



SOLDOTNA ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL

KPBSD School Board Monthly Meeting

CHARTER SCHOOL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

A conversion charter designed to preserve neighborhood access, strengthen school-level voice, and focus on growth for every student.



October 5th, 2026

INTRODUCTION

WHO WE ARE

Ben Cheah

Parent representative
APC Chair

Kaiti Syverson

Parent representative
APC Vice Chair

Renae Olsen

Parent representative
APC Secretary

GOAL

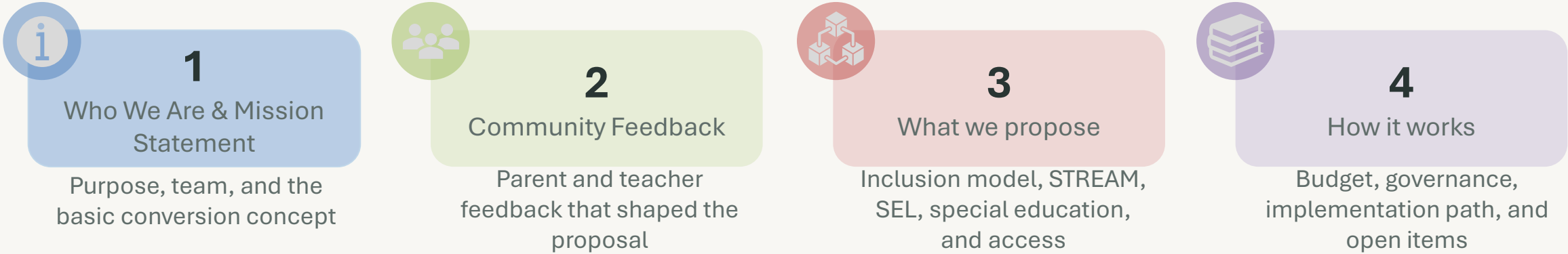
To preserve the strengths and accessibility of a neighborhood public school while creating stability for staff and families, and flexibility to deliver a distinct, mission-driven instructional program that integrates STREAM-enhanced learning and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) throughout the student experience.

MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure every student grows, achieves, and leaves with the foundational skills needed to succeed in their next stage of education and life. Our approach is grounded in strong core academics and reinforced by a supportive and consistent school culture.

Take-away: Creating a conversion charter which preserves public access while strengthening program quality, staff/family stability, and KPBSD student retention.

AGENDA



Purpose: Demonstrate why we are pursuing this charter school and provide an understanding that this was not developed in isolation by a few parents but was developed in discussions with Soldotna Elementary parents and Staff members to understand their concerns.

ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

**Katrina Cannava**

26 years teaching experience, intervention, K, pre-K, Science & STEM clubs, Summer reading clubs, head start

**Joanna Stevenson**

14 years teaching experience. 5/6th grade math, masters in curriculum and instruction

**Ben Cheah**
(Chair)

Degree in Engineering and Sustainable Energy. Almost two decades of consulting experience for government & regulatory agencies

**Kaiti Syverson**
(Vice Chair)

Developed charter application, APC governance documents, and family and community engagement.

**Renae Olsen**
(Secretary)

Parent representative with experience in management, administration, and academic accreditation.

**Brittany Scott**

Pediatric SLP providing early intervention services. Specialized knowledge of speech, language development, and pre-literacy skills

**Bethany Fernstrom**

Alaskan educator for 13+ years. Taught at elementary schools in villages across the state. Created and implemented a school-wide Arts and Science program.

HOW WE GOT HERE

Parent and teacher input began shaping the proposal during very preliminary stages



Early discussions

Concerns about merger, stability, and preserving the current school community.



Parent Input

Families identified what they value and what a charter would need to protect.



Teacher Feedback

Staff identified strengths to preserve, implementation concerns, and ideas for instructional flexibility.



Application Design

The proposal was built around themes identified as important to the community: education, access, inclusion, support, and accountability.

PARENT SUPPORT

~25%

of estimated families responded

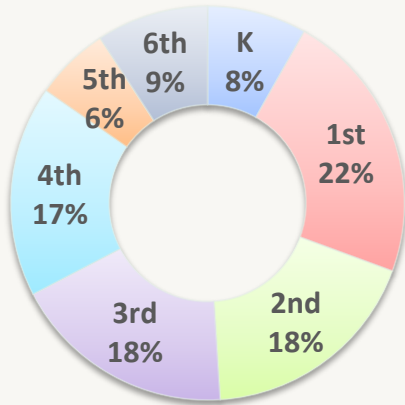
~22%

of projected student population
represented

87%

of eligible respondents somewhat
or very likely to enroll

Note: This does not mean only 25% of families support the proposal. It means support was measured through a voluntary network with limited ability to reach every family.



