



SOLDOTNA ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL

KPBSD School Board Monthly Meeting

WORKING GROUP MEETING

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



October 26th, 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



1

Who We Are & Mission Statement

Purpose, team, and the basic conversion concept



2

Community Feedback

Parent and teacher feedback that shaped the proposal



3

What we propose

Inclusion model, STREAM, SEL, special education, and access



4

How it works

Budget, governance, implementation path, and open items

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.

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.



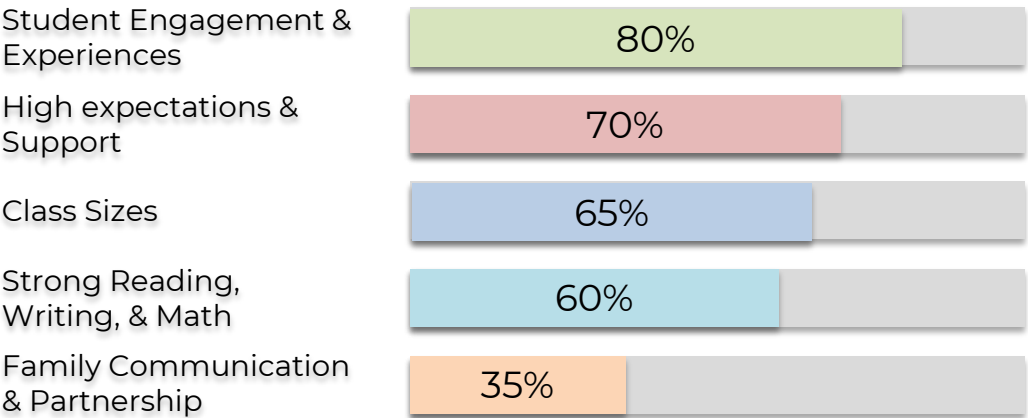
Application Design

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

PARENT & 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

PARENT & TEACHER INTEREST

86%

**of parent responses
very or somewhat
likely to attend**

49 of 57 families, representing
90 children

88%

**of teacher responses
very or somewhat
likely to teach here**

14 of 16 teachers; 2 needed
more information; none
unlikely

2

**parent responses
unlikely to attend**

1% of an estimated 183
families

“

...ensure that the vision of
inclusivity is maintained and that
over time it doesn't become a
'traditional charter.'”

“

I want to ensure that the
curriculum chosen supports and
enables a diverse and inclusive
group of students.”

“

Making sure if the school
transitions into a charter school
that it doesn't become exclusive
and serves the existing
community. Making sure we
retain many of the current
teachers and maintain the
current school's community feel”

“

...I think creating a charter will
give parents more input. I am
afraid the school district will
continue to ignore and disregard
the [community's] opinions if we
do nothing. It was already voted
on and in favor of to re-build
Soldotna Elementary. Why is
community and parent input
being so widely disregarded?
Why are we even voting? It feels
a proposal for a charter is our
only hope for being heard.”

