboat. In 2005 they moved back to Alaska for jobs at Seward Elementary, with Barnwell teaching fifth grade and her husband teaching sixth.

She especially likes teaching kids to learn about their local community and environment. With iTREC!, there's no end to that lesson.

"I've got that project mapped out for the next 10 years," Barnwell said.

## Debbie Tressler, head secretary, K-Beach El



Debbie Tressler's position as head secretary at Kalifornsky Beach Elementary School may not change from year to year, but her job is never the same.

"The most rewarding thing — and I know it's cliché — is the kids, because your job is never boring. Everybody has things about their job that are so mundane, that you do over and over, but with kids they always change, and you're always learning. The kids are always showing you something you didn't know," she said.

The tradition of "Friday hugs" has become a special high point in her week, where Bill Vedders brings his third-grade class to the office to visit.

"That is really cool. One little girl this year told me, 'You're like everybody's mom.' You can't replace that kind of stuff. And that was just this year. I have 19 years

of this. I can't imagine not working around children," she said.

Each year holds new lessons. One she learned long ago is to never pigeonhole kids, because they have endless capacity for growth and surprises.

"When you watch a kid come into kindergarten and just cannot behave. Then you see him in fifth grade and he has become this intelligent, well-behaved, fun, maybe a little eccentric kind of kid, and you like to see him every day. To see them grow, that's pretty good stuff," she said.

Seeing the future unfold and adapting to it is one of the interesting challenges of the job, but Tressler aims to preserve a perspective on the past, as well. Tressler grew up in the Kasilof area and graduated from Kenai Central High School, moving to the central Kenai Peninsula here when she was 9. She moved back after a few years of college with her husband, and was drawn to work in the school District, since her mother had worked there for years before.

She got certified as a substitute secretary in the early 1980s. Her first several years with KPBSD involved being a substitute secretary at KCHS, in central office and at the warehouse. In 1992 she hired on as a part-time secretary at K-Beach and moved up to the head secretary position in the mid-1990s.

"I just think that a lot of us get focused on the negative sometime, because there's so much negative out there, but I want people to know good things are happening. We have great kids. There are really neat kids in school, and they're going to be neat adults. Positive things are going to happen in the world. If we could all focus on that a little, I think we'll all feel a little better," she said.

## Anisia White, bilingual tutor, Voznesenka School

Anisia White, a bilingual tutor at Voznesenka School, knows what it's like to have to relearn your native language while learning a new one.

Coming from an Old Believer family, her first language was Russian. But as part of the exodus of Old Believers from Russia seeking a new home, she was born in China, had moved to Australia when she was 1 year old, to New Zealand by age 6 and to Brazil when she was 12.

"We, the kids, barely spoke Russian by then, even though our parents tried really hard to teach us our native language at home," White said.

She was 18 when her family moved to Oregon. When she was 21, in 1979, she got a job at a kindergarten home school, which provided an opportunity to get her GED. She's been working in schools ever since, though it was part time while her five kids were in school. She's been at Voznesenka School since just after it opened, having moved with her family to the Old Believer village on the southern Kenai Peninsula

## Wally Hufford, speech

### pathologist, Nikiski North Star El.

Reading, writing, math, science — those are all important platforms of education from which students launch into learning. But with students facing hurdles in communication, it can be a stumbling block keeping them from reaching the levels of achievement they otherwise could.

That's where Wally Hufford comes in. As a speech pathologist, Hufford helps students address challenges with communication early on, so they can set off on a lifelong trajectory of success.

"I just love it when kids get the sound they've been working on for months. It all of a sudden comes to them, they can tell they're doing it correctly now and you can tell they feel so great about it," Hufford said. "That's something a student will take with them for the rest of their life, and it's something I helped them with, so I like that."

Hufford just finished his 25th year as a speech language pathologist for KPBSD, having worked at Tyonek, Nikiski Elementary, North Star Elementary, Nikiski Middle-High School and Kenai Middle schools. Currently he's at Nikiski North Star Elementary. He grew up in Wyoming and Montana and got a master's degree in speech pathology.

"I kind of knew right at that time that this was for me. I thought that it was a good way to help people live better lives, which is important to me," Hufford said. "Communication is vital to our happiness as human beings. The better we are at it, the happier we are, I think."

Hufford came to work for KPBSD after graduate school and got hooked on Alaska. He met his wife, Elizabeth, who retired from teaching two years ago. They have two daughters, Laura, who is entering ninth grade at Nikiski Middle-High School, and Emily, who is entering third grade at Nikiski North Star.

Hufford said it's his goal to do more than just his job, and he finds many ways to contribute to the culture of his schools, like leading various clubs, such as fly-tying, snowshoeing and bird watching. At Nikiski North Star he helped implement the Character Counts program.

"You become a real part of the building and community where you work and live and what not. To that end I've tried to do a lot of different things over the years in addition to my regular job," he said.



## Matt Walton, English, SoHi

The day Matt Walton stops learning is the day he'll stop teaching. After 16 years teaching English at Soldotna High School, it's clear that retirement will get him before a lack of learning ever does.

"I always find myself learning new things, and my greatest instructors have been my students," he said.

Though his first year teaching, in Phoenix, Ariz., in some respects was his most memorable, his time in Soldotna has been his most enriching. After college in New Mexico and a year teaching in Arizona, he and his wife, Patricia, knew they wanted to get back to Alaska — Walton grew up in Anchorage — to raise their son, Ryan, now a commissioned lieutenant in the Air Force, and daughter, Sarah, a student currently on the dean's list at Kenai Peninsula College. He got a job at Soldotna High School in 1995.

Walton likes a challenge, both to himself and his students. None of his freshmen or sophomores can pass the first semester of his class without first earning a 90 percent on a specific grammar test.

"I've never had a student not pass — eventually. They might say a D is passing. Not in my book. You set that bar high and they'll achieve to that bar. If you set it low, they'll aim for low and they'll settle for low. So raise the bar and they'll get there," Walton said.

His particular forte is teaching students with disabilities or who have struggled in academics for one reason or another.

"As a teacher, you learn there's nothing you can't teach, and there are no students who can't be taught. You just have to find a way that works for them. In turn, though, I have to admit that these amazing kids have taught me even more: perseverance, courage, and creativity in both teaching and learning," Walton said.

He's created extensive web pages and online tutorials that students, parents and other teachers can access anytime they need extra help or a new way to look at information. Technology makes that type of replication possible — it literally puts both teaching and learning at everyone's fingertips.

"You're building something and adding to it and revising it and you're constantly asking yourself, 'How can I make this better?' I think the day I quit asking myself that question is the day I say, 'I'm done,'" Walton said.



20 years ago. Her husband, Stan White, retired from teaching at Voznesenka School, and one of their sons, Essaia, is moving into his dad's teaching position.

"I like working with the kids, and I see the need for it," she said. "It's changing now. In the past, at home they mostly spoke Russian and they'd come to school and they'd be confused learning English. But now they come from homes where they speak more English, but the thing is they're picking up the English language kind of from siblings, from watching TV or radio, and when they're speaking it they don't learn it the way they should. When they're talking in the schools sometimes it seems like they've understood everything, but when you really start talking to them in their own language, you realize how much they have actually missed."

White is a proponent of culturally diverse students having a solid start in Russian — or whatever their native language — as well as learning English in school.

"I find that when the kids are stronger in their native language, when they start to learn the second language, that comes to them much easier," she said. "They build a foundation on something solid. Everything on top is easier."



# Graduating to new horizons

## Coty Beck

**15** Football took Coty Beck away from Seward; family brought him home, and now he's considering where in Alaska he'll touch down next.

Born in Minnesota, Beck grew up in Seward, graduating from Seward High in 2006 after being active in basketball, wrestling, soccer and football. He wanted to play college ball and attended Valley City State University in North Dakota, bouncing around a bit before he settled into a major.

"Initially I actually went into fisheries and wildlife. I took the first class and all they talked about was ducks and geese and I got kind of bored. I was more into the fisheries part," Beck said.

Next he tried business classes.

"Punching numbers wasn't my best thing, I didn't find it too interesting," he said.

Then he tried education — his mother, Angela Hammer, has been a teacher for more than 20 years. He graduated in 2010 with a degree in elementary education and a minor in physical education. Then it was home to Seward, where he hoped to find a job, but knew he'd find his family and the landscape he loved.

"I missed Alaska. Out in North Dakota I saw flat farmland," he said.

In Seward, Beck and his girlfriend, Jean Garcia, have plenty of family to help raise their new baby, Landen Beck. Most of her aunts, uncles and cousins live in the area, as do Beck's mom, Angela Hammer, and stepfather, John Grimes, and Beck's brother, Dylan Beck (Seward class of 2009), who is completing a culinary arts degree from AVTEC. Beck and Garcia knew each other from elementary school. She moved, but they reconnected when she came back to Seward the summer after she graduated high school in 2006.

Beck was hoping for a teaching position in KPBSD,



Coty Beck, Jean Garcia and Landen Beck.

but hasn't yet landed one.

"I applied to most of positions here on the peninsula, but my first year right out of college, it's tough. There were 89 applicants for the position in Seward. That gives you a little bit of a picture of how hard it is," he said.

Beck recently landed a job as the recreation coordinator for the Mountain Haven senior citizens center. It's a good opportunity to use his skills and he's looking forward to the job, he said. Garcia will graduate college in December with a teaching degree. In the future the two hope to find positions as a teaching couple. Beck would like to end up working with primary grades.

"I like to see the progress that they make. You see someone who's at a certain level and you bring them up to where they should be at, and even beyond that. I think, with the younger kids, you can see the progression even more," he said.

## Whitney Schollenberg

Whitney Schollenberg's life since graduating from Ninilchik School in 2003 is inextricably intertwined with an array of friends and family, which is fitting, considering how important personal ties are in her life.

"I am definitely a small-town girl. We call Anchorage a big city. Growing up in a small town, having the community feel and really having your family here, not everybody has that, with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and everybody here. We had the opportunity here to do a lot of things that not many families get to do. We basically spend half our lives on the beach (her dad is a fisherman). That's something you don't get everywhere."



Schollenberg, daughter of Dan and Jamie Leman and sister of Tasha Boin (Ninilchik Class of 2000) and Krista Leman (Ninilchik Class of 2007), was a prominent basketball player at Ninilchik School, and went on to play for the Seawolves at University of Alaska Anchorage.

She transferred to Eastern Oregon University with her boyfriend since high school, and now husband, Jason Schollenberg (Ninilchik Class of 2004). A big draw was continuing her Ninilchik basketball roots, playing with her cousin Amanda Matson (Ninilchik Class of 2004).

An injury her senior year kept her off the court, but she was involved in sports in other ways. Since college she's been an assistant high school basketball coach, played city league basketball and softball and hopes to coach again.

"Sports have always been a big part of my life. It there's one thing that's going to be part of my life forever, it's sports in some way shape or form. And family," she said.

All three graduated from EOU in 2008, with Schollenberg obtaining a bachelor's degree in media arts with a minor in business. T

he Schollenbergs moved to Anchorage, where Jason is a surveyor with Edge, and Whitney works for the CIRI Foundation as a program assistant, helping students navigate the scholarship process. She can certainly relate.

"It's all about the work you put into it. Going to college doesn't just plop into somebody's lap. If you want to go to college or vocational school, there're resources out there to help you. If you want to go, you need to go do it, make it happen," she said.

The Schollenbergs would like to move back to Ninilchik to be closer to family one day, especially when they have their own additions to the clan.

"I really think that you need to make the most of where you are because sometimes, being from a small town, it has its perks and it has its downfalls. You need to decide which way you're going to go with it. You need to make the most of it," she said.

## Jennifer McCard, Alex Peterson



Attending the University of Southern California in Los Angeles was a significant culture shock for Alex Peterson and Jennifer McCard, having grown up in Soldotna. After that, the jump to life abroad for this married couple was not such an intimidating leap.

Peterson graduated from Soldotna High School in 2003, and McCard in 2001, and both attended USC. Peterson graduated in 2005 with a degree in international relations and a minor in business, and McCard in 2006 with a degree in environmental studies and a minor in international relations. The couple returned to Soldotna, finding positions mirroring their interests. Peterson worked in the information technology department at KPBSD, and McCard was a

watershed scientist for the Kenai Watershed Forum.

Although people from Outside may consider Alaska an exotic locale, these two wanted to put their international studies to use somewhere new to them. Peterson accepted a position with the U.S. Foreign Service in Kigali, Rwanda. He is an information management specialist for the U.S. State Department inside the U.S. Embassy in Rwanda, where he supports classified and unclassified communications, including radio, phone, mail and computers. By working at a small post, Peterson has been able to participate in projects to promote U.S. exports to Rwanda and serve as the resident telecommunications policy officer.

McCard is the deputy operating officer at Manna Energy Limited, an international business that develops sustainable technologies to improve environmental and public health conditions for impoverished communities around the world. She works mostly from home, managing day-to-day operations of the company's Rwanda office, including financial matters, liaising with U.S.-based management and public relations. She said she enjoys working on projects like utilizing solar energy to purify drinking water and designing efficient cook stoves because it allows her to mitigate the impacts of climate change while simultaneously improving the quality of life for Rwandans.

They have been in Rwanda for about two years and the experience has not failed to expand their horizons.

"Our house is on a typical African dirt road featuring a steep driveway that's luckily ice free year-round. Rwanda has nearly perfect weather all year," McCard said.

In October, the couple will transfer to Brasilia, Brazil.

"This career path fits us well because of our love to travel," McCard said. "We both had teachers during our KPBSD academic studies that encouraged us to push our boundaries and follow our passions."

## Katie Bauer

Out of everything Katie Bauer learned in high school — a science and math background, and emergency medical technician experience, for example — she gained a work ethic that is even more applicable.

**56** Bauer graduated from Homer Flex School in 2007. She brought a self-directed work ethic to her secondary schooling developed from being home schooled for most of her education, by her parents Adam and PJ Bauer, of Homer. She attempted Homer High School and realized it wasn't a good fit for her, and gravitated to the most personalized opportunities of the standards-based Flex program.

"I think Flex is a great school. If you are the kind of person who knows you want to go to college, Flex will definitely help you achieve that," Bauer said.

Graduating at the top of her class, she qualified for the University of Alaska Scholars program and used it



Photo courtesy of McKibben Jackinsky, Homer News to further her training in the health care field.

"I became a volunteer EMT in Homer when I was 17. It was a way of volunteering in the community," she said.

She split her schooling between Kenai Peninsula College Kachemak Bay Campus and the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and graduated as valedictorian of KBC in 2011 with an associate of arts degree and an associate of applied science degree in paramedicine.

In checking out advanced-track nursing programs across the country, where she can take her clinical hours from her paramedic degree and apply it to a nursing degree, Florida had immediate appeal.

She plans to spend the next two years obtaining a bachelor's degree in nursing while her husband, Daniel Turner, who graduated from Homer High School and from the University of Alaska with an associate of applied science degree in municipal fire control, works as a firefighter. Long-term, Bauer would like to become a neonatal intensive care nurse and expects that she and her husband will end up back in Alaska.

For now, though, she's excited to getting the most out of their time in Florida. "I'm looking forward to living next to Walt Disney World," she said.

# 12 13 14 Central to the Community

## Partners in growth

The primary purpose of school buildings in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is to facilitate the education of the youth of the peninsula, but that is far from the only purpose they serve.

