

From the Superintendent

"Building on a Solid Foundation" has been the theme for this school year. After receiving the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) designation as a district for an unprecedented second year in a row, KPBSD was poised to refocus on the next levels of student success. The goal of student achievement, as measured by this important accountability tool, had been met. But in the District's spirit of continuous improvement, that simply wasn't enough.



Donna Peterson, Ed. D.
Superintendent
of Schools

KPBSD celebrated this monumental success and quickly moved to "what's next?" With the Board of Education leading the charge, the next steps involved developing individual learning pathways and options for each student. The pathways are intended to help each student reach his/her highest personal potential. For those needing extra assistance, a Response to Intervention (RTI) model has been established. The results of the (RTI) are proving positive for many students in catching and addressing learning challenges early, before they become significant obstacles. The District Instructional Team worked on facilitating new levels of collaboration between staff and schools. The District has high-performing, leading-edge teachers who, by working together, have discovered excellent new ways to reach and teach students so they will be prepared for an uncertain, but global, workplace.

The bridge to the future is truly about creating educational experiences that encourage students to be creative, innovative and collaborative. Young people learn differently than ever before. They need to be able to think and problem solve. Our classrooms need to be places where critical thinking and authentic learning happen daily, where students conduct real research and experiments. Our young people are dedicated to making the world a better place, and "schooling" provides them with the tools to do so.

As I bid goodbye to the District after a decade as superintendent, I will close with a heartfelt thank you. The students, employees, parents and community members have enriched my life in unimaginable ways. I send best wishes for the continued success of the excellent schools on the Kenai Peninsula, a place that continues to be known and recognized for its unsurpassed quality of life. Education is truly the key that makes the magic of the community come alive.

Donna Peterson, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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.

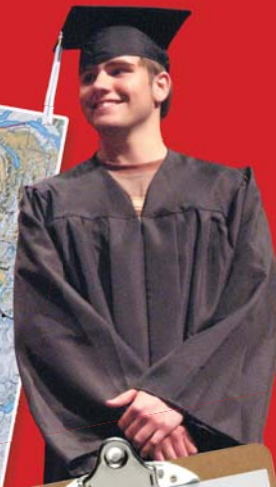
The Kenai Peninsula

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 and yet 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

This brochure is provided by the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

148 N. Binkley St.
Soldotna, AK 99669

907-714-8888
www.kpbsd.k12.ak.us

BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION

Kenai Peninsula Borough
School District

ANNUAL REPORT 08-09



2008-09
Kenai
Peninsula
Borough
School
District

Board of Education GOALS

1. Increase graduation rate/decrease dropout rate
2. Increase parent/community engagement
3. Develop an Individual Learning Pathway for each student

HIGHLIGHTS

- Staff trained and autism primary classroom opened at Mountain View Elementary.
- Background checks for volunteers successfully implemented, with pilot process improved at four schools and communications materials developed and distributed to parents, schools, volunteers and the public.
- Nanwalek teacher housing construction progressing, with contracts signed, materials barged to site and construction completion expected over the summer. Modern, attractive and comfortable housing will help attract and retain the best teachers possible to remote sites.
- Curriculum updates under way: Science curriculum implementation complete, with summer science institute and follow-up meetings with K-12 teachers held. World languages curriculum developed and materials selected.
- Social studies needs assessment completed.
- Plan developed for Skyview building utilization including input from community leaders, Borough Assembly members, School Board and administration. River City Academy (formerly Peninsula Optional High School) will move into building.
- Gifted student Plan of Service completed.
- Legislative work on equalizing District Cost Factor for education funding; Assistant Superintendent Dave Jones appointed to task force by Governor Sarah Palin.
- Emphasis on best practices for increasing graduation rate.



The Educational Program

Assessments are an everyday part of education. Student achievement is checked, efficiency of instructional materials and strategies is monitored, financial accountability is tracked, and so on. One of the challenges for a large school district is to take a step back from day-to-day matters, holistically assess itself and use the findings to make meaningful improvements. During the 2008-09 school year, KPBSD did just that. This introspection led to changes in instruction, curriculum development and how we provide help for our struggling learners.



Last fall, the District applied for an Alaska Performance Excellence Award, which involves reviewing all aspects of how KPBSD functions as an organization. KPBSD scored very well for a first-time applicant, and although we didn't receive the award, the review of our application provided us with valuable, practical feedback that we are now using to make improvements. Foremost of these is creating opportunities that will allow us to benefit from the collective strength of the District. The District is creating new, electronic methods for teacher communication so that staff across the District can share their ideas and the practices they use to meet the needs of students. With our students, improvements in teacher-student accessibility were made with the implementation of on-line communication applications and with two of our schools piloting a one-to-one laptop computer initiative. The District will continue to create opportunities for staff to regularly collaborate with one another.