Family responses span
all grade levels

Why these results are meaningful

Parents often lack time to attend meetings, complete surveys, or learn separate school-choice rules. The proposal reduces that burden by preserving standard neighborhood registration.

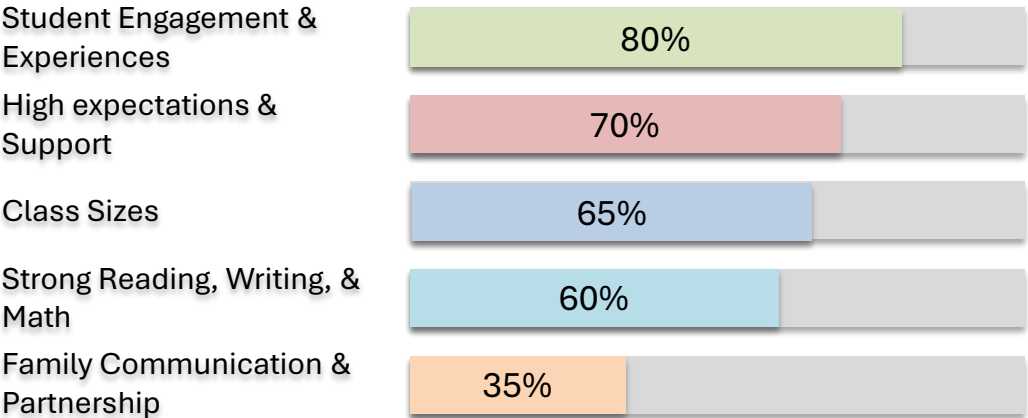
Takeaway

Use the survey as a strong support signal, not a census of all families. The proposal is explicitly designed to be inclusive of families who do not have time to engage heavily in process steps.

PARENT & TEACHER FEEDBACK



Parent Feedback



Parent Values

Quality teachers, small school feel, class sizes, individual support, art, field trips, safety, student support, community



What Parents want Protected

Inclusive access, special education, therapy supports, lunches, buses, strong academics, less screen time, hands on learning, music, art, PE.



Staff Feedback



Protect

Dedicated staff, strong relationships, diverse student population, art, field trips.



Strengthen

Teacher autonomy, joyful and experience-based learning, family involvement, student engagement



Concerns

FAPE, special education funding/ support, facility/location



Staff Themes

Flexibility for diverse needs, student engagement

“ Teachers need support and autonomy to choose the best curriculum and practices for their students.

” All kids within the area are welcome.... Keep our current clientele, free and reduced lunch & bussing.

” How do we ensure this does not become selective?

