



## KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Office of Superintendent

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March 27, 2019

State of Alaska  
House of Representatives Finance Committee  
Representative Neal Foster, co-chair  
Representative Tammie Wilson, co-chair  
State Capitol Room 505  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Testimony on budget to House Finance Committee

Dear Representative Foster, Wilson, and House Finance Committee members:

On Saturday, March 23, 2019, our district communications liaison provided verbal testimony to House Speaker Edgmon, Representative Johnston, and Representative Knopp in person at the community budget conversation in Kenai. This letter serves to put our testimony in the official record.

We are living in unpredictable times. The proposed budget from the Governor fueled important conversations. We are educating youth for jobs that do not yet even exist.

Over the past seven years, to meet annual deficits, the district has:

- Spent \$9.1 million from general fund balance savings
- Found and implemented \$8.5 million in reductions over the past five years through district initiated efficiencies, district office reductions, staff reductions, etc., with a focus to keep cuts as far away from classroom as possible and protect the pupil-to-teacher (PTR) ratio

This totals \$17.5 million use of savings and reductions in KPBSD to meet the deficit over past seven years. For perspective to wrap your mind around this figure: every \$1 million is approximately ten teachers.

It is uncertain if the district will receive the FY19 one-time funding of \$1.4 million.

The proposed state cut is a 25.7% reduction to the district. The budget the Governor proposed for FY20 is a \$20.9 million reduction in state funding to our district, and also triggered a \$1.5 million reduction to the amount the Borough can fund. There could be even more cuts if other state reductions and pending legislation impact Borough revenue, and the Assembly does not vote to fund to the maximum allowable, or cap. The proposed state reduction is a \$22.4 million cut to the school year that begins in August.

A comprehensive analysis is underway by district leadership to meet the potential budget cut. Valuable discussions about priorities are taking place with the Board of Education. A flyer listing the cuts that would be necessary include raising PTR in classes, elimination of sports and co-curricular activities, school closures and consolidations, among other things. The flyer is not a scare tactic. If the district did everything on the list, it is still \$5 million shy of a \$22.4 million cut.

The district has more than 100 non-tenured teacher contracts that cannot be offered to staff the district invested time and resources in, and who are valued in their school settings. There is unpredictability with our staff, who we hear are seeking alternate employment now, and assessing their personal options.

Our district is diverse: 43 schools over 25,600 miles, includes small community schools, neighborhood schools, charter schools, a homeschool, and four schools accessible only by boat or plane.

Our state experiences the highest costs in the nation for health care, workers' compensation, and heating fuel. This contributes to the claim our state has the highest cost of education in the nation. An idea for legislative action is to address the continued rise in health care costs for school districts through statewide pooling, or incentives.

Adverse Childhood Experiences—ACES are rising. Our school district does have positive outcomes and we continually improve through personalized learning, and educating the whole child. Weekly stories highlight our graduate successes.

We do not have the answers to solve the fiscal limitations the state is experiencing. If implemented, the outcome of these cuts would devastate our communities.

Sincerely,



Sean Dusek  
Superintendent of Schools



## \$ 22.4 million

### A sobering look at what the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District would have to cut to begin to meet the Governor's proposed reduction to state funding

- The Governor Michael J. Dunleavy 2019-2020 State Budget proposed drastic cuts to education funding
- Alaska State Legislators could honor the FY20 education funding put into law in 2018 by the 30th Legislature
- KPBSD schools are funded by the State of Alaska and the Kenai Peninsula Borough



**CLASS SIZES  
AND  
STAFF REDUCTIONS**

**Increase Pupil-To-Teacher (PTR) ratios:**

- Plus 7 students to high school classes
- Plus 6 students to middle school classes
- Plus 2 students to elementary school classes
- Plus 2 students to K-12 school classes
- Plus 3 students to Connections Homeschool
- Reduce administrators
- Eliminate professional development support for new teachers

**Support staff reductions:**

- Eliminate some job classifications
- Reduce hours for some positions
- Reduce contract days in annual work calendar











**SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES  
DISTRICT PROGRAMS**

- Discontinue and eliminate all sports in high school and middle school, athletic directors, coach stipends, extra-curricular activities including music, yearbook, DDF, etc., ASAA, and KPSAA activities
- Eliminate the District Mobile App
- Eliminate FY20 School Technology Plan purchases
- Discontinue inservice meals and snacks
- Reduce funding to Student Nutrition Service (SNS)
- Reduce school funding to charter schools: Aurora Borealis, Fireweed Academy, Kaleidoscope School of Arts and Science, Soldotna Montessori
- Cut school supplies by 10%






**SCHOOL  
CONSOLIDATIONS  
AND CLOSURES**

- Close Chapman School
- Close McNeil Canyon School
- Close Moose Pass School
- Close Nikiski Middle-High School
- Close Seward Middle School
- Close Soldotna Prep School
- Additional consolidations and closures are under review

**Close Pools in:**  
Kenai, Homer, Ninilichik, Seldovia, Seward, and Soldotna

**Close Theaters in:**  
Kenai, Homer, Nikiski, Seward, and Soldotna








**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

In addition to this list, \$5 million further in cuts would be needed to meet the deficit the Governor's proposed budget would create. State funding reductions link to how much the Borough can fund, creating an even further reduction to education funding. Current bills before the legislature may also affect Borough revenue. This creates an even larger deficit.



- Contact your state legislator via phone, email, or attend a town hall meeting
- Testify at a legislative hearing in a LIO office, make a phone call, or write a letter
- Attend Borough Assembly meetings, talk to Assembly members about "local" Borough funding
- Talk to your principal or school site council about the impact of education funding reductions to your school
- Advocate for a realistic state fiscal plan, speak up and share your positive stories about education

[www.KPBSD.org](http://www.KPBSD.org)

The mission of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is to empower all learners to positively shape their futures.



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ANCHOR POINT COOPER LANDING HOMER HOPE KACHEMAK SELO KENAI MOOSE PASS NANWALEK NIKISKI NIKOLAEVSK NINILCHIK  
PORT GRAHAM RAZDOLNA SELDOVIA SEWARD SOLDOTNA STERLING TUSTUMENA TYONEK VOZNESENKA