



KPBSD SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION DISCUSSION FY 26 - 29

School Consolidation Discussion

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Purpose

- State Statute **4 AAC 31.016 (School/Community requirements)**
- Identify which school can legally be identified for closure/consolidation
- Potential Considerations
- Development of a rubric to determine each identified consideration for consolidation or closure.
- Questions and Answers

State Regulations

4 AAC 31.016

(b) Each group of public schools in a school district that meet the following criteria will be established as a single attendance area:

(1) all schools serving students in any of the grades 9-12, and located within a single home rule, first class, or second-class city; an attendance area under this paragraph includes all feeder schools, if any, for those schools;

(2) each school serving students in any of the grades 9-12, and located outside of a unified municipality or of a home rule, first class, or second-class city; an attendance area under this paragraph includes all feeder schools, if any, for that school;

(3) all schools located within a unified municipality; however, a high school and all of its feeder schools within a unified municipality will be established as a separate attendance area, if the high school

(A) is located more than 13 road miles from the next nearest high school within the unified municipality; and

(B) together with all of its feeder schools has an ADM in excess of 1,000 in grades kindergarten through 12;

(4) all schools located on a military installation, if access to those schools can be limited by security measures of the installation.

(c) The commissioner will establish an attendance area in addition to those described in (b) of this section if the commissioner is satisfied that the schools in that attendance area are geographically separated from the nearest school in the attendance area established under (b) of this section in which the schools of the additional attendance area would otherwise be included.

4 AAC 31.900 - Definitions

(25) "attendance area" means an attendance area established under 4 AAC 31.016;

(26) "feeder school" means a school that does not serve students through grade 12 and that feeds students to another school serving grades higher than those served by the feeder school;

(27) "geographically separated" means

(A) lacking year-round, publicly-maintained road access to other district schools; or

(B) separated by more than 20 road miles from the closest other school in the district;

Assuming maintaining an enrolment greater than or equal to 10 students the following schools may not be closed:

Cooper Landing - 4 AAC 31.900 (27B)

Homer School - 4 AAC 31.900 (27B)

Hope - 4 AAC 31.900 (27B)

Kachemak Selo - 4 AAC 31.900 (27A)

Kenai School - 4 AAC 31.016 (1)

Moose Pass (27 miles to Seward, 20 Miles to Cooper Landing) - 4 AAC 31.900 (27B)***

Nanwalek - 4 AAC 31.900 (27A)

Ninilchik - 4 AAC 31.900 (27B)

Port Graham - 4 AAC 31.900 (27A)

Razdolna or Voznesenka could be combined legally (no space) but one school would be required. - 4 AAC 31.900 (27B)

Seward School - 4 AAC 31.900 (27B)

Soldotna School - 4 AAC 31.016 (1)

Susan B English - 4 AAC 31.900 (27A)

Tebughna - 4 AAC 31.900 (27A)

NOTE: The term School encompasses a school serving K-12 students and is not broken into grade levels.

Schools that can be legally closed or consolidated

Homer Area:

Chapman
Homer Flex
Homer High
Homer Middle
McNeil Canyon
Paul Banks
Razdolna
Voznesenka
West Homer Elem

Kenai Area:

Kenai Alternative
Kenai Central High
Kenai Middle
Mountain View

Nikiski Area:

Nikiski Middle/Senior
Nikiski North Star

Seward Area:

Seward Elem
Seward High
Seward Middle

Soldotna Area:

K-Beach
Redoubt
River City Academy
Skyview Middle School
Soldotna Elementary
Soldotna High
Sterling
Tustumena

Recommending for consideration for school closure / consolidation:

- 1. Focus on Consolidating Within Communities That Have More Than One School** Rationale: Urban or semi-urban areas with multiple facilities offer more consolidation opportunities with less disruption. Considerations: Reduces the need for long-distance transportation. Often provides flexibility in repurposing buildings for alternative uses. Can allow for program enhancement by pooling resources and staff.
- 2. Consider Impacts to Student Learning (Long Ride to School)** Rationale: Extended commute times can negatively impact student performance, engagement, attendance, and well-being. Considerations: Younger students are especially vulnerable to fatigue from long commutes. Time spent commuting is time lost for homework, rest, or extra curriculars. May affect students' access to breakfast or afterschool programs.
- 3. Enrollment Trends and Projections** Evaluate long-term sustainability based on declining or stagnant enrollment projections.
- 4. Operational Cost vs Revenue Generated Rationale:** Aligning facility operating costs with enrollment-based state funding helps avoid budget shortfalls. Considerations: Schools with high per-student costs (due to low enrollment) may be financially unsustainable. Review cost categories: staffing, utilities, maintenance, and overhead vs funding received (e.g., ADM). Include potential cost savings from consolidation (e.g., fewer administrative positions).