The buildings have a much broader life, enhancing the quality of life and functionality of the communities in which they are located. Through partnerships with governments, nonprofit organizations, churches, businesses, public safety agencies and other entities, school facilities are utilized for gatherings, recreational activities, community education, trainings and workshops, arts and cultural events, and even as Red Cross-designated shelters in case of emergencies.

Especially in smaller towns, schools can be among the most centralized, heavily used buildings in a community. Often they are the only facilities large enough to accommodate communitywide events and gatherings — such as festivals, concerts, meetings or even funerals. Schools also can be the only facilities outfitted with specialized equipment or technology — like swimming pools, theaters, computer labs and basketball courts. As such, community members, even without any kids in their lives, still feel a sense of connection and ownership in their local schools.

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## Ninilchik Pool

In the central Kenai Peninsula, a portion of Ninilchik School unites all ages of the surrounding area.

"If the pool weren't open there would be an outcry," said Ginny Johnson, pool manager. "We're just open for anybody who wants to come in. In the winter it's boring around here so, we have lots swimmers coming in."

Her regulars are "the mafia," as they call themselves — a group of senior citizen ladies who come in for regular exercise sessions, with water aerobics taught by a 92-year-old instructor.

"She tells me, 'That's the only thing that keeps me alive.' I have to get to work and keep the pool open — Maxine will die," Johnson joked.

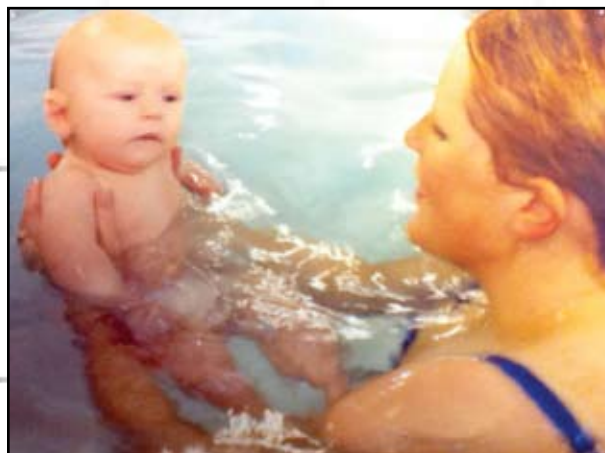
The Ninilchik Traditional Council sponsors a preschool swim program and free, after-school swim once a week that is always packed. It's used by Alaska State Troopers for water-rescue trainings and by SCUBA divers working on their licenses. Babies are baptized in the pool, home-school students use it for physical education, and all Ninilchik School students are well-versed in swimming skills and water safety, including kayaking and canoeing classes, and a junior high marine tech class where students practice wearing survival suits and practicing what to do if they're on a sinking boat.

"A lot of kids and adults around here fish in the summer," Johnson said. "The pool is the hub of our community."



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## Kasilof Public Library

Residents of Kasilof, Clam Gulch, Ninilchik and points south looking for a good book to take home or the newest issue of a magazine to flip through may take it for granted that they'll have to drive to Kenai or Soldotna to find a library to suit their needs.

They'd do well to check that assumption, and check out the Kasilof Public Library.

"Some people don't know we're here, but we're trying to change that," said librarian Katja Wolfe.

Located inside Tustumena Elementary School, the Kasilof Public Library boasts a collection of books, magazines, graphic novels and audio books in a variety of genres.

With the exception of a few campgrounds in summer, the Kasilof Public Library is also the local area's only source of public wireless Internet access.

"We're getting more and more people coming in just to use the Internet, either our Wi-Fi, or one of the three public computers. We're also hoping to have a few more computers for people to use," she said.

The library hosts monthly classes, events and community meetings. It also participates in the inter-library loan program, so even if it doesn't have a title, Wolfe can get it upon request for free. Though serving the educational needs of the school is the first priority, keeping up with the community is a close second. Dozens of new titles are added monthly.

