



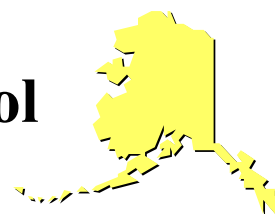
# West Homer Elementary School

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

995 Soundview Avenue

Homer, Alaska 99603

<http://westhomerelementary.blogs.kpbsd.k12.ak.us/wpmu/>



Eric P. Waltenbaugh  
Principal

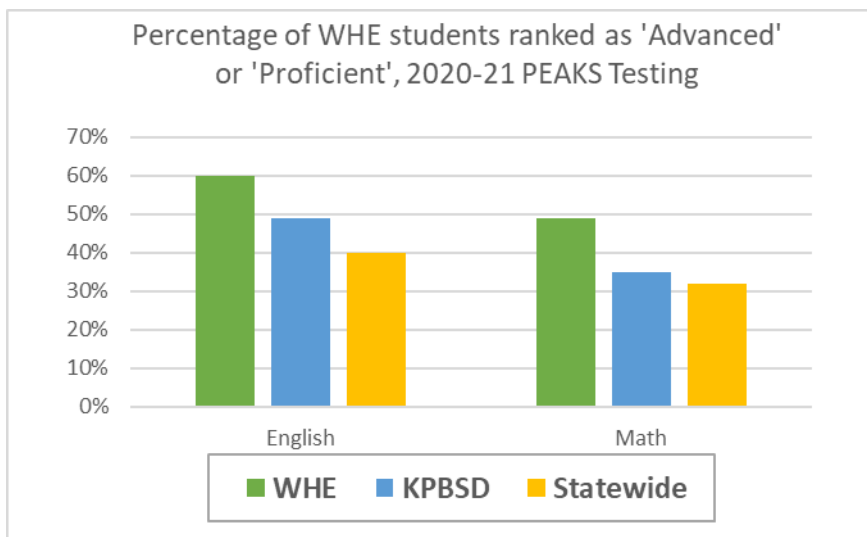
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March 23, 2022

Dear Members of the Alaska Legislature,

We are writing to you as families from West Homer Elementary School (WHE) to encourage stable and strong investments in our schools. Here at WHE, our children are in grades three through six. Our school is run by fantastic people – teachers and paraprofessionals and administrators and a nurse and a part-time mental health counselor among many other staff and volunteers. All of these people participate in the lives of our children to make their days enriching and safe.

School funding is critical for strong results from our students. From the PEAKS testing for grades 3 through 6 in 2020-2021, WHE kids (175 of them) outperformed the district and the state. Our school is one of many throughout our district and the state providing Alaskan children with a safe, challenging, and inspiring place to learn and grow. Our public school system is one of the state's greatest assets and requires adequate funding.



The pandemic has reminded us of a lot of things – the importance of community, communication, understanding, patience. These last few years of a pandemic also have come on the heels of budget cuts and years of uncertainty in school funding and stability in Alaska. Our school system is pushed to its limits with budget cuts. To invest in Alaska, we need strong, stable schools for our children.

This is all to say, please look to investments in our schools. We are doing the work as families to support our kids at home. And we look to the State and the Borough to strategically fund schools so they can do the work of supporting Alaska's children at school. With a revised revenue forecast, you have an unforeseen opportunity to invest in this state asset and set that stage for years to come in the FY23 budget. Together, we will ensure a vibrant future with and for our kids.

**We encourage you to consider the following action items:**

- Support HB 272 and HB 273 to increase the Base Student Allocation and tie it to inflation. Our kids deserve better. Our schools have been doing less with less as inflation and rising fixed costs have eaten away from dollars into the classrooms. The BSA needs to be increased and should adjust as all costs adjust with inflation.
- Fully fund the state's portion of school bond debt reimbursement.
- Ensure ongoing (post-CARES etc.) funding for mental health counselors in schools.
- Support forward funding of our K12 schools.
- Continue to explore ways to honor the Alaska Constitution's dedication to education in our public schools through stable, consistent funding of our schools and the state Department of Education.

Thank you for your work on behalf of families across Alaska. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us with any questions about our experiences as WHE families!

Sincerely,

The West Homer Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization  
Homer, Alaska