



July 30, 2020

John O'Brien
Superintendent, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
148 North Binkley Street
Soldotna, AK 99669

Dear Superintendent O'Brien,

As cases of the COVID-19 coronavirus continue to rise across Alaska there is a growing sense of concern regarding the reopening of public schools on the Kenai Peninsula. We are writing today to acknowledge the collaboration the district has offered during the development of our Smart Start framework, and to ask for more as we approach the first day of school.

KPEA members want to be back in our schools, working directly with students. We know that this is the best way to ensure they are getting everything out of their lessons and are properly prepared to move forward in their education. What we don't want to do is put anyone, students, educators, or our communities, in danger. As the leader of this district it is incumbent upon you to take bold and specific steps to inform and instruct our educators about the mitigation policies the district is taking, prior to reopening a single school.

KPEA require the following before the plan can be considered actionable:

- Guarantee that proper PPE, dividers, sanitizers, and other protective structures and equipment will be provided by the district in sufficient quantities to protect staff and students.
- Masking must be mandatory for staff and students.
- Clear, concise, definitive guidance developed in detail, in cooperation with our association, on procedures for notifying educators, families, and communities of infection in district work sites.
- Clear expectations of which individuals will be quarantined when an infection is detected, how their job duties will be affected, and how their absence will be accounted for at the building level.
- Details about the process for applying to, consideration for, and execution of teleworking for educators.
- Urgent communication from school administrators to staff detailing building-specific plans and procedures, and consideration and inclusion of staff input.
- Clear consideration and protocol for educators with children of their own to handle their job duties and provide for their families.



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- Actionable plan to solve the sub shortage immediately, including numbers of individuals that have applied to sub, a clear process of approval, and dates of training to be held before schools open.
- Details about funding and its use to prepare each school building to be operated safely during a global pandemic.
- A procedure for the shift to online learning with expected timeframes, responsibilities, and plans to address inequities our students and staff face as fairly as possible.

KPEA is fully aware of the diversity of the public schools in our district. Maintaining flexibility is prudent so that individual schools may develop plans based on their unique circumstances. We must however urge that the district provide specific guidance to all schools that is based on the most current scientific evidence and recommendations of public health officials at the state and national levels.

Over 70% of KPBSD public school employees surveyed recently stated that they were uncomfortable fully reopening our schools. For that to change, we need decisive and clear leadership before educators and students return to the building.

Thank you for your leadership and we stand ready to assist in any way possible to ensure a safe and productive school year.

Sincerely,

KPEA Executive Board

David Brighton, President
Mark Fraad, Seward Elementary
Sam Pugia, Redoubt Elementary School
Robert Ernst, Nikiski Middle/High School
Becca Walker, Mountain View Elementary
Megan Murphy, Soldotna High School
Maryjane Hadaway, Skyview Middle School
Winter Marshal-Allen, Homer High School
Elaine Chalup, Voznesenka School
Kim Bates, Mountain View Elementary
Nathan Erfurth, Soldotna High School

From: John O'Brien <JO'Brien@KPBSD.k12.ak.us>
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2020 5:34 PM
To: David Brighton <DBrighton@KPBSD.k12.ak.us>
Subject: RE: KPEA Letter to Superintendent

Thank you David...I am committed to continued collaboration with teachers, support staff, principals, and all KPBSD work groups as we dive deeper beyond the Smart Start Framework document and into the granular aspects of all of the necessary details to safely open schools. I am committed to continuing to take bold steps to inform and ensure that our educators are trained and prepared to implement mitigation and operational plans at each of our 42 schools, program sites, and the District Office. By the conclusion of the Leadership Academy next week, all 42 of our schools should have a clearer understanding of how to operationalize the District's Smart Start guidance for their unique schools. The safety and well-being of every student, staff member, parent, and community member are always at the forefront of every decision that is made.

Earlier today I informed the entire KPBSD staff community of the new face covering requirements and the continuation of our symptom free schools and workplace protocol. Each and every area you highlight in your letter either already has a protocol ready to implement or one that is in development. Hundreds of teachers, including special education staff, from throughout the district have been invited by their building principals to collaborate and be a part of our School Start Up Leadership Academy on August 5th and 6th. School teams will return to their schools to engage their entire staff in further collaboration and implementation specific to their school. You and the KPESA President are also being invited to participate.

As we collaborate over the next three weeks before schools are open for students, I ask that you communicate to me any concerns you have immediately so that we can attempt to resolve issues as soon as possible. I am focused on creating solutions and your help is valuable. Thank you for your acknowledgement of the collaborative process thus far and your willingness to continue in this spirit. Take care.

Wishing you success and positive impact,

John O'Brien
Superintendent of Schools
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
(907)-714-8888

From: David Brighton <DBrighton@KPBSD.k12.ak.us>

Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2020 4:34 PM

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

Subject:

John,

Please find the attached letter.

Sincerely,
David Brighton

David Brighton
KPEA
President
(907)690-573
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