"Some are purchased by request. I purchase some that are on various best-seller lists, and I read several reviews. I have a pretty good idea of what people here like," she said.



Rugby is one of many activities offered by Soldotna Community Schools at Soldotna Middle School.

## Community Schools

Soldotna Community Schools and Homer Community Recreation are thriving education and activity programs that offer much-needed enrichment and learning opportunities. The Soldotna program is over 30 years old and holds 60 to 70 classes each winter and spring session in arts and crafts, sports, conditioning and other physical activities, technology, fishing, cooking and about anything else community members would want to learn or teach.

It's run through the city of Soldotna, but simply would not exist as extensively as it does without the use of KPBSD facilities, said Carmen Triana, program director.

"Without the schools, it would definitely mean the program wouldn't look at all like this," she said.

Most programs are held at Soldotna Middle School, with others at Skyview and Soldotna high schools.

"We use everything, from the gym to the home economics room, the computer lab, the library. One of the coolest things about using a school is you've got these great buildings that have these really specialized rooms. To be able to open a building like that up to the community is huge. You can have a community computer class and actually have a computer for each student to use," Triana said. "The partnership makes it possible for us to develop a lot higher quality of a program with a lot lower funds necessary. What I'm really passionate about is about how cool it is that we can use a building like that and have the whole community benefit."

In Homer, the community recreation program offers over 120 programs a year, with over 3,000 participants and over 80 volunteers putting in over 2,300 hours of volunteer service. Most programs are recreational, held at Homer High or Homer Middle Schools. Of the 3,038 participants in 2010, 1,292 were youth, said Mike Illg, program coordinator.

"In Homer, we don't have a teen center. We don't have a recreation center. There's a history of the high school as a community center where so many things are happening, which is why we have a lot of support and a lot of participation," Illg said.

"Not every single School District student participates in school activities or sports or teams, so we offer casual recreation opportunities. And we all know the benefits of why we need to keep our youth active and healthy and busy, so we have been filling a need for over 35 years that this program has been around."

# KPBSD makes good sense

## Economic impact

A new study assessing the economic significance of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District on the Kenai Peninsula Borough has found that KPBSD adds up to a sizable effect on the borough economy. Findings indicate that for each School District job, 0.43 jobs are created in the borough through indirect and induced economic activity. The study also determined that for every dollar of School District payroll, 30 cents of additional payroll is created in the borough.

The Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) of the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) conducted the study, based on an Alaska-specific input/output model created by Dr. Scott Goldsmith of ISER and using data from the fiscal year 2010 budget. Kim Pitney, of the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship at UAA, created a poster of the findings, which is available through KPBSD for anyone interested in more information.



## Programmatic Staffing

Programmatic Staffing was implemented starting in fiscal year 2009, after the Alaska Legislature enacted changes to the funding formula to better support education and help address funding inequities affecting KPBSD



and other school districts. Rather than adjust only the pupil/teacher ratio, KPBSD created targeted programs that were implemented with the expectation they would be evaluated and adjusted depending on effectiveness.



A student takes aim in Sterling's archery class.

