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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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**From:** Alicia Brooks [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 10:39 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to share my strong support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School. As a supporter of this effort, I have seen how much work, care, and community commitment has gone into building this school. Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would give Fairbanks families another strong public school option and create new opportunities for students through its STEAM-focused approach.

There is real community support behind this school, and I hope you will recognize the need and excitement surrounding it. Fairbanks families deserve more public school choices, and Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would be a valuable addition to our district.

Please support the opening of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alicia Brooks  
Fairbanks, AK



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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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**From:** Allison Plachinski [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 11:44 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to share my strong support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

As a supporter of this effort, I have seen how much work, care, and community commitment has gone into building this school. Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would give Fairbanks families another strong public school option and create new opportunities for students through its STEAM-focused approach.

There is real community support behind this school, and I hope you will recognize the need and excitement surrounding it. Fairbanks families deserve more public school choices, and Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would be a valuable addition to our district.

Please support the opening of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Allie Plachinski

Fairbanks, AK



Outlook

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**FW: Pearl Cream STEAM Charter**

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-----Original Message-----

From: Amber Hays [REDACTED]  
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 8:37 AM  
To: EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Subject: Pearl Cream STEAM Charter

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CAUTION: This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear members of the Alaska State Board of Education, I am writing you today in hopes to advocate for the Pearl Creek STEAM charter school.

I have 2 children that attended and thrived at Pearl Creek elementary school prior to the school's closure. Over the years at Pearl Creek, we have seen tremendous growth within their educational journey. They're excited for learning and being at school. They have made lasting relationships with friends and adults that have traveled through those years together. Teachers and staff create a safe, fun and caring environment for all children. I believe best practices are achieved daily.

After school enrichments like the Community service club and partnering with the FNA elders impact our community directly and foster a healthy relationship within our neighborhoods.

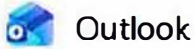
We live in such a diverse and inclusive community. Quality education is vital for future generations and helps keep children enthusiastic about their learning opportunities.

We are counting on you and genuinely believe Pearl Creek STEAM Charter school will be a valuable

3/20/26, 3:00 PM

addition to our community and district.  
Thank you for your time and consideration,

Proud Pearl Creek Puffin,  
Amber Hays  
Fairbanks, Ak



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**FW: Regarding Pearl Creek Charter School**

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**From:** Amy Boyd [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 12:43 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:**  
Regarding Pearl Creek Charter School

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Hi,

I am writing to voice my opinion on the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter school application. I am opposed to this charter school. I believe that it is not what will best serve the Fairbanks North Star School District as a whole. I attended Pearl Creek from kindergarten to 6th grade and was sad when it closed, but I understand, and trust our school board, that it was the best decision in order to support all students in the district. My children attend University Park and have had another great school year. The influx of staff and students from Pearl Creek has been a positive addition to our school.

Thank you for your time,

Amelia Boyd



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**FW: Pearl Creek**

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**From:** Amy Schrum [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 1:57 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:**  
Pearl Creek

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To Whom It May's Concern:

I am an alum of Pearl Creek 85-92, and my children attended PC until it closed. PC is a wonderful school in a great neighborhood, and the closure should have never happened. I would love to see the school reopen as a charter school and would send my youngest back again for his final years of elementary school.

Please consider allowing PC to open as a charter school. Our community would significantly benefit from a STEAM focused charter.

Sincerely,  
Amy Schrum

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)



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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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**From:** Andrea Croll [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 7:57 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important.](#)

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Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to share my strong support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

As a supporter of this effort, I have seen how much work, care, and community commitment has gone into building this school. Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would give Fairbanks families another strong public school option and create new opportunities for students through its STEAM-focused approach.

There is real community support behind this school, and I hope you will recognize the need and excitement surrounding it. Fairbanks families deserve more public school choices, and Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would be a valuable addition to our district.

Please support the opening of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

Thank you for your consideration.

3/20/26, 3:05 PM

Sincerely,

Andrea Croll

Fairbanks, AK



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**FW: Don't Overturn Fairbanks School Board's Pearl Creek Charter Decision**

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**From:** ondrej valaska [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 2:40 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:**  
Don't Overturn Fairbanks School Board's Pearl Creek Charter Decision

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)  
**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Board of Education,

We are writing as parents of 3 elementary age kids, and formerly attending Pearl Creek Elementary in Fairbanks. We were extremely sad about the state school funding situation that led to our beloved neighborhood school being closed. Nonetheless, it was a decision we see helped pool resources and better support our students.

Overturning our local elected School Board's decision, which represented the best our community could do with a terrible situation, merely compounds the harm to our kids' education possibilities. There simply aren't enough dollars to re-open another elementary school in a building with severe repair and maintenance issues. Doing so hurts all our kids.

Charter schools are supposed to bring something new to a district, but supporting this charter appeal in the face of a unanimous local decision merely reduces our district's educational opportunities.

Please, support our Fairbanks kids and leave this charter application as it stands: denied for the good of all 11,000 kids in our district.

Thank you,

Andrew & Eva Allaby  
Fairbanks AK



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**FW: Pearl Creek Steam Charter School**

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**From:** Annje Titus [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 7:22 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Pearl Creek Steam Charter School

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear State Board of Education Members,

I know your time is valuable, so I will keep this message brief. I am writing to respectfully urge you to vote **against** the Pearl Creek Steam Charter School application.

I have taught in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District for 16 years, specializing in primary intensive resource. My life's work and deepest passion is supporting students with significant special needs—students who are incredible, capable, and who contribute so much to our schools and community.

Unfortunately, the Pearl Creek Steam Charter School does not make space for students like mine. Excluding students with severe disabilities not only limits their access to education but also sends a harmful message to all students: that inclusion is optional or unimportant. In reality, inclusion strengthens school communities for everyone—students with disabilities *and* their peers in general education.

Please consider what kind of values we are modeling for our children. I urge you to vote *no* on this charter application and stand for a district where **all** students are welcomed and included.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our students.

Sincerely,

Annie Titus



FW:

**From:** Aspen Frick [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 9:09 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:**

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Board of Education,

I write to you today as an atypical testifier, but a voice I think is critical to the future of Fairbanks.

I am at that part of life where people decide where to land. I am in my mid twenties and finished with an undergraduate degree looking to being a career in GIS. Alaska is my home. I was born and raised in Fairbanks, and on one hand it is hard to imagine settling anywhere else in the world.

I want my children to grow up running barefoot in the woods, picking blueberries, excited for the first snow, perhaps dreading the last. I want to be able to make a whole life here. But as much as it is hard to imagine being anywhere else, it is also hard to imagine raising a family in the current educational environment.

Great schools produce great citizens and attract great citizens. I urge you to consider the Alaskans if the future as you make decision today. We must have schools like the proposed Pearl Creek STEAM charter school. For my generation these decisions will determine whether it not we can remain where we were born to raise a new generation.

Alaska law allows for the creation if charter schools. Today your decision is simple - uphold the law. Open this lawful charter and in doing so, help to build the infrastructure we need to attract and keep young Alaskans here.

3/20/26, 3:18 PM

Best wishes,  
Aspen



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**FW: Support for Pear Creek STEAM Charter School**

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**From:** Barbara Wood [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 2:24 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for Pear Creek STEAM Charter School

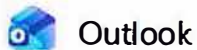
You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

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Alaska State Board of Education,

I support the opening of the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School. Having had 2 children and 4 grandchildren who attended the Pearl Creek school, I saw the strong community and parent support surrounding the school. All that same support, plus more from the families who recognize the need and want the new opportunities that will be created with this STEAM Charter school have gone into building this school. The Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School will give the Fairbanks area a great, much needed additional choice in our school district. Please support the opening of the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

Sincerely, Barbara Wood  
Fairbanks



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**FW: SUPPORT PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER**

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**From:** Brittney Johnson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 9:57 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:**  
SUPPORT PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER

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I want more choices for our community education options. I love the plan for the Pearl Creek steam charter school and its ties into the community. The waiting list for other schools of choice are extremely long and this will help our community get more local students back into classrooms.

The way the local school board denied it was wrong and seemed to just want to "stick to their guns" to prove a point and not look bad. I have never been into school board meetings until this last year and watching how this board is using its power to twist things around in their favor is **WRONG!**

The APC for Pearl Creek steam charter has done amazing work on the application and it should be **APPROVED** so we can have another school of choice in our community.

Sincerely,

Brittney Johnson

\*Parent of soon to be Kindergarten and 3rd grade students



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**FW: Support for pearl creek steam charter school**

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**From:** Carol Juergens [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 10:40 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for pearl creek steam charter school

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Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to share my strong support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School. As a supporter of this effort, I have seen how much work, care, and community commitment has gone into building this school. Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would give Fairbanks families another strong public school option and create new opportunities for students through its STEAM-focused approach.

There is real community support behind this school, and I hope you will recognize the need and excitement surrounding it. Fairbanks families deserve more public school choices, and Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would be a valuable addition to our district.

Please support the opening of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.  
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carol Juergens  
Grandmother of Fairbanks school children

3/20/26, 3:18 PM

Kodiak, Alaska



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**FW: Pearl Creek charter school and FNSBSD**

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**From:** Carrie Nash [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 9:33 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored)  
<eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:** Pearl Creek charter school  
and FNSBSD  
You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

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To the State Board members:

I live across the street from Pearl Creek Elementary School and all three of our now-adult kids attended the school.

I am writing to beg the State Board of Education to honor the unanimous decision of our FNSBSD school board and not force the opening of the proposed Pearl Creek charter school.

We, the people of the Fairbanks North Star Borough, and our elected representatives are the ones who should make the decision about this charter proposal. We are the ones who will have to live with the outcome and consequences of the decision.

Due to the Dunleavy administration our schools statewide are suffering. Fairbanks has lost many neighborhood public schools now and by opening a new charter we lose the ability to

decide where we will allocate very scarce resources.

The State Board, DEED, and the Dunleavy administration will certainly not be giving our neighborhood public schools funds to return to smaller classes and maintain them into the future as our community has prioritized. You will not be here to watch the diminishment of neighborhood schools in impoverished neighborhoods while Pearl Creek Charter gets their way. And... they will get their way in perpetuity as the district cannot close a charter school if our funding sources become even more scarce.

My final concern is that two of my three children enjoyed very high quality special education programming at Pearl Creek Elementary and I know darn well that the new charter will not have this option for severely disabled students. It is not pretending to try to be a school for everyone. The State Board should not support public education that isn't for every member of the public.

Please allow the FNSBSD school board vote to stand. Do not attempt to overturn the decision and force a charter on all of us who live here.

Thank you!

Carrie Nash, Fairbanks

Carrie Nash  
[nash.carrie@gmail.com](mailto:nash.carrie@gmail.com)

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Fairbanks, AK 99709



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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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**From:** Celina Clift [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 4:58 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored)  
<eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK  
STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL  
You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to share my strong support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

As a supporter of this effort, I have seen how much work, care, and community commitment has gone into building this school. Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would give Fairbanks families another strong public school option and create new opportunities for students through its STEAM-focused approach.

There is real community support behind this school, and I hope you will recognize the need and excitement surrounding it. Fairbanks families deserve more public school choices, and Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would be a valuable addition to our district.

Please support the opening of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

Thank you for your consideration.

3/20/26, 3:03 PM

Sincerely,

Celina Clift

Fairbanks, AK



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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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-----Original Message-----

From: Chandra Mcgee [REDACTED]  
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 3:24 PM  
To: EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Subject: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

[You don't often get email from [REDACTED] Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon,  
I'm writing as a parent and member of the Fairbanks community to express my strong support for the Pearl Creek Steam Charter School.  
This is an effort to fill a need in our school district and one that many families support and want for their children.  
Please support this school!  
Chandra McGee



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**FW: Pearl Creek Stream Charter School**

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**From:** DAN SPILLANE [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 10:29 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Pearl Creek Stream Charter School

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I am in support of the founding of Pearl Creek Stream Charter School.

Dan Spillane  
[REDACTED]



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**FW: Support for Pearl Creek STEAM school**

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**From:** Darlin Monroe [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 4:01 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored)  
<eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:** Support for Pearl Creek STEAM school  
You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

I am writing to you to show my support for this school to be opened. I believe it is needed and would benefit many students who the curriculum would resonate with. When I proposed this to my son he was very excited about all the opportunities this school would provide for him to really find school worthwhile and grab his interests. He struggles feeling engaged in the coursework where he is and is looking to find that at this new STEAM school. Thank you for your consideration

Darlin Monroe



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**FW: Support for Pearl Creek Charter**

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-----Original Message-----

From: dp2477@gmail.com [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 11:41 AM  
To: EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Subject: Support for Pearl Creek Charter

[You don't often get email from [REDACTED] Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear State Board of Education,

This letter is in regards to your review of the Fairbanks based Pearl Creek Steam Charter (PCSC) elementary school application, which has been denied by the Fairbanks North Star Borough school board.

I am a parent of two Fairbanks based public school children a first grader and a third grader both of whom attend attended Pearl Creek elementary school last year.

The school had a fantastic reputation and superior teachers, as well as an amazing school culture that took 40 years to develop.

The denial of the application put forth by a dedicated group of parents and educators who are committed to advancing education opportunities in Fairbanks with clearly deemed illegal by the Commissioner of Education.

As a parent of two students who are students in the Fairbanks school system it has been incredibly disappointing to see our district waste, valuable time, energy and resources fighting this parent and teacher led effort. At a time of fiscal concern I am beyond frustrated by their lack of focus on improving,

educational opportunities for Fairbanks youth and their choice to instead dig their heels in and spend precious taxpayer dollars on proving they are not "wrong" .

As a parent, what I see are teachers, leaving the school district and other high quality educators who have left their jobs specifically due to frustrations with the current school district administration- that does not further the mission of either the State Board of Education or the FNSBSD, and it certainly does not improve educational opportunities for my kids.

As you review this charter application, please pay attention to State law - which this school board is actively working to circumvent- and please approve this well thought-out application by PCSC to improve access to charter schools and educational opportunities for youth in the interior.

Many thanks for your time and your service,

-Dave Messier

Fairbanks Parent



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**vote no on Pearl Creek Charter**

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Dear Alaska State School Board (FNSB School Board, cc'd),

I'm writing to ask that you vote against implementing the Pearl Creek Charter.

My four-year-old will attend UPark next year, so the decisions being made now about district resources matter a great deal to my family. I understand why families near Pearl Creek would like a school in their neighborhood, and I sympathize with that goal. However, I'm concerned that opening a new school at a cost of roughly \$2.7 million per year will come at the expense of the schools we already have.

In particular, I worry that adding a new school will further stretch the district's limited budget. That could make it harder to retain strong teachers if salary increases are off the table, and it could jeopardize programs like music and art that many schools are only beginning to rebuild after years of cuts.

The district has already done significant work to right-size our schools. Opening a new charter school that the district cannot comfortably afford risks reversing that progress and spreading resources too thinly again. In the end, the students in our existing neighborhood schools would bear those consequences.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you vote against the Pearl Creek Charter.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our community.

David Fee  
Fairbanks, AK 99709



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**FW: support for Pearl Creek STEAM School**

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**From:** Dawn Ell Fitzpatrick [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 10:12 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** support for Pearl Creek STEAM School

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello and thank you for your service to our state,

I am writing as a parent of two children in FNSBSD and a community member. I hope the state school board will support the Pearl Creek STEAM school. The denial of the charter school has felt strangely biased by our superintendent and in turn our school board.

One of the four pillars of the FNSBSD strategic plan includes supporting access and choice. Recently, North Star college started to expand choice. Our district supports many other charter schools (Boreal Sun Charter, Chinook Charter, Discovery Peak Charter, Effie Kokrine Charter, and Watershed Charter) and schools of choice (BEST Homeschool in Fairbanks and North Pole, the Career Education Center, Star of the North, and Barnette Magnet School). The denial of the Pearl Creek STEAM charter school which is highly supported by community members is confusing to me, and it feels like a strange and possibly punishing application of bureaucