



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education

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2020 State Legislative Priorities

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District stands ready to work with the Alaska legislature to find the right solutions to fully implement the following priorities in order to support development of world-class graduates from our public schools.

- **Public Education**

Section I of Article VII Health, Education, and Welfare of the Alaska State Constitution is clear. The legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State, and may provide for other public educational institutions. Schools and institutions so established shall be free from sectarian control. No money shall be paid from public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD) fully supports what our State's founders promised all generations of Alaskans. The public school insures the preparation of all children for effective citizenship in our state; as such, it is critical that public funds go to support public schools.

- **Timely, sustainable, adequate education funding plan that addresses inflation**

The State of Alaska must provide timely, sustainable, adequate revenue for public schools in Alaska. This funding must be consistent, reliable and predictable to provide full funding to meet the diverse and significant needs of our students. Early notification of funding is critical for sound financial management, as well as recruitment and retention of quality educators. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD) is accountable for the dollars entrusted to it and supports measures that will allow our district to operate in a more efficient manner.

- **Safe Schools, Positive School Climate, & Social and Emotional Learning**

Providing a safe school environment conducive to learning is a high priority. Schools have experienced many safety challenges and tragedies in recent years around the country. The State of Alaska must provide the funding to retrofit many schools to provide more secure schools. This will take a significant capital improvements budget.

School safety is not only related to the physical plant, it is also strongly related to the school's climate and culture. The state must provide financial support so schools can partner with local communities to implement comprehensive, culturally appropriate school-based mental health programs that support and foster the health and development of students. Adequate funding is necessary to enable schools to increase, recruit and retain more school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and mental health specialists. Additionally, funding is needed to increase professional development opportunities for districts in planning and implementing interventions for students experiencing childhood trauma and other mental health challenges. Meeting the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) needs of students is essential to ensure this.

- **Health Care Costs**

The cost of health care for KPBSD continues to increase every year between 6% and 12%. district has worked hard to find efficiencies to lower these costs; yet has not been able to slow the overall increases. More funds for health care reduces the amount of funding devoted to the classroom. It is critical that the State of Alaska develop a long-term, sustainable plan that addresses rising health care costs that are negatively impacting all sectors of Alaska.

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

KPBSD Board Members and Superintendent 2019-2020

Penny Vadla, President	Lynn Hohl
Zen Kelly, Vice President	Greg Madden
Dan Castimore, Clerk	Matt Morse
Mike Illg, Treasurer	Jason Tauriainen
Debbie Cary	Cameron Blackwell, Student Representative
	John O'Brien, Superintendent