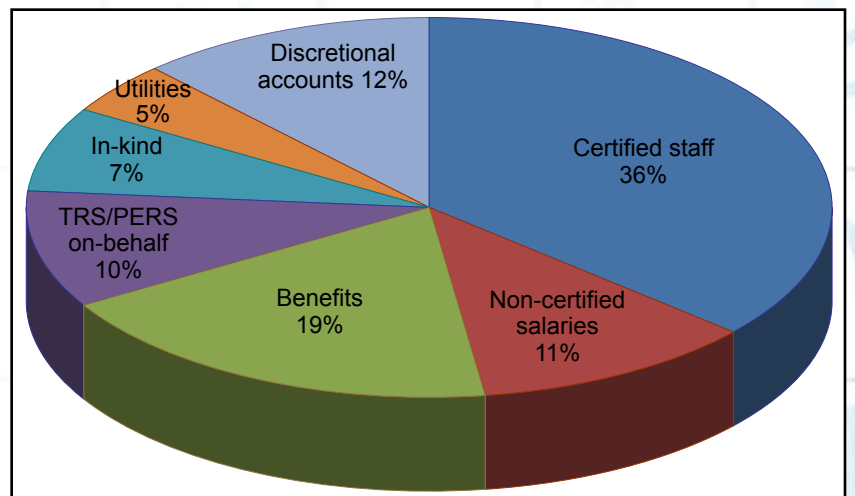
Changes included an increase in staffing at middle and high schools for electives, such as vocational education, creative/practical arts, foreign languages and credit recovery; reduction in the high school counselor/pupil ratio; addition of intervention staff districtwide for kindergarten through eighth grade; and implementation of the Read 180 program at all middle schools.

## Revenues, expenditures

More than three quarters, 76 percent, of the General Fund budget is spent on salaries and benefits. About 10 percent of that is a payment made by the state of Alaska on behalf of the District to pay down part of the unfunded liability in the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) and Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) retirement accounts. To comply with accounting requirements, this payment is reflected on School District financial statements both as revenue and expenditure. TRS and PERS on-behalf payments are made by the state for all participants in the programs and are scheduled to continue for 20 years.

In-kind expenditures by the Kenai Peninsula Borough are also reported as revenues and as corresponding expenditures on the School District financial statements, as required by accounting rules. The in-kind payments comprise 10 percent of the Expenditure budget and are devoted to property, liability and workers compensation insurance payments, maintenance on school buildings and audit services, as well as custodial services and utilities at District Office.

Of the remaining 17 percent, 5 percent is dedicated to utility payments for schools and departments, including electricity, water and sewer, fuel for heating and natural/bottled gas. That leaves 12 percent for supplies, software, contract services, phone, postage, travel and other discretionary



accounts.

The state of Alaska requires that 70 percent of funding for education be spent on instructional functions. When the fiscal year 2011 budget is sorted by function, it shows that KPBSD exceeds that requirement, as 72.9 percent of the budget is dedicated to instruction.