“

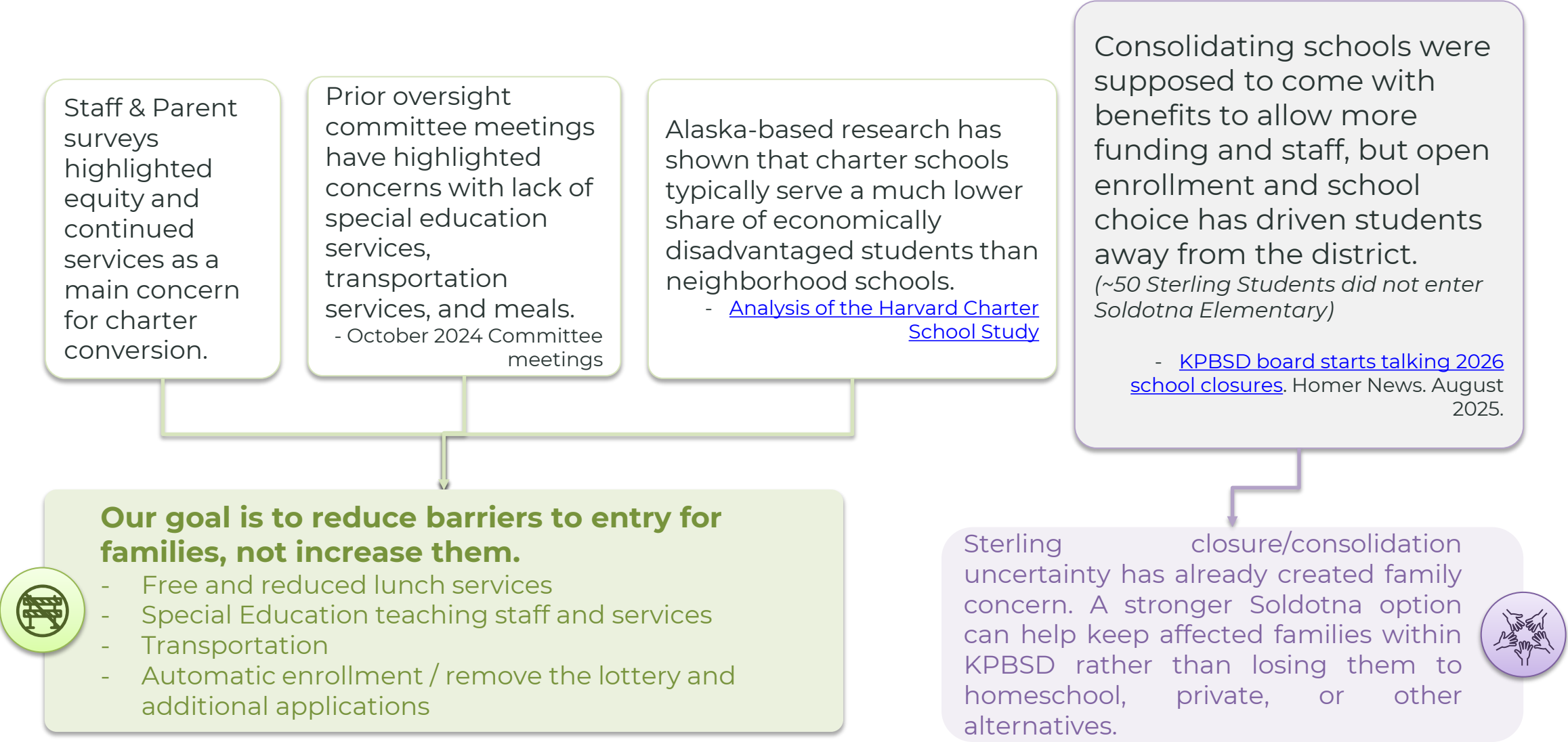
I'd like to make sure that the
school isn't exclusive, and that it
prepares students for not just
educational challenges that they
will face as they grow but also
that they learn to navigate social
and emotional challenges.”

“

Would like to see a diverse
population offered the
opportunity to continue strong
community development among
all children.”

INCLUSION MODEL

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



WHAT SETS US APART FROM NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS

SAME AS ANY KPBSD SCHOOL

KPBSD curriculum and required assessments

Neighborhood registration

Transportation and school meals

Special education, 504, and intervention services

KPBSD staffing formula as the minimum

WHAT THE CHARTER ADDS, IN WRITING



APC and parent voice

Parent and staff representation on the APC brings family feedback into school decisions and program review.



STREAM in every grade

Quarterly hands-on projects connect subjects, apply KPBSD curriculum, and document student learning.



Weekly explicit SEL

A core lesson each week, reinforced through classroom routines and STREAM projects.



Science specialist

Dedicated K–6 Science, Music, and PE teachers. Proposed specialist staffing exceeds the FY27 formula by one FTE.



Training supports STREAM

Explore literacy, STEM, and arts training. Named programs depend on funding and availability.



Annual program review

STREAM & SEL performance assessments help the APC review progress each year.

KPBSD curriculum provides the foundation. The charter adds coordinated STREAM learning and a formal role for parent and staff voice.

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

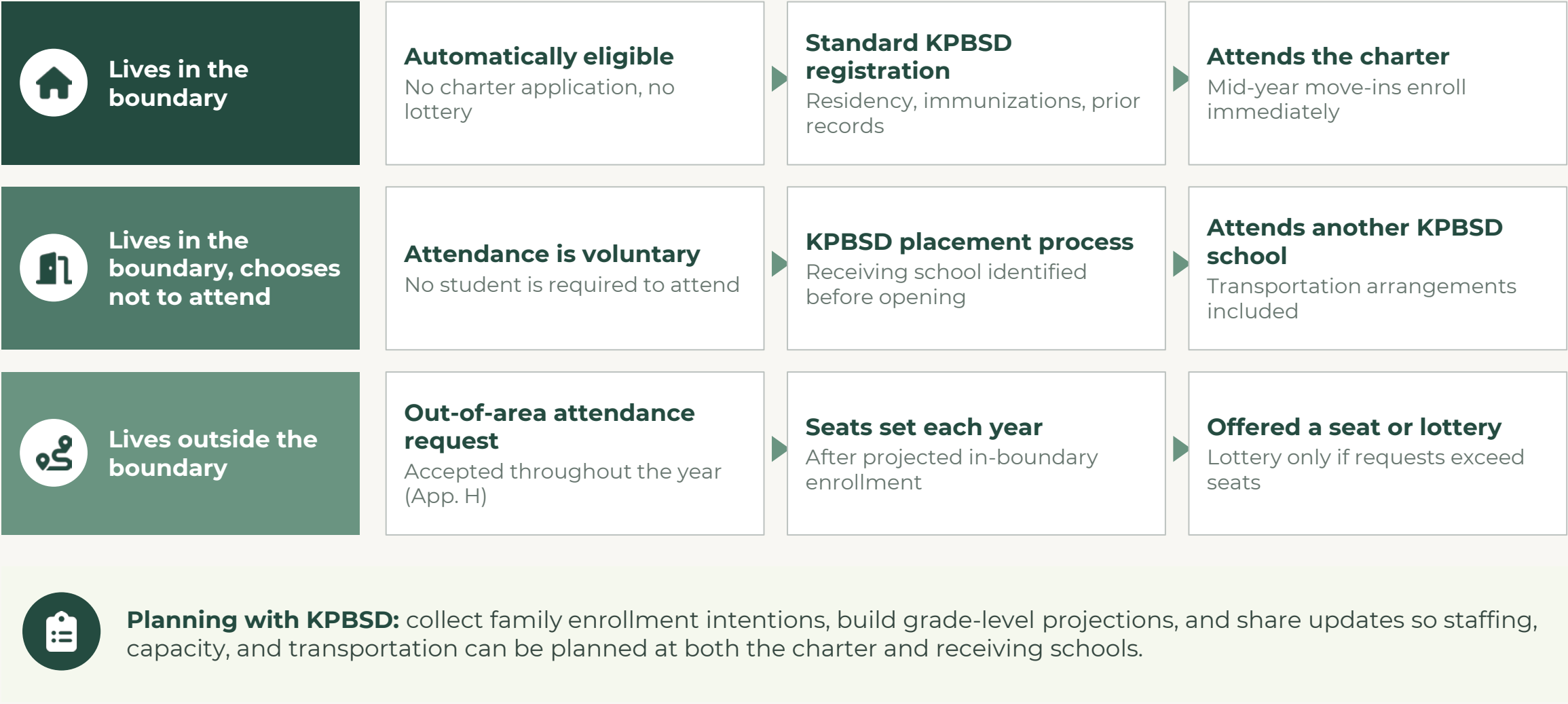
Problem-Solving

Growth Mindset

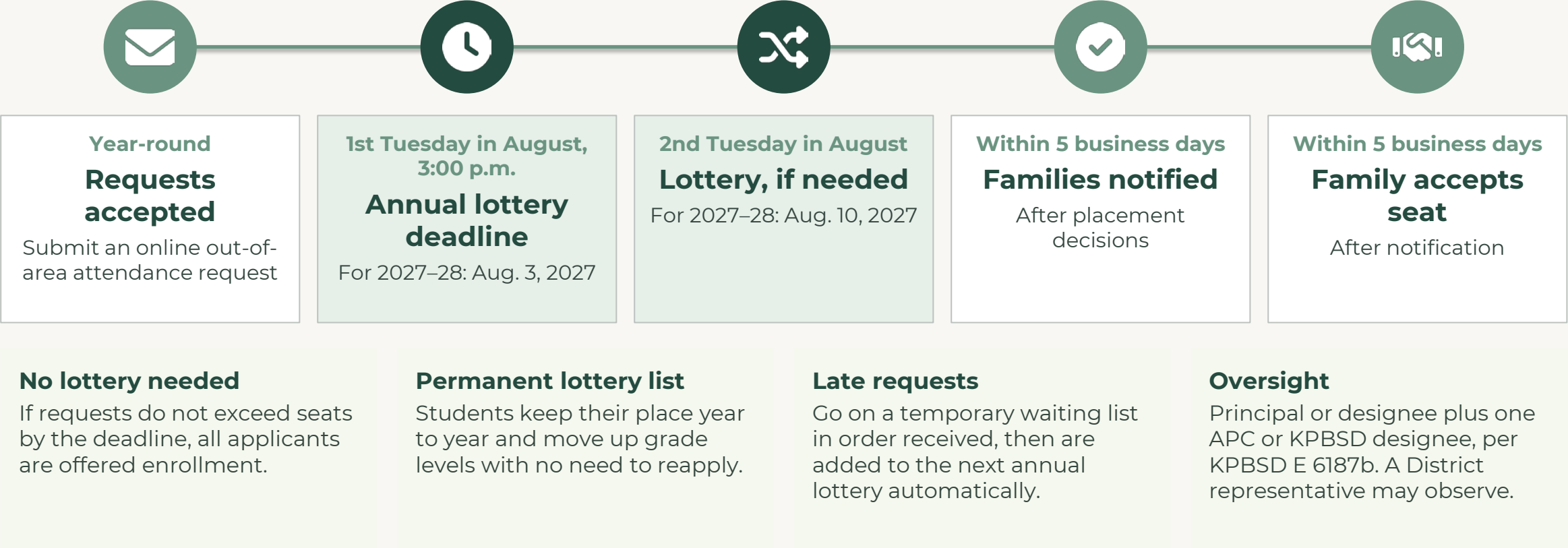
Responsible Decision Making



ENROLLMENT PROCESS



OUT-OF-AREA ATTENDANCE AND LOTTERY DATES



Mid-year openings: offered first to the permanent lottery list, then the temporary waiting list. If no list exists and space is available, students may enroll without a lottery.

