

Michael Mason

From: Kelly King <KKing@KPBSD.k12.ak.us>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 4:27 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for SJR 17

Hello, Chair Tobin, Vice Chair Stevens, and Committee Members Bjorkman, Kiehl, and Gray-Jackson –

I have been the McKinney-Vento Liaison and Students in Transition Program Coordinator for the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District for the last 15 years. Over this time, I have become well-versed in the complex challenges many of our unhoused children, youth, and families face across Alaska; with this in mind, KPBSD made a very intentional effort to spend the ARP HCY funds in a way that was most meaningful to our students, their education, and their lives beyond high school graduation.

In Kenai, a few examples of what the ARP HCY funds have allowed include the following:

- more adequate staffing across the Peninsula, bringing a locally based Liaison to the Eastern Peninsula communities of Seward, Moose Pass, Hope, and Cooper Landing (previously the Soldotna-based Liaison had to satellite to these communities)
- mental health counseling for a homeless unaccompanied youth who had experienced immense trauma
- the creation of a small summer work program for unhoused youth with barriers to the general workforce
- Human and Sex Trafficking awareness and intervention training to targeted school staff, including school nurses, school counselors, and school Administrators
- student enrichment activities focused on exposure to arts, history, service-learning, and post-secondary education opportunities

While the KPBSD is poised to have these funds obligated and spent before the current deadline, it is my understanding that there are districts across the state (and country) that are not. I support SJR_17 and an increased timeline for ARP HCY funds to be obligated, as it would allow districts to be intentional in the way these much-needed funds are utilized. The goal with any funding should be to make deep and positive impacts for the youth we are here to serve, and this extension would help support these very efforts.

Thank you for your time in reading this.

Respectfully,

Kelly King
Program Coordinator
KPBSD Students in Transition (SIT) Program