



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of Superintendent

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Alaska Legislature
Senate Education Committee
Senator Gary Stevens, Chair
State Capitol Room 429
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support for Senate Joint Resolution No. 9, early funding for K-12 education

Dear Senator Stevens and Education Committee Members:

This letter is in support for Senate Joint Resolution No. 9. If approved, this resolution would result in early funding for K-12 education, which supports the statutorily established hiring timeline for the school districts in Alaska.

This resolution would bring certainty to our school district during the budget development process. In turn, this provides the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (and all school districts in Alaska) the opportunity to retain and attract high quality educators for our students. This resolution would abolish the political endgame that is typical within our legislature where education funding is the pawn at the end of a legislative session. As sessions have become more divisive, they now extend beyond the statutory 90-day session and frequently extend beyond 120 days into special sessions. Missing these important deadlines, especially the 90-day term, causes uncertainty in school district budgeting. Our school board must approve a budget on April 1 and then submit it to the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly. In addition, time, resources, and attention are diverted from instruction and school leadership when principals are asked to design district level contingencies and "what if" scenarios due to unknown funding. Fiscal uncertainty leads to quality teachers and staff leaving our schools because they cannot be guaranteed a position for the next year. If quality replacements can be found, they must be trained and provided supports that take additional funds and expertise.

Education is frequently criticized for not being run like a business. I do not know of any business that prepares a budget months in advance of their known revenues and with timelines for hiring that typically occur before the funding entities agree on the level of funding they will provide to education. SJR 9 will allow districts to know their revenues in advance of the statutory hiring deadlines, recruit early in the process if necessary, and allow certainty among staff, which leads to retention of high quality teachers.

Timely funding is a part of the top priority of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District and this resolution would go a long way toward meeting this goal.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the impact of this resolution to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. I welcome your input and suggestions on how to help move this legislation forward.

Respectively,

Sean Dusek
Superintendent of Schools