On the instructional front, the District presented teachers with an extensive plan that proposed to significantly change many of its major processes for instruction and assessment. After receiving teacher feedback, it was decided to adopt two of the plan's four main areas. One was to increase the level of collaboration. The other was to intensify the focus that our curriculum development places on learning



goals, which can be viewed as the most important concepts of a content area. This focus differs from the more traditional long list of standards and will ensure that our students do not miss key concepts.

In line with the review of instructional practices is the growing interest in performance-based education. Several of our small schools are now either completely performance based or will be testing these waters next year. In this system, students progress through levels after demonstrating proficiency of the standards, rather than clocking a certain amount of "seat time" in a class or grade. These students are not tied to grade-level work, but rather to a level of content that matches their skill level. Thus, some students move at a rapid rate, while others take a little longer to complete their studies.

The District's Response to Intervention (RTI) process continues this year as a way to offer extra support for students who are struggling to master concepts within a content area. Our addition of interventionists at elementary and middle schools allowed us to provide these students the individualized help they needed. We are continuing to refine our process for this area and are generally looked upon as a state leader in RTI.

Programmatic Staffing

KPBSD revised its staffing formula for 2008-09 to positively impact student achievement, improve the District's graduation rate and meet the needs of all students in preparing them for the post-secondary world.

The changes included adding 15 percent to the staffing formula at high schools and middle schools to offer more diversity of elective offerings. Similar-sized schools have similar programs that are focused at the high school level and allow for exploration at the middle school level. Counselor staffing was increased at the high school level to work with students individually as they prepare for post-secondary opportunities. Interventionists were added to the elementary and middle schools to work with struggling students at a critical time in their educational career and help with the transition to high school.

A significant change occurred at the elementary schools where the pupil-teacher ratio was improved to 1:24 for grades four through six. This allowed our intermediate grades to provide individualized instruction to meet each student's unique needs and to develop higher-quality relationships in preparation for the next steps in their career within KPBSD.

Response to Intervention

KPBSD is committed to providing timely and appropriate academic support for all students. Through the full implementation of the Response to Intervention (RTI) process, teachers are able to regularly monitor student academic progress and provide immediate, focused support through individual learning plans.

KPBSD is proud to be recognized throughout the state of Alaska as a leader in the implementation of RTI. All elementary and small K-12 schools fully utilize the RTI process following a districtwide protocol. Middle schools are working toward the effective application of the process, and high schools have started exploring how the RTI model fits into a secondary schedule with plans to begin initial implementation in fall 2009.

Seventeen certified interventionists work with school teams and teachers to provide additional academic support for students identified through the RTI process at the elementary and middle school levels. Increases in student scores throughout the school year have demonstrated the positive impact of this strategic and targeted intervention model.



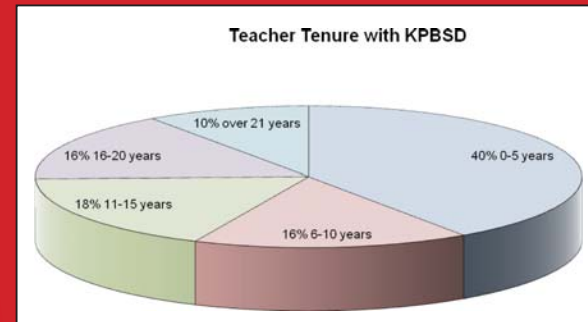
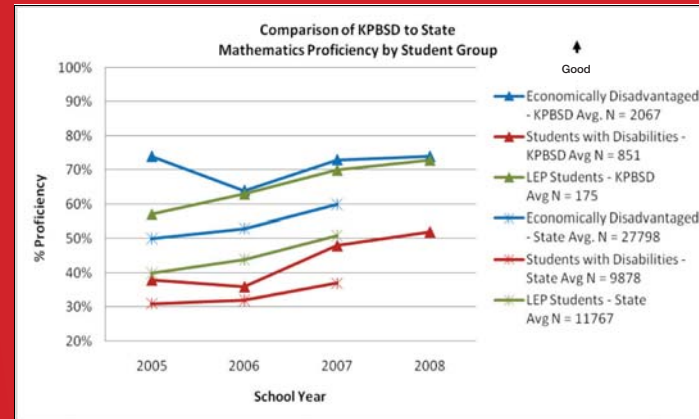
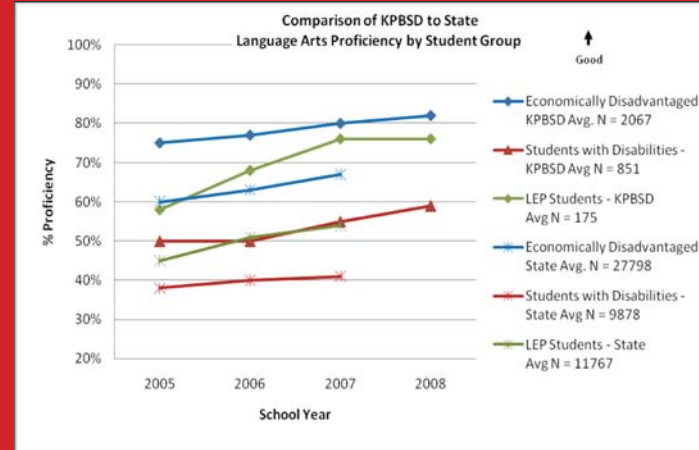
Professional Development

