



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of Superintendent

Sean Dusek, Superintendent of Schools

148 North Binkley Street Soldotna, Alaska 99669-7520

Phone (907) 714-8888 Fax (907) 262-9132

M E M O R A N D U M

Date: February 7, 2018

To: Kenai Peninsula Borough Community Members

From: Sean Dusek *Sean Dusek*
Superintendent of Schools

RE: HB 287 Testimony

On January 25, 2018, I had the opportunity to testify about House Bill 287 Appropriation for Education and Student Transportation. The District supports this bill and greatly appreciates the efforts by Rep. Seaton and the other sponsors to provide certainty to school districts in Alaska.

Recent legislative sessions have seen a great deal of discussion on how to solve Alaska's current fiscal reality. While this discussion is extremely important, it has also led to delaying passage of state budgets until well into the summer months. By statute, school districts must make staffing decisions no later than mid-May. There is a disconnect between school related statute and recent legislative budget development practice, which has forced districts to either lay off staff or delay the hiring of staff to protect against fiscal insolvency.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough has had to make many difficult decisions over the past few years due to fiscal problems at the State level. While flat funding from the State does not cover the rising costs occurring in Alaska and its school districts, it does, in this bill, provide certainty for districts to work with local communities through the budget process in a timely manner that allows for the hiring and recruitment of high quality teachers.

While this bill is a large piece of the puzzle to provide certainty for districts, if passed in a timely manner, there are other pieces that must also be put in place. Those pieces include funding for TRS and PERS along with funding for bond debt reimbursement. Health care costs must also be addressed.

I urge the legislature to pass an adequate budget, in a timely manner, that includes all aspects of education funding. Addressing a complete funding package in a timely manner will provide schools and communities a high level of certainty so we can provide an excellent education, every day for our students.