

September 26, 2025

Dear Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board Members,

We are writing to share our collective concerns about the proposed plan to consolidate Soldotna Elementary and Redoubt Elementary into one school. We know the district is facing a major financial deficit and declining enrollment, and we understand that [Board Policy Code: BP0530](#) can be interpreted to allow closures or consolidations under those circumstances. But [BP0530](#) also says the Board should consider enrollment, student displacement, permanency of the decision, and financial factors before making a decision.

From both a policy, educational and student well-being standpoint, we don't believe those criteria have been fully addressed.

### **Enrollment Capacity**

Soldotna and Redoubt are two of the largest elementary schools in the district. Are they really considered "under-enrolled"? Would closing or consolidating them align with [BP0530](#)? Combining them would create an elementary school of almost 600 students, this is considerably large for our community. Research (*and common sense*) shows elementary schools work best when they're under 400 students. Smaller schools are known for better educational outcomes and engagement.

The current plan shows 21 general-education classrooms (not including SPED), with 3 for Kindergarten and 18 for grades 1–6. The Ed Specs study target lists 70 Kindergarteners. At the district's best practice cap of 20 per kindergarten class, three rooms only fit 60 kindergarteners, leaving 10 students without a seat. For grades 1–6, the study target is 450 students. With 18 rooms, that's 25 students per class, already above the best practice cap of 24 students per class. If enrollment bumps even slightly, what would the ramifications be for the already large class sizes? Would this force us to raise class capacities, resort to combination classes, or both? And are the educational implications of this being fully considered in the consolidation plan?

There is still talk of additional school closures and consolidations. What happens if Sterling or Tustumena Elementary close? Will those students also be added to this building, and if so, has the district created a plan to ensure class sizes and shared spaces don't become overwhelmed?

Given these capacity pressures, we also wonder whether other school or grade configurations have been considered that might better meet students' developmental needs while still achieving the district's goals.

### **Educational Specifications**

When we looked at the [Educational Specifications](#) posted on the Board's site, we didn't see a budget or financing plan, even though that's a required component under [4 AAC 31.010](#). Maybe those pages weren't included in what was posted, but the public should be able to see them. We would also like to know how community input and review were built into this process, and how the Board plans to take that feedback into account.

### **Financial Clarity**

The [Educational Specifications](#) lay out enrollment numbers and building capacities, but what's missing is a clear apples-to-apples comparison of running two smaller schools versus one large one. The plan has been described as "more efficient," but in reality staff numbers can't just shrink.

- **Specialists:** How can one PE teacher serve 20+ classes? Will students still receive PE twice a week, or only occasionally? Would one PE teacher be expected to teach multiple classes at once? And if art, music, and science are truly being added in a meaningful way, surely those programs will also need dedicated staff and supplies.
- **Administration:** Can one principal and one secretary really handle 600 kids? Realistically, that will take more office and support staff, not less.
- **Maintenance and Support:** A larger school also means more staff for student support and building upkeep. More lights to keep on, more space to heat, and greater custodial needs.

All of this costs money. So before calling this plan "efficient," the community needs to see the actual numbers and a side by side comparison to support this claim. Otherwise, it's hard to see where the savings really come from.

### **Student Experience & Well-Being**

Most importantly, we have to look at how this consolidation would affect the day-to-day experience, education and well-being of our students. Research shows young children thrive in smaller learning environments. What specific adaptations will the district take to replicate this environment in a larger school? How will students not get lost and still have a sense of belonging? Will teachers and administrators have the opportunity to make meaningful relationships with all their students when there are so many?

The [feasibility study](#) outlines some incentivizing programs such as art and science, but has the district created a plan for how these programs could meaningfully support students? Can we bring on the staff to ensure they are a success? Even if the budget allows us to bring on additional staff, are we able to effectively recruit those specialists?

Another serious concern for parents is safety and supervision. Will staff be increased to accommodate the proper safety ratio of adults to children? In addition, a continuous concern is what arrival and dismissal will look like, the plan has all Soldotna schools located on one main road, how will the district handle drop-off and pick-up safely and efficiently?

We understand the district is facing tough facility and budget challenges, and we appreciate the effort to find long-term solutions. We're not opposed to consolidation in principle, but we want to ensure the chosen path truly prioritizes students' education and well-being. We want to be partners in finding the best course of action during this difficult time.

