

eComments
Public Comments on Items Not Appearing on the Agenda
April 2, 2019 Assembly Meeting



Virginia Morgan

4/2/19 4:38 PM

Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly,

Thank you for the time you spend serving our borough. I appreciate and understand that difficult decisions have to be made. Our children's future, as well as our own, is at stake, and I implore you to fund our Kenai Peninsula Borough schools to the maximum allowed by the state cap.

I'm frustrated with the tired argument, that our state spends the most money on education and gets the lowest results. This is a misleading statement and is not a true picture of the state as a whole. We know that multiple choice tests are not an accurate measure of a good education. The cost of education versus student achievement, compared nationwide, is a false argument. It is an extremely complicated thing to measure, influenced by many factors, including the high cost of living in Alaska and our Alaska Native population, further complicated by the use of one test to measure something it was not designed to do.

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District has consistently provided a quality education to all of our children. Cutting the education budget will not fix the perceived problem of cost versus achievement statewide.

Education is not an expense – it's an investment. The budget required to continue to provide our students with the quality education they've been receiving has been identified by the KPBSD School Board. We need to examine our priorities about where our money goes and diversify our revenue sources. Many options were suggested at the recent finance committee hearings across the state.

We are educating children for a future we can't predict. This is not a time to be scaling back and cutting education budgets. Ray Kurzweil, an American inventor and futurist, said, "We won't experience 100 years of progress in the 21st century — it will be more like 20,000 years of progress (at today's rate)." Now, more than ever, we need to be investing in education and attracting the highest quality teachers for our children.

Please fund our Kenai Peninsula Borough schools to the maximum allowed by the state cap.

Thank you,
Virginia Morgan
Cooper Landing, AK



Oppose

Meldonna Cody

4/1/19 5:01 PM

Re 2018-19-33 Oppose

As a person who has worked in the KIBSD and the KPBSD from the late 1990s through 2017, I have had the privilege of being part of some exceptional educator teams striving to achieve that moment when a student absolutely glows with the realization of a formerly unknown concept as well as that very second when they realize, "I've got this!". I have been an aide, a SPED aide, taught high school subjects, filled in as a secretary and even done food service work. I've seen a lot of superb teachers, as well as some very good people who are not very good teachers. I've also watched Alaska's schools and their results decline and directly witnessed a great deal of financial waste.

Working support in education is a nice job with nice hours. Holidays, weekends and summers are off. Day to day hours are quite decent with planning periods at middle and high school levels (but needed at elementary levels) and sometimes extremely nice benefits. Also, there is a degree of dignity and prestige not in other professions.

As a retired senior, watching both the statewide budget debate and this local debate, I am very disappointed to see the KPBSD and the associated union(s) abuse their social status and portray hard-working people with much lower incomes than teachers, who are working longer miserable hours with little or no benefits --- who want to see the school district share in budget cuts, as people who are somehow anti-education. I am not anti-education. I absolutely am for cutting, across the entire peninsula, including the KPBSD.

When the Kenai Peninsula Borough has already made deep cuts and is every day trying to find more cost-saving proficiencies, I would like to see the school district also offer some serious and hard concessions. The cry of "it's for the children" no longer flies when the result of extra financial burdens of this expanded budget will harm already struggling families financially.

I was recently informed by a Kodiak teacher that two times during budget cuts in the KIBSD, the Kodiak teachers themselves returned their own raises, actually returning a collective check to their own district in order to save the jobs of their non-tenured district teachers. I'm not seeing that kind of deep selfless community commitment from the teachers on the Kenai Peninsula.

The KPBSD Communications person explained some cost savings taken, but it was not missed in her list that much of the supposed savings was for the 2020 school year forecast, not an actual budget cut. For example, we know that year after year, the pink slips are handed out in spring, but in fall those same people are actually back on the payroll - sans their tenure. So these are not actual cuts, but instead, are ongoing bad budgeting policy.

eComments
Public Comments on Items Not Appearing on the Agenda
April 2, 2019 Assembly Meeting

I've yet to hear one teacher offer up any cost saving ideas. One after the other has just demanded more money.

This budget situation is an opportunity to open discussions to seriously revamp the KPBSD into a leading and innovative school district that creatively works in a tighter budget. I'm sure several of the very talented KPBSD teachers have some ideas of how they would run things differently - within a very restrictive budget. When we can afford more, than we can all have more, but now is not that time.

Please do not approve this budget request.

Very sincerely,

Meldonna Cody



Oppose

Debbie Boyle

4/1/19 5:22 PM

A resolution also has been approved by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly, Ketchikan City Council and Saxman City Council. It states that the budget, as proposed, would irreparably harm Ketchikan's economy and shift state expenses onto local taxpayers.

Ketchikan borough approved a community wide resolution opposing Gov. Dunleavy's budget. I would like to see a COMMUNITY WIDE joint resolution from Kenai Peninsula Borough opposing Gov Dunleavy's budget. This proposed budget will cause irrevocable harm to boroughs around the state. Ketchikan borough gets it. Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly needs to pass a joint resolution as well, along with a stamp of approval from our KPBSD school board to OPPOSE this ill advised and damaging budget. The proposed cuts will indeed cause irrevocable harm to not only our borough, but the state. The Ketchikan resolution specifically notes the direct economic effect of proposed cuts to public education, the university, the Alaska Marine Highway System, Inter-Island Ferry Authority, health and senior services, the arts and public broadcasting. It also notes that the governor proposes no longer sharing raw fish tax revenue with coastal communities that are home to seafood processors.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Debbie Boyle Nikiski