

April 5, 2018

To The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District School Board:

We are writing to you today in light of proposed policy changes, specifically those regarding dual credit changes that would allow one high school credit (one year) for a three credit college class (one semester), and providing weighted grades for college courses at a 200 level or higher. These changes will have adverse impacts upon Homer High School for a number of reasons.

By providing one year of high school credit for a semester of college credit, we are unfairly incentivizing students to take college classes they may not be prepared for. Furthermore, we contend that the breadth of learning in a yearlong class at the high school level is more than a semester class. For example, in U.S. History, a college class is split into two chronological sections divided at the Civil War, so a student who takes only the second semester will miss the historical context for the Founding Documents, Federalist/anti-federalist debate, and the Constitution and a student who takes only the first semester will miss the World Wars, Great Depression and New Deal, and the rest of the 20th century. A similar concern exists within language arts classes: a high school course requires students to focus on literature (multiple genres), non-fiction texts, composition (multiple forms), grammar, speaking, and listening, while a college class might focus exclusively on composition or literature. Finally, the pedagogical approach at the university level is almost exclusively lecture, which is the antithesis of the school district's emphasis upon personalized learning.

Additionally, by incentivizing this program with such energy, we fear that socio-economic inequality will be exacerbated as only students whose families have the financial means will participate in this program. We believe the effect will be to "track" students even more so than already happens and greatly diminish the socio-economic and academic diversity of our classrooms and school learning environment.

Although more abstract, though no less damaging, these proposals will irreparably harm the academic and social culture at Homer High School. With a flood of students exiting the building to take college classes, the nationally recognized academic culture at Homer High School will suffer. Furthermore, programs like student council, which rely upon a strong and engaged student body, will be increasingly challenged to prepare and empower student leaders to serve their school and communities because students will be less invested in the culture of HHS. Furthermore, the cultural implication of vacant hallways and empty classrooms is one that discourages a climate of innovation and discovery.

In addition to the damage that this policy change will induce, we are concerned about the impact of weighting the grades of college classes. This will mitigate the value of AP classes, which Homer High School has worked hard to implement. These rigorous college preparatory courses, which require a national review for accreditation and an end of course exam for potential college credit, will have little value and incentive for students. We have already observed this trend with our AP US History classes.

Although the intent to incentivize students to take college classes is commendable, the impact on high schools around the school district, including Homer High School, will be detrimental. The message it will send to students, parents and teachers is that the education offered at the high school is not valuable. As school board members, we hope that you will represent all of the students in our schools.


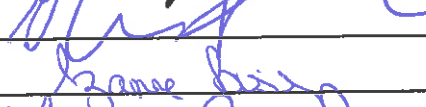
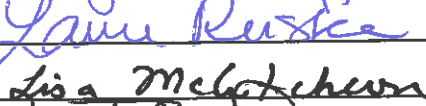

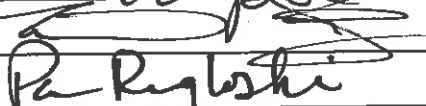
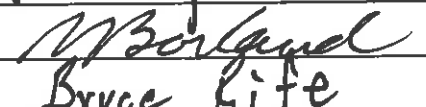
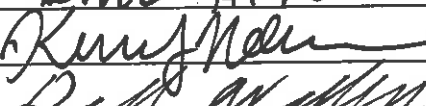
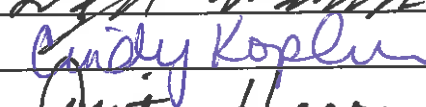
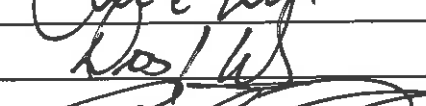
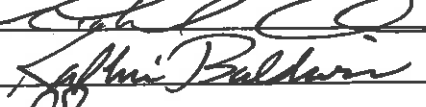
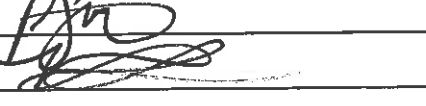



Kind Regards,

Homer High School Staff

Name

Signature

Sean Campbell  
 Gordon Pitzman  
 Suzanne Bishop  
 Laura Reiske  
 Lisa McGutcheon  
 Heather Kerchenberg  
 Reba Temple  
 Matt Stineff  
 Pam Rugloski  
 Michelle Borland  
 Bruce L. Kite  
 Kendra Nelson  
 Douglas Wiclawski  
 Cindy Koplen  
 Anita Harry  
 Kristin Metz  
 CHRIS PERK  
 Dennis J. Welch  
 Michael Torzo  
 KATHIE BROWN  
 Paul Story  
 Vicki Lowe  
 Sara Fisher

  
  
 Suzanne Bishop  
  
 Lisa McGutcheon  
  
  
  
 Pam Rugloski  
  
 Bruce Kite  
  
  
 Cindy Koplen  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  


Name

Signature

Gia Baker  
 Sharon Gorman  
 Jessi Felice  
 Deb Curtis  
 Clayton Smith  
 Alayne Tetor  
 Connie Akers  
 Wink J. M. ~~AK~~  
 Lin Hampson  
 Scot Akers  
 Alison Mall  
 Lauren Scaton  
 Walter Love  
 Daniel Newsted  
 Kyle Schneider

Gia Baker  
 Sharon Gorman  
 Jessi Felice  
 Deborah C Curtis  
~~AK~~  
 Alayne Tetor  
 Connie L. Akers  
 Wink J. M. ~~AK~~  
 Lin Hampson  
 Scot Akers  
 Alison Mall  
 Lauren Scaton  
 Walter Love  
 Dan Newsted  
 Kyle Schneider

**From:** Dawn Edwards-Smith

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 3, 2018 1:42 PM

**To:** John O'Brien <JO'Brien@KPBSD.k12.ak.us>

**Subject:** RE: IMPORTANT Policy Instructional Change Considerations

John

I spoke with my Site Council (which includes both parents and students) about these changes. They were 100% supportive of these proposed changes. Especially the dual credit and GPA bump are important to them. As students at a school without AP Courses, having an avenue for bumping a GPA helps to level the field ...

Thanks

Dawn

April 22, 2018

Dear Mr. O'Brien,

You asked in your email dated March 30, 2018, which was titled "Important Policy Instructional Change Considerations", that we reply regarding feedback shared by our Site Council.

1. PE Waiver Changes: Our Site Council believes that NYO already is personalized, along with keeping/using an "Activity Log", or even having the ability to count chopping wood. The Council appreciates having this waiver available.
2. AK Studies waiver: Our Site Council believes that it would be fair to waive this graduation requirement, if the student is new to the state during any of their high school years, not only during their second year, or after taking a similar class in a different state.
3. Dual Credit Change: Our Site Council appreciates this possibility to assist a high schooler to take college classes, and receive simultaneous high school credit. They also very much like that KPBSD offers reasonably-priced college classes for juniors and seniors.
4. Early Graduation: Our Site Council did not fully understand the point of this. They felt it was subjective.

Thank you for the opportunity to reply on these possible "Policy Change Considerations".

Sincerely,

Pamala Potter, on behalf of our Site Council  
Tebughna School