ATTENDANCE BOUNDARY

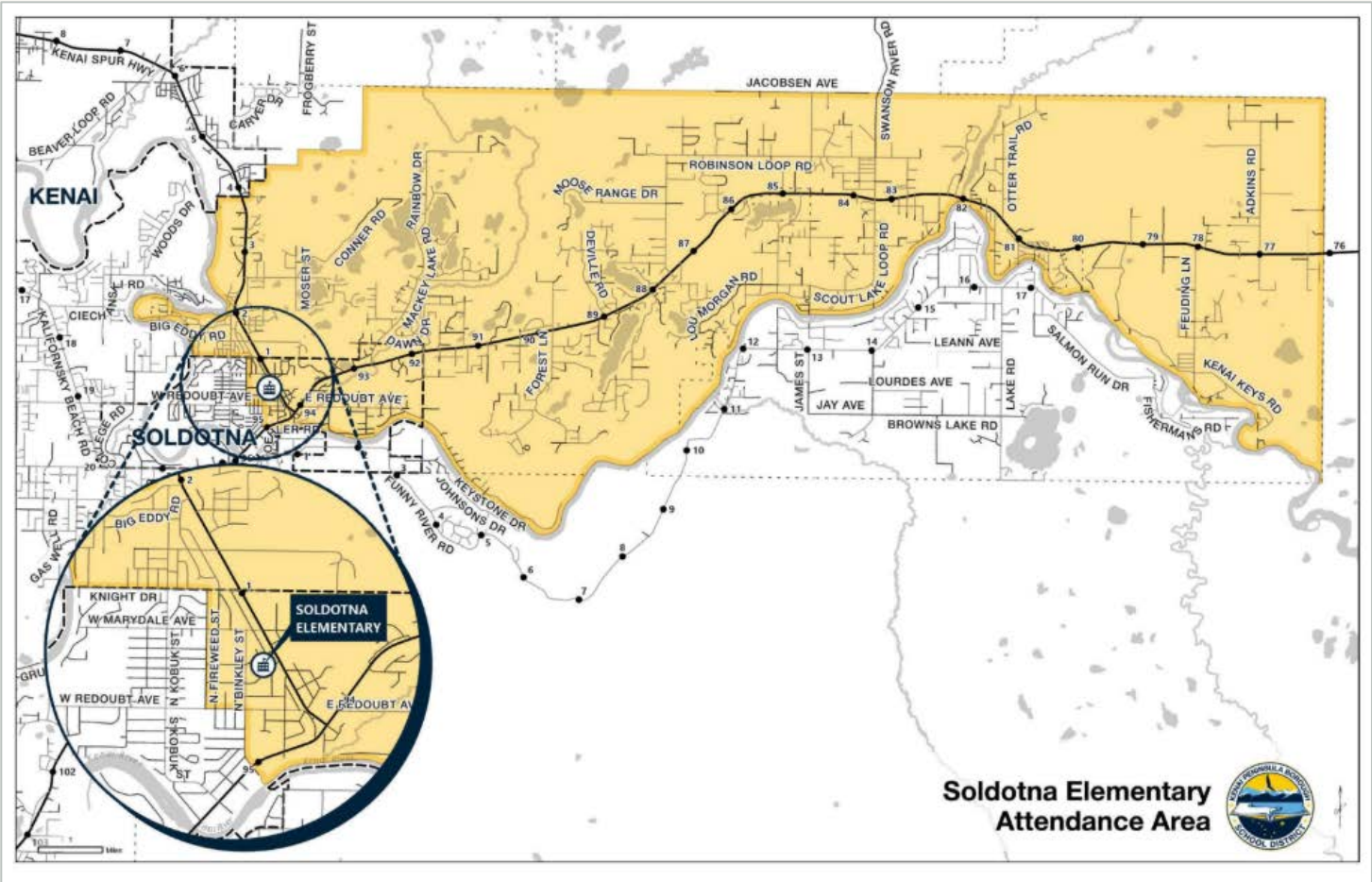


Figure K-1, Appendix K. Boundary shown as of September 2026.

HOW THE BOUNDARY APPLIES



Inside the boundary

Automatically eligible; register through standard KPBSD registration.



Outside the boundary

Submit an out-of-area attendance request; seats depend on capacity.



Opting out

Families may attend another KPBSD school through the placement process.



Transportation

KPBSD routing continues for eligible students within the boundary.

IS A NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY ALLOWED?

ALASKA STATUTE 14.03.265 Admission

(a) The program of a charter school **MAY BE** designed to serve

(1) students within an age group or grade level;

(2) students who will benefit from a particular teaching method or curriculum; or

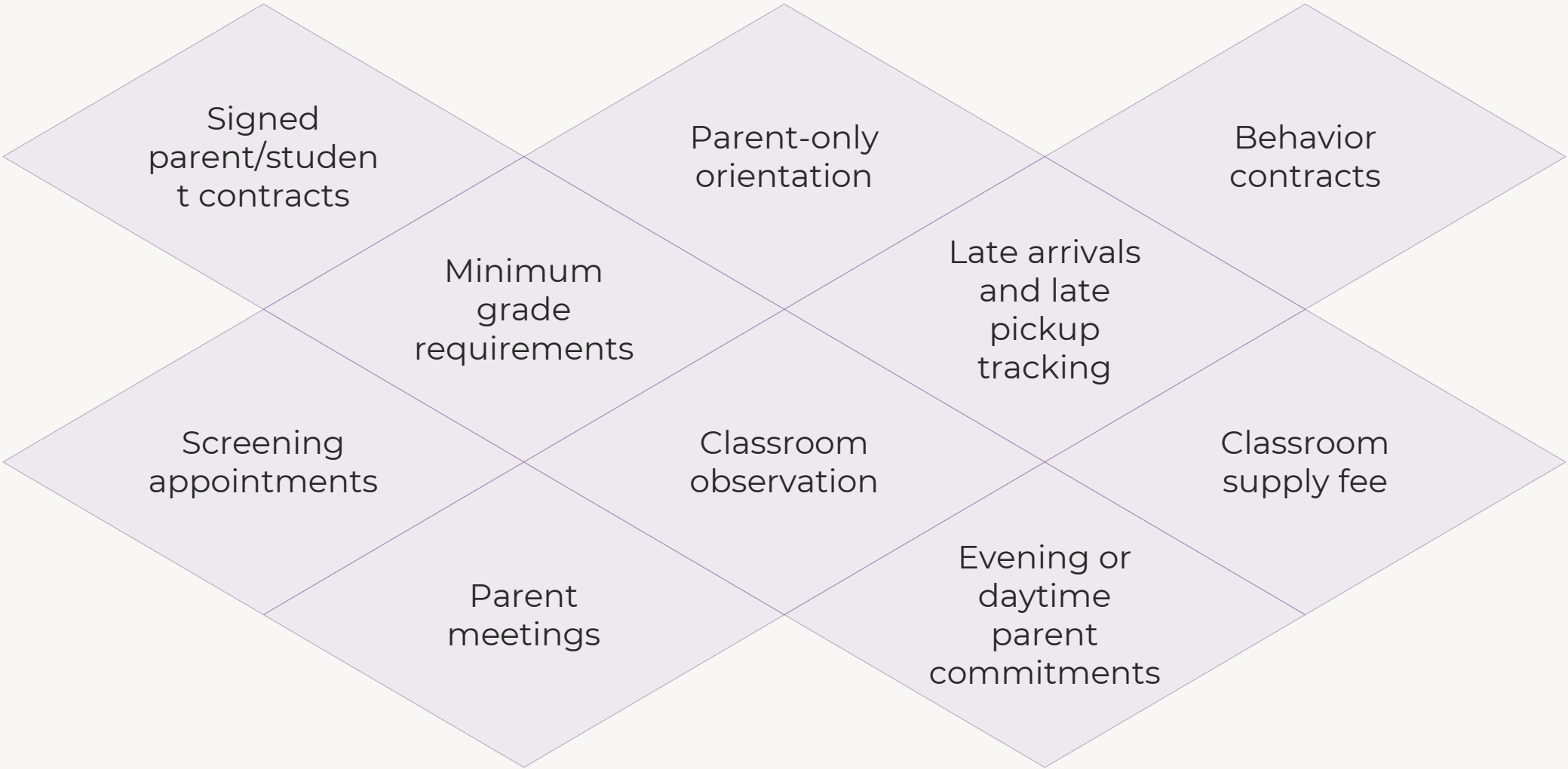
(3) nonresident students, including providing domiciliary services for students who need those services, if approved by the board.

(b) **A charter school shall enroll all eligible students who submit a timely application**, unless the number of those applications exceeds the capacity of the program, class, grade level, or building.

In the event of an excess of those applications, the charter school and the local school board shall attempt to accommodate all of those applicants by considering providing additional classroom space and assigning additional teachers from the district to the charter school.

If it is not possible to accommodate all eligible students who submit a timely application, students shall be accepted by random drawing. A school board may not require a student to attend a charter school.

WHY DOESN'T EVERY CHARTER SCHOOL ADOPT OUR PROPOSED MODEL?



FACILITY & LOCATION OPTIONS



OPTION 1
Existing Soldotna Elementary building

Temporary occupancy for a mutually agreed period while a permanent solution is developed.

- Continuity for students and staff
- Review of building condition, maintenance, operating cost, and construction plans



OPTION 2
Soldotna Prep or Redoubt building

Dedicated space on the consolidated campus, on its own or shared with another school or program.

- Possible shared nursing, custodial, food service, transportation, and SpEd staff
- Written agreement on classrooms, schedules, and costs



OPTION 3
Another facility or phased arrangement

Other District or Borough space, a renovated community building, or a leased Soldotna-area facility.

- Modular classrooms possible in a phased plan
- Evaluated for access, transportation, cost, and safety



Right of first refusal

Documented review of qualifying District space under AS 14.03.255(d). Any lease is limited to actual operational cost per square foot.



Joint planning and funding

APC, District, and Borough compare options. Possible funding to investigate: USDA Community Facilities, federal charter facilities credit enhancement, and Alaska school construction grants.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & SPECIALIZED TRAINING



Early literacy
Primary grades (K–2)

- Science of Reading Academy
- Amplify science of reading professional learning
- LETRS
- Institute for Multi-Sensory Education (IMSE)



STEM & engineering
Intermediate grades

- Project Lead The Way (PLTW)
- National Institute for STEM Education (NISE) certification
- National Science Teaching Association (NSTA)
- National Inventors Hall of Fame (NIHF)



Outdoor & place-based
All grades

- Project WILD (coordinated in Alaska by ADF&G)
- iTREC! place-based workshops (Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, BLM Campbell Creek Science Center, Chugach National Forest)



Arts
Interested teachers

- National Art Education Association (NAEA)
- Alaska Arts Education Consortium (AAEC) Summer Arts Institutes

Funding

Career Development Grants (every two years), plus school PD funds as the budget allows

Selection

Administrator approves based on mission fit, staff needs, program availability, and cost

Application

Training feeds curriculum planning, STREAM projects, and classroom instruction

COMPARISONS TO LOCAL CHARTER

Program feature	Aurora Borealis K-10	Fireweed Academy (K-6)	Kaleidoscope K-5	Soldotna Montessori K-6	TuĦen K-4	Soldotna Elementary Charter School K-6 (proposed)
Classical instruction and Latin	X					
Montessori materials and independent learning				X		
Mixed-age classroom model		Multi-age groups		X		As necessary
Dena'ina language and cultural learning					X	
Arts integrated across academic learning		X	X		X	X
Hands-on inquiry and investigations		X	X	X	X	X
Dedicated Teachers (Elementary)	Music/Art, PE	Art	Science, Music/Band, PE	Music, PE/Intervention		Science, Music, PE
Explicit School-wide STEAM/STREAM Framework		Theme immersion/ project based learning			X	X
Social Emotional Learning	N/A*	Direct SEL instruction	Conscious Discipline/ Lifeskills	Conscious Discipline	Conscious Discipline	Second Step
Standard attendance-area registration						X
KPBSD Transportation		X	X	X	X	X
Hot Lunch Program		X	X	X	X	X
Location	Kenai	Homer	Kenai	Soldotna	Kenai	Soldotna

* Reference to practicing Foundation Stones, but no explicit instruction required.

COMPARISONS TO LOCAL CHARTER

Program feature	Aurora Borealis K-10	Fireweed Academy K-6	Kaleidoscope K-5	Soldotna Montessori K-6	TuĦen K-4	Soldotna Elementary Charter School K-6 (proposed)
Number of Students	194	104	173	164	48	290
Students Economically Disadvantages	18.1 %	45.2 %	35.6 %	24.4 %	--	44.7 %
Special Ed %	9.1 %	8.7 %	21.0 %	16.5 %	--	25.9 %
SpEd Students	17.6	8.9	36.3	27.0	--	75.2
SpEd. Final Budget (4220 + 4200)	\$ 83,580	--	\$ 352,876	\$ 365,765	--	\$ 1,747,299
SpEd. Budget per SpEd. Student	\$ 4,760	--	\$ 9,722	\$ 13,550	--	\$ 23, 227
SpEd. Budget per Student	\$ 431	--	\$ 2,040	\$ 2,230	--	\$ 6,025
BARRIERS						
Signed Parent/Student Contract	X	X	X		X	
Minimum Grade Requirements	X					
Late arrivals and late pickup tracking	X					
Behavior Contracts	X					
Screening appt / Parent-only orientation / Parent Meetings / Classroom observation / Other commitments		X		X	X	
School-specific volunteer training			X			
Classroom Supply Fee		X			X	
Evening or Daytime Parent Commitments			X		X	

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

ANNUAL WEB-BASED SURVEYS

Used to solicit feedback from enrolled families, and will address:

- Academic programming
- STREAM & SEL implementation
- School climate
- Student supports
- Communication
- Access
- Priorities for improvement

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT

Parents will always be welcome to join us for field trips, provide classroom observation, and assist teachers with projects, but mandatory parent participation is not required.

BUDGET

Funding	FY28
Foundation funding	\$4,764,889
Additional allowable local support	\$1,089,307
State charter school grant	\$145,000
Additional Title I revenue	-
Total first-year revenue	\$5,999,196
District charges	FY28
Indirect administrative charge	(\$183,705)
In-kind District services	(\$696,191)
Facility / rent	(\$447,156)
Total District charges	(\$1,327,052)

Expenditures	FY28
Salaries / wages	\$2,375,652
Health benefits	\$1,133,375
Employer payroll costs	\$431,491
Teacher discretionary funding	\$5,981
Special education services (4220)	\$363,359
Staff travel	\$2,913
Utilities	\$133,223
Purchased services	\$3,732
Supplies / materials	\$23,023
Curriculum purchases	\$100,000
Dues / fees / other	\$787
Equipment / technology allowance	\$5,000
Technology purchases	\$45,000
Additional service adjustments	-

BUDGET

Position	FTE
Classroom teachers	12.00
Music teacher	1.00
Science teacher	1.00
PE teacher	1.00
Intervention teacher	1.50
Resource Teachers	3.00
Intensive Teachers	2.00
Principal	1.00
Teacher FTE (excludes principal)	21.75
Direct certified staffing	22.75
SpEd aides	7.92
Library aide	0.44
Nurse	0.88
Office support	1.05
Custodians	1.66
Direct classified staffing	11.95
Costed direct personnel	34.70

Position	FTE
Adapted PE teacher	0.05
Deaf / hard-of-hearing teacher	0.15
Visually impaired teacher	0.05
Itinerant instruction total	0.25

Position	FTE
Speech-language pathologist	0.50
SLP assistant — first allocation	0.26
SLP assistant — second allocation	0.88
Occupational therapist	0.45
Physical therapist	0.05
School psychologist	0.50
Related-service total	2.64

Thank you

Soldotna Elementary Charter School

Questions and discussion

Ben Cheah

APC Chair
408-981-7477

Kaiti Syverson

APC Vice Chair

Renae Olsen

APC Secretary

SoldotnaElementaryCharter@gmail.com