## For every operating dollar spent in the general fund in 2010-11:

\$0.66 was spent on salaries and benefits



\$0.12 was spent on all other discretionary accounts



\$0.10 was spent on TRS/PERS on-behalf



\$0.05 was spent on utilities



\$0.07 was spent on in-kind services



# Snapshot of kpbsd

where kids come first

## Mission:

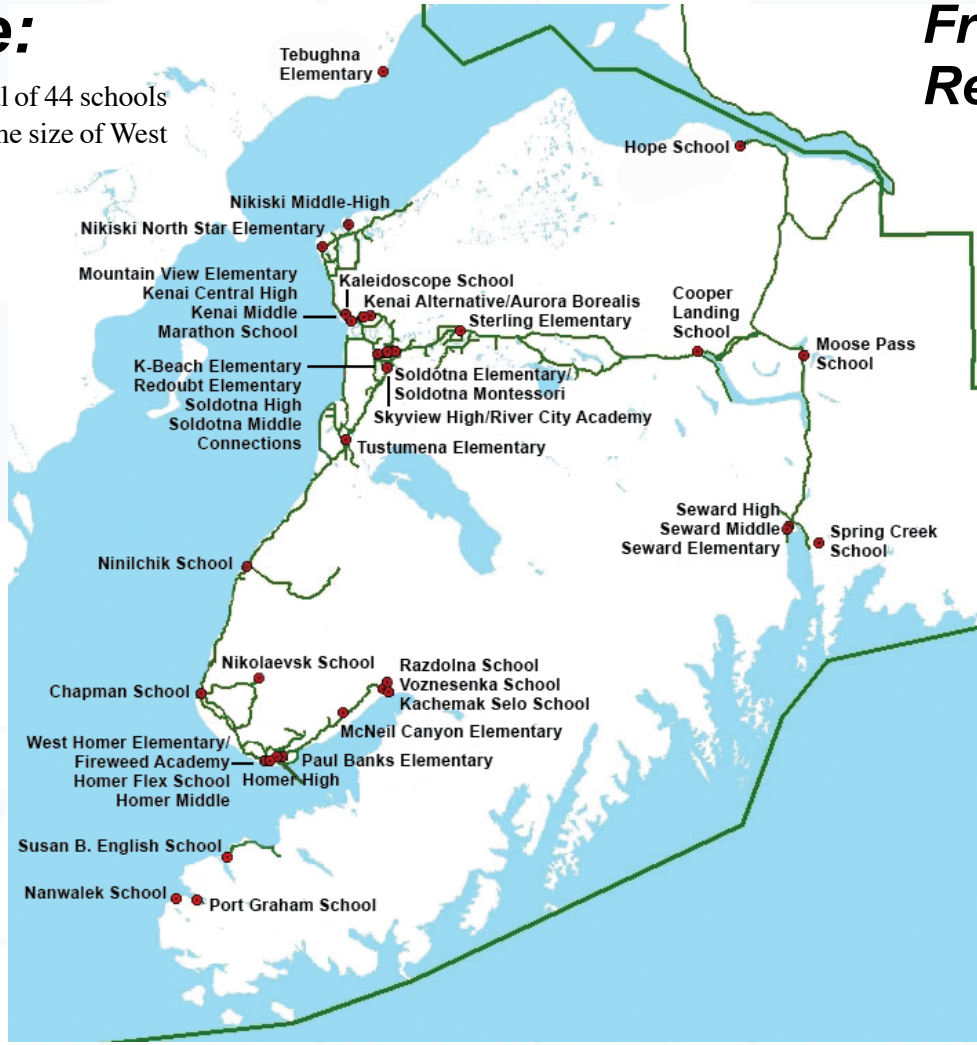
The mission of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, in partnership with its richly diverse communities, is to develop creative, productive learners who demonstrate the skills, knowledge and attitudes to meet life's challenges, by providing stimulating, integrated learning opportunities in a safe,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

## District size:

The School District has a total of 44 schools and covers a land area roughly the size of West Virginia (25,600 square miles).

## Student transportation statistics:

Each school day, 2,679 students are transported a total of 7,507 miles on school buses throughout the District.



## Free and Reduced Lunch:

A total of 3,346 KPBSD students, or 44% of the student body enrollment, qualified for free or reduced-price meals during the 2010-11 school year. Across the state roughly 40% of students enrolled in Alaska schools that sponsor school meal programs qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

## Homeless:

As of May 10, 2011, 300 students were identified as homeless in the District. This number reflected a 7% increase from May 2010.

## Enrollment, fiscal year 2011:

Preschool.....	195
Kindergarten-6th grades.....	4,649
7th-8th grades.....	1,400
9th-12th grades.....	2,884
Total projected enrollment for 2011-12 school year.....	9,148

## Teaching Excellence:

56.43% of KPBSD teachers have an advanced degree. 83.80% of KPBSD teachers are Highly Qualified in the subject in which they teach.



## Student Statistics (ethnicity and race):

White.....	78.5%
Black or African American.....	0.6%
Hispanic or Latino.....	3.0%
Asian.....	1.4%
American Indian.....	1.2%
Alaska Native.....	10.9%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.....	0.5%
Two or more races.....	3.9%

## Average Years Experience with KPBSD:

Teachers.....	10 years
Support staff.....	8 years

## Staffing Ratios:

Type of School	Pupil/Teacher Ratio
Elementary schools with more than 200 enrolled students: Kindergarten	1:20
Elementary schools with more than 200 enrolled students: Grades 1-3	1:22
Elementary schools with more than 200 enrolled students: Grades 4-6	1:24
Middle and high schools	1:24
Small schools with less than 200 enrolled students: Grades K-6	1:17