Implementation of the new professional development plan began in the 2008-2009 school year. The District Professional Development Steering Committee (PDSC) was established and professional development site liaisons were selected. Avatar, the new professional development management software, went live in November.

Members of the PDSC met throughout the year and created a professional development needs assessment, which assisted with planning the focus of next year's professional development opportunities. The PDSC also developed a process and procedure for graduate-level professional development courses and for site-level requests for professional development. The site liaisons were instrumental in training staff in the professional development management software, collecting and distributing professional development information and acting as a bridge between the schools and the PDSC.

In addition to the implementation of the new plan, many professional development opportunities were conducted throughout the school year, including a district-wide inservice in January with over 600 certified employees attending. Large and small group collaboration was utilized as participants explored the proposed District-level change to instruction and assessment to improve student achievement.

Achievement Profile



Technology

KPBSD Distance Education Program

Distance delivery proves that just because some of KPBSD's communities are isolated, education in those schools doesn't have to be. The District continues to utilize technology to bring all sites closer together by sharing resources, improving communication and offering online classes. In 2008-09, 300 students were enrolled in distance education courses based on KPBSD curriculum, including language arts, government, world history, U.S. history, health, pre-algebra, geometry, advanced algebra, calculus, Earth science, biology, keyboarding, personal finance, accounting, childhood development, tourism, drafting, computer applications and software design. Due to demand, the program will expand offerings into art and world languages, and assume oversight of the District's credit recovery program.

The majority of students served by distance delivery are at the high school level, but there are opportunities for other levels. For example, elementary students could participate in virtual field trips, and the middle school level could see enhanced Response to Intervention efforts in language arts and math, while providing enrichment activities developed through students' individual learning plans.

Distance delivery also can be an invaluable tool in facilitating the District's professional development program, and several development opportunities are being explored through distance delivery methods. Ideally, the program would facilitate the technical aspects of professional development for District staff.

Saving energy means saving money

KPBSD's energy conservation program is now in its second year. The program has been quite successful, thanks to the conscientious attention of school personnel and students who have embraced the conservation attitude. Through the program, schools are eligible for an incentive award where they get back 25 percent of the utility bill savings they create through energy conservation.

Last year, the District achieved a 19.4 percent reduction in the amount of electricity used in schools, 14.4 percent reduction in natural gas usage and 5.4 percent reduction in fuel oil. Based on the average usage of utilities for the previous four years, and the extreme cost increases for energy, KPBSD would have spent about \$934,500 more on utilities had it not been for these reductions. Due to the conscientious effort at KPBSD schools, the District was able to limit the increase in utility costs to about \$196,000. KPBSD conservation efforts resulted in a cost avoidance of an estimated \$738,000.

The incentive awards given back to the schools this year amounted to \$189,000. These funds, which previously would have gone to pay for utilities, were redirected to classrooms throughout the district for student and school supplies.

Plugging in the Tech Plan

During the summer of 2008, KPBSD continued implementation of its highly successful technology plan, now in its ninth year. One hundred thousand dollars was spent on instructional software and 675 computers were placed at 11 schools. Computers displaced at those schools were dispersed to 31 other schools, replacing older computers. After that, 227 surplus computers were sold to the public.

A multi-year project was completed to replace our antiquated telephone infrastructure with Internet Protocol (IP) phones that run over the District's data network. This effort modernized our voice equipment while lowering monthly telephone bills.

After the successful implementation in 2008 of new Finance/Payroll/Human Resources software running on PC servers, the District was able to end our two-decade dependence on expensive, proprietary mainframe computer systems.

Through the generous gift of the use of two strands of fiber-optic cable from Homer Electric Association and a long-term private network contract with Alaska Communications Systems, the District has secured a gigabit network between Homer, Soldotna and Kenai, connecting 16 of our sites for the next 10 years.