Shared Themes



Inclusive Access



Student Engagement



Strong Academics



Hands-on Learning



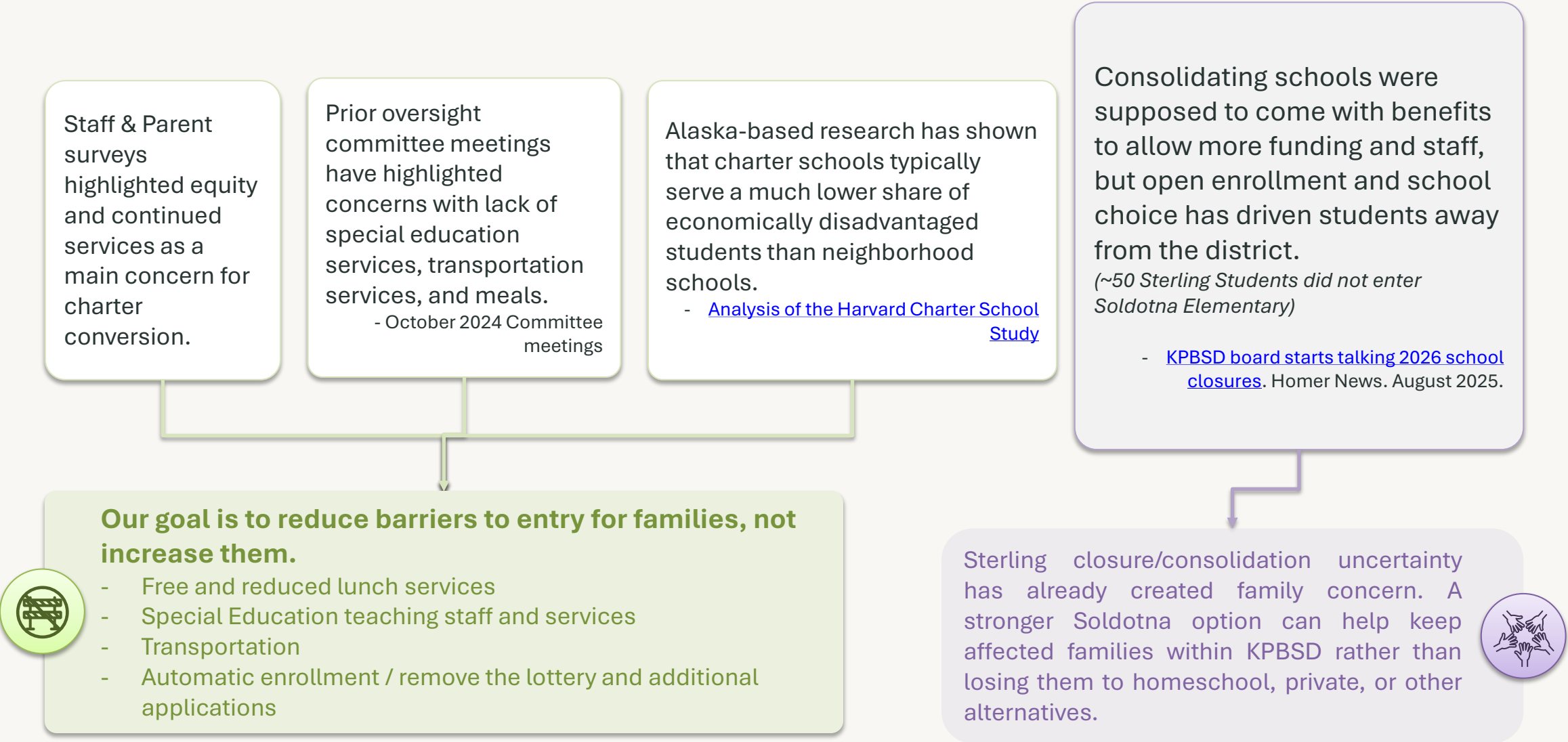
Special Ed. Support



Preserve Community

INCLUSION MODEL

Our proposed model responds structurally to recurring issues in charter and school-choice discussions.



WHAT SETS UP APART

PRESERVE

- KPBSD standard registration
- Transportation and meals
- Special education and supports
- KPBSD core curriculum
- School community and relationships
- Focus on Arts and Experiences



WHAT THE CHARTER OFFERS

- STREAM-Enhanced Learning** Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics through investigations and design
- Dedicated Specialists** Proposed dedicated science, music, and PE teachers for K-6
- SEL Practice** Explicit lessons reinforced in routines and project work
- Teacher Collaboration** Coordinated planning and review of student progress
- School-Level Voice** Parent and staff participation through the APC

FOCUS ON ARTS AND EXPERIENCES

Soldotna Elementary has been able to do so many amazing things with their kids. **2025-2026 school year**, the kindergarten class experienced



STREAM IN PRACTICE

Illustrative Examples of Primary Grade Projects

Example: What helps a plant grow?

1 Reading

Students read about what plants need, design a way to improve growing conditions.

3 Math

Measure plant growth, compare results, create simple graphs

5 Art

Create illustrated observation journals or visual presentations explain their discoveries.

2 Science

Grow plants under different conditions and record observations.

4 Technology

Photos, digital tools, or simple data collection to document growth over time.

6 SEL

Reflect & collaborate, practicing patience, responsibility, problem solving, and working together when plants don't grow as expected.



STREAM GROWS WITH OUR STUDENTS

K–2

Explore & Build Foundations

STREAM

Observe • Describe • Classify • Count • Measure • Read • Draw • Build • Ask questions

Project Complexity

Short, teacher-guided, and closely connected to current classroom instruction

SEL Emphasis

Routines • Listening • Taking turns • Working with partners • Identifying needs • Beginning perseverance

Examples

Incubation/chicks or plant growth: observe daily, count and graph changes, draw diagrams, practice care and routines.

3–4

Investigate & Apply

STREAM

Ask questions • Research • Collect data • Maintain notebooks • Test designs • Explain conclusions

Project Complexity

Multi-step and collaborative; may connect multiple units or subjects

SEL Emphasis

Teamwork • Planning • Shared responsibility • Feedback • Conflict resolution • Reflection

Examples

Local salmon/water unit: map streams, test water, read informational text, build a fish-passage or erosion model, write evidence-based claims.

5–6

Integrate & Lead

STREAM

Synthesize sources • Analyze data • Evaluate information • Revise prototypes • Argue with evidence • Present findings

Project Complexity

Longer, more complex, and increasingly interdisciplinary; grade 6 may include capstone-style experiences

SEL Emphasis

Independence • Leadership • Self-management • Collaborative decision-making • Responsibility for quality of work

Examples

Insulation/structures challenge: measure heat transfer or load, design prototypes, calculate results, revise, and present tradeoffs.

WEEKLY SEL ACTIVITES

TEACH

1 core lesson each week

Generally 15–30 minutes during the program sequence.

Explore Second Step Elementary Digital Program.

PRACTICE

Brief reinforcement

Class meetings, partner conversations, discussion prompts, and reflection.

Revisit the current skill a few times during the week.

APPLY

Authentic classroom situations

Manage frustration, listen to a partner, share responsibility, and resolve disagreements.

Use skills during STREAM, literacy, arts, and PE.

SEL SKILLS STUDENTS DEVELOP

- Self-Awareness
- Empathy
- Collaboration
- Conflict Resolution
- Resilience

- Emotion Regulation
- Communication
- Problem-Solving
- Growth Mindset
- Responsible Decision Making



CLASSROOM BASED SEL INSTRUCTION

PROJECT MOMENT

SKILL AND EXAMPLE LANGUAGE



Learning to measure and record growth

Set a shared goal, practice, and learn from mistakes.

“We can get better at measuring with practice.”



A seed has not sprouted, or a plant has not survived

Name disappointment or frustration and use a calming strategy.

“I feel disappointed. I can pause and take a breath.”



A partner is upset about their plant

Notice a partner’s feelings, listen, and offer help.

“How are you feeling? How can I help?”

Partners both want to water the plant

Name the problem without blame, consider fair solutions, agree on roles

“Could we take turns or share the job?”

SPECIAL EDUCATION & STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

5.0

Teacher FTE

7.33

Aide FTE

\$221k

Related-service planning allowance

SERVICES

- IEPs and 504 supports
- KPBSD Student Support coordination
- SLP, OT, PT, psychology, and other IEP-related services

PARTICIPATION

- Adapt materials and group roles
- Offer different ways to demonstrate learning
- Coordinate classroom and specialist support

Final staffing and charges depend on enrollment, IEP requirements, and KPBSD allocations.



Families within the existing Soldotna Elementary Boundary use standard KPBSD registration



Transportation

KPBSD routing and transportation procedures continue for eligible students.

Transfers follow District policy and availability.



Meals

Continue participation in KPBSD Student Nutrition Services.

Preserve breakfast and lunch access.

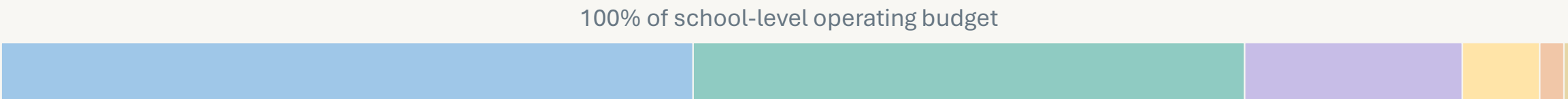


Location

Plan for continued operation in the existing Soldotna Elementary building.

Confirm occupancy terms with KPBSD.

BUDGET



Certificated salaries		\$2.006M	44.3%
Employee benefits		\$1.599M	35.3%
Classified salaries		\$628k	13.9%
Sp.Ed. Support Services		\$221k	4.9%
Other Operating Categories		\$60k	1.3%
Contingency / reserve		\$15k	0.3%

“Other operating” includes substitute personnel, technology/equipment, curriculum/STREAM supplies, professional/technical services, travel/field experiences, and office/general operating costs.

Thank you

Soldotna Elementary Charter School

Questions and discussion

Ben Cheah

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Renae Olsen

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