Recommending for consideration for school closure / consolidation:

5. Transportation Costs (New Areas Where Transportation Is Not Currently Provided) Rationale: Consolidation may shift students from walkable or nearby schools to distant ones requiring bus service. Considerations: Evaluate cost of adding new routes, vehicles, and drivers. Consider maintenance, fuel volatility, and insurance costs. Longer routes may impact start/end times and district-wide transportation schedules.

6. Facility Condition and Life Cycle Costs Prioritize closure of buildings with the highest maintenance costs, deferred maintenance needs, or safety concerns.

7. Flexibility for Future Growth or Retraction - Ensure any consolidation plan allows for re-expansion if demographics shift.

8. Ease of implementation – some of the options will require facility modification / construction prior to allowing implementation.

Other Considerations:

Minimize Impact to Small Communities Rationale: Schools often serve as the heart of small communities, providing not just education but also a hub for civic life, culture, and community events. Considerations: Loss of a school can lead to population decline or deter families from settling. May disproportionately affect rural or Indigenous communities. Weigh educational efficiency against long-term community sustainability.

Consider Impacting the Least Number of Students (Focus on Small Communities) Rationale: Closing a small school may seem less disruptive in terms of headcount. Considerations: May appear efficient on paper but could have outsized impact on the affected students and communities. Should be balanced with educational quality and financial viability. The cumulative educational disruption (social-emotional, academic) may not be proportional to the student count.

Geographically Isolated Areas Rationale: Some schools are in locations where closure would effectively eliminate access to education without significant infrastructure changes. Considerations: Transportation may be impractical due to distance, weather, or terrain. Closure may conflict with the state's or district's obligation to provide equitable access. Virtual instruction is not always a viable alternative in remote locations due to connectivity issues.

Other Considerations:

Equity of Educational Opportunity - Ensure all students have access to comparable educational programs, extracurriculars, and support services regardless of location.

Community Engagement and Partnership Potential Consider opportunities for co-use of facilities (e.g., with local governments, libraries, or community centers) before closure.

Staffing Challenges and Teacher Recruitment - Consolidate where consistent, qualified staffing is difficult due to isolation or low enrollment.

Academic Performance and Program Viability - Focus on consolidating schools unable to offer full academic programs due to low enrollment or staffing limitations.

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Future Planning

Creation of a rubric for KPBSD to determine each identified consideration for consolidation or closure.

Are there additional considerations that should be added?

Set the weighted score for each Philosophy selected.

Research other school district rubrics or checklists for school closure or consolidation. DEED does not currently have a document.

Q&A



Reference

Alaska State Statute regarding School Closures/Consolidation

[AS 14.17.410 \(b\)\(I-M\)](#)

(I) if the basic need calculated under (H)(i) - (iii) of this paragraph for one of the first four fiscal years after consolidation is less than the basic need calculated under (A) — (C) of this paragraph for that fiscal year, the basic need may not be adjusted under (H) of this paragraph for that fiscal year;

(J) a district may not offset a decrease under (H) of this paragraph if

- (i) a new facility is constructed in the district for the consolidation; or
- (ii) the district offset a decrease under (E) of this paragraph in the same fiscal year;

(K) a district that offsets a decrease under (H) of this paragraph **may not reopen** a school that was closed for consolidation in the district until

(i) seven or more years have passed since the school closure; and

(ii) the district provides evidence satisfactory to the department that the schools affected by the consolidation are over capacity;

(L) a district may not reopen and reconsolidate a school that was consolidated in the district more than once every seven years for purposes of the calculations made under (H) of this paragraph;

(M) a district offsetting a decrease under (H) of this paragraph shall provide the department with the list of schools participating in the consolidation and the corresponding ADM;