



# KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Office of Superintendent

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## M E M O R A N D U M

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**DATE:** October 9, 2007  
**TO:** Members, Board of Education  
**FROM:** Donna Peterson, Ed.D. *Donna Peterson*  
Superintendent of Schools  
**RE:** 2008 Federal Legislative Priorities

During the worksession on October 1, the five federal priorities from last year were reviewed. Attached are these same priorities with updated rational language. The administration recommends your approval.

## **Kenai Peninsula Borough School District 2008 Federal Legislative Priorities**

### **Fund adequate housing for teachers in Nanwalek and Tyonek**

The remote Native Villages of Tyonek and Nanwalek suffer from high teacher turnover. A new duplex in Tyonek was built last year and has enhanced the District's ability to recruit and retain quality teaching staff. A second duplex is needed in Tyonek as well as a similar complex in Nanwalek. With this change from substandard housing and the expected continuity of staff, student achievement will likely be positively impacted. Work with the Denali Commission on this project has been positive.

### **Address health care costs in the United States**

In Alaska more than 110,000 residents have no medical insurance and the price of treatment is increasing. In the U.S. 47 million people have no health insurance. The uninsured drive costs up for everyone. For school districts in Alaska these health care costs for current and retired employees is a growing problem. In many districts these costs add up to more than 10% of the budget. In the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District health care costs comprise approximately 10% of the budget. This growing budget category mitigates districts' ability to directly impact student achievement through classroom focused expenditures.

### **Fully fund Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandates**

In order to ensure a quality education for all Alaskan students and meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act federal funding must be sustainable, reliable, and adequate. NCLB requirements for assessment, targeted student services, teacher and paraprofessional qualifications and services for children in transition require funding support far above current funding levels. Restrictions on transferability of funds for districts in improvement hinder the ability of these districts to effectively address identified needs therefore need to be relaxed. Less restrictive transferability regulations would allow for increased learning opportunities for struggling learners in high poverty areas and low performing student groups.

### **Fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

IDEA was reauthorized in 2004. Congress originally promised to fund up to 40% of the excess costs of educating students with disabilities under IDEA. Currently congress has authorized expenditures to cover just less than 18% of the excess costs nationally. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District believes that congress should fund the full amount they originally promised. To do otherwise requires local districts to reduce funding for general instructional needs to meet the needs of special student populations. This results in another under-funded mandate passed down to state and local governments.

### **Develop East End Road from Homer to top of hill above Kachemak Selo**

The East End Road provides access to three Russian Villages: Razdolna, Voznesenka and Kachemak Selo. State road maintenance ends at the end of the pavement at mile 20.5. The remaining portion of the road is a two mile long, very steep, gravel road, ending at the Kachemak Bay bluffs. This road has a very poor sub-base with a silty gravel cap. There are several annual frost heaves and significant hills and curves with very little platted right-of-way. Borough Road Service Area maintenance extends two miles, from the end of the pavement to the bluff.

This project is intended to plat the road in a more favorable location, reduce the hills, improve drainage, and add an appropriate gravel surface. Repairs to the road will allow school buses to use the road, improve emergency vehicle access, and protect the safety and well being of the KPBSD staff members and community members who travel this road on a daily basis.