

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District 2016 State Legislative Priorities

Provide sustained, reliable and adequate educational funding for Alaska's students

While the State of Alaska is currently experiencing fiscal challenges, a multi-revenue fiscal plan to eliminate the highs and lows of oil dependent funding must be developed. Adequately funding public education is a legal responsibility of the State of Alaska and is its primary financial concern. The education funding plan should be consistent, reliable and predictable. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is accountable for the dollars entrusted to our District and supports measures that will allow our District to operate in a more efficient manner. The District stands ready to work with the Legislature to find the right solutions for solving today's fiscal crisis.

Control health care costs to school districts

The cost of health care for KPBSD increases every year. KPBSD has worked hard to find efficiencies to lower these costs; it has not been able to slow the overall increases. More funds for health care reduces the amount of funding that can be devoted to the classroom. KPBSD stands ready to work with the Legislature to explore all options to control the increase of health care costs to all districts.

Fund early learning programs in Alaska

All children should have opportunities to learn during the formative early childhood years. The District uses a portion of its federal Title I money to offer preschool to about one-third of its four year olds. The students who attend our preschools are more likely read on grade level at the end of third grade. Thus, KPBSD has experienced a reduction in the need for remediation and the associated cost of services for these students. KPBSD recommends that the Legislature issue a block grant for early childhood education and encourages the DEED to apply for federal funds. Further, the District advocates that enrollment in early childhood education be accessible for all children.

Review and reconsider the state's bond reimbursement program moratorium

KPBSD's facilities are aging and many have significant maintenance needs. In the past the Kenai Peninsula Borough voters have approved bond funding for school maintenance projects. KPBSD encourages the Legislature to review existing needs state-wide and reconsider the current moratorium. KPBSD appreciates past support and encourages the Legislature to reinstate this necessary program in order to maintain, upgrade, and replace existing facilities.

The mission of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is to develop productive, responsible citizens who are prepared to be successful in a dynamic world.

KPBSD Board Members and Superintendent

Joe Arness, President	Marty Anderson
Sunni Hilts, Vice-President	Liz Downing
Dan Castimore, Treasurer	Bill Holt
Penny Vadla, Clerk	Lynn Hohl
Brian Dusek, Student Representative	Tim Navarre
Sean Dusek, Superintendent	

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District 2016 Federal Legislative Priorities

Reauthorize Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

KPBSD calls on Congress to reauthorize the ESEA with accountability provisions that are based on student growth. Further, KPBSD requests that the reauthorization consider unique state situations and not have the Act be a “one size fits all” as a way to respond to those provisions that are not suitable for Alaska.

Maintain funding for federal programs

The ESEA was designed to help students living in poverty. Over the years, our neediest students have benefitted greatly from these extra funds. Our District has relied on these funds to provide innovative professional development for our teachers and to lower class sizes in our neediest schools. While KPBSD understands the need to reduce federal spending, the District feels that reduction of support for ESEA should be a last resort.

Fund early learning programs in Alaska

All children should have opportunities to learn during the formative early childhood years. Studies show that for every \$1 spent on early childhood education, \$8 is saved in later services that are not necessary. Many of Alaska's children are placed at risk for future school failure because they do not have access to rich early childhood learning opportunities. The District uses a portion of its federal Title I money to offer preschool to about a one-third of its four year olds. KPBSD recommends that Congress offer grant opportunities directly to school districts for early childhood education. Further, the District advocates that enrollment in early childhood education be optional for students.

Affordable Care Act (ACA) cost differential

The District is concerned that the Excise Tax (Cadillac Tax) on the value of health insurance benefits will cause a substantial cost increase, especially as the rate of costs will require ever increasing deductible thresholds to meet the ACA requirements. The District recommends that there be a regional cost differential recognizing that health care costs in the State of Alaska are the most expensive in the country.