In closing, we share the district's mission to prepare productive, responsible citizens. Because this decision will shape the daily experience of hundreds of children for years to come, we ask the Board to pause until a clear, detailed plan can be shared and community members have had a real opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,

Concerned Community Members:

Kaiti Syverson  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Tate Syverson  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Lana Syverson  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Educator*

Courtney Pearson  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*

Mary Marquardt  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Sierra Walls  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Staff*

Shaele Bryant  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Soldotna Montessori Charter School*

Rollin Ritter  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Nyle Ley  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*

Shaelyn Urban  
*Future parent of student in KPBSD*

Todd Syverson  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Educator*

Leslie Blanning  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Evelyn VanMeter  
*Concerned Community Member*  
*Grandparent of KPBSD students*

Tina Gilman  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Educator*

Nicolina Chumley  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Jarrett Urban  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*

Krystal Walden  
*Concerned Community Member*

Capri Lott  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Meagen Christensen  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Taylor Duncan  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Jessica Thomas  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*

Crystal Nikolas  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
*Concerned Community Member*  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Staff*

Whitney Fusaro  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Jamie S  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Redoubt Elementary*

Isabella Bates  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*

Andrea Dahlen  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Leila Nath  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Christie Abbott  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*

Aryauna Olds  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Redoubt Elementary*  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Renae Olsen  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Joe Gilman  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Jason Owen  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Ray Chumley  
*Concerned Community Member*

BreAnna Hamman  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Arianna M  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*

Brittany Scott  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Natalia Aulenbacher  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Redoubt Elementary*

Denali Cobb  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*

Barbara  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Rachel Niver  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*

Katrina Cannava  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Concerned Community Member*  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Educator*

Kayla Scarito  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Karen G  
*Concerned Community Member*  
*Parent of former student*

Samantha Moore  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*

Jen Wardas  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Educator*

Garrett Soares  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Kristina and Tyler Fergus  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*

Kay Gardner  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Staff*

Katie Silva  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*

Dawson Pearson  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*

Ashley Christianson  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Hannah Eckert  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Cassie Sheridan MPH  
*Concerned KPBSD grad considering a family move back to KPBSD*

Becca Hitchcock  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*

Nikki Leck  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Redoubt Elementary*

Shovaughnna Wilson  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Redoubt Elementary*

Caitlin LeClair  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Redoubt Elementary*

Krystal Duval  
*Concerned Community Member*  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Educator*

Hannah stratton  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Christy Abernethy  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*

Evan Hatfield  
*Concerned Community Member*

Devin Way  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Educator*

Erica Chilla  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Torey norenberg  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Rhonda Needs  
*Concerned Community Member*

Maria Bultsma  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Staff*

Shelby Fletcher  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Seloni Goolcharan  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Lisa Gough  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*  
*Concerned Community Member*  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Staff*

Kalee Brusven  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Bristol DeMeter  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
*Concerned Community Member*  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Staff*

Brett DeMeter  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Katherine Burkhalter  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

*Thomas galloway*

Mrs. Harvey  
*Concerned Community Member*

Jennifer Holkko  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

James Carnegie  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Austin Stevenson  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Educator*

Nancy Whitmore  
*Retired Teacher*  
*concerned Grandparent*

D Craig Whitmor  
*Concerned Community Member*  
*Grandparent*

Morgan Smith  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Amanda Lee  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Brittnie Pearcy  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Angela Smith  
*Concerned Community Member*  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Staff*  
*Grandparent*

Patrick Smith  
*Concerned Community Member*  
*Grandparent*

Jake Hill  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
Lindsey Hill  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Amanda McGlasson  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Megan Cheah  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*

Ashley Hollon  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Sara Erfurth  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Kellie Bartelmay  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Staff*

Rebecca Beutel  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Sara Williams  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Staff*

Nettie Keller  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Daniel T Christianson  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Ashley Soares  
*Concerned Community Member*

Gracie Crowder  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*

Laura Black  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Marisa k  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*

Joshua Herald  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Redoubt Elementary*

Lissa Cristiano  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Redoubt Elementary*

Benjamin Cheah  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Danielle Bahl  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Redoubt Elementary*

Samai Suarez  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Eliel Rodriguez  
*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*  
*Concerned Community Member*

Carla Miller  
*Concerned Community Member*

Brian miller  
*Concerned Community Member*

Mae Troy  
*Future parent/guardian of a student in KPBSD*  
*Current/Retired KPBSD Educator*

Laura Sherwood  
*Concerned Community Member*

Jorge Garcia  
*Parent/guardian at another KPBSD school*

Mandy Christensen

*Parent/guardian of a student at Soldotna Elementary*

Jenny Gates

*Parent/guardian of a student at Redoubt Elementary*

Ken Gates

*Parent/guardian of a student at Redoubt Elementary*

Alyssa Giles

*Parent who might switch to a KPBSD school*