



August 3, 2020

Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner  
State of Alaska  
Department of Education and Early Development  
PO Box 110500  
Juneau, AK 99822-0500

Sent via email: [deed.commissioner@alaska.gov](mailto:deed.commissioner@alaska.gov)

Dear Commissioner Johnson:

The Petersburg Borough Assembly is writing to request school districts be held harmless from any decrease in Average Daily Membership numbers from the previous school year.

The 2020/2021 school year presents unprecedented challenges – both operational and financial to every school district. The Petersburg School District along with every other district in the state is charged with developing plans for reopening requiring additional staff, classroom space, equipment, supplies, transportation, as well as full contingency plans for remote learning and virtual classes. While the borough is making a significant investment of its CARES act dollars toward school funding, these funds are limited to previously unbudgeted expenses. The school district still needs enough revenue to maintain its basic operations, which cannot be funded through the CARES Act.

There is a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the coming year and significant concern among some families, particularly in multi-generational households and those with household members who have underlying health conditions. As a result, some families are choosing to start the academic year by homeschooling.

As you know, the Average Daily Membership (ADM) is calculated early in the school year, generally October. With some families taking a “wait and see” approach to sending their children to school, using October enrollment numbers will result in significantly less funding to schools at a time when they are most in need. Holding schools harmless by using the previous school year’s ADM provides stability and assurances to teachers, students and families that the school district will be able to provide educational support and services for the entire school year.

Thank you for your consideration as we all work together to provide the best educational opportunities possible to students during these difficult times.

Sincerely,

Mark Jensen  
Mayor

cc: Governor Mike Dunleavy  
Senator Bert Stedman  
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins  
Nils Andreassen, Alaska Municipal League  
Norm Wooten, AASB

**Petersburg Borough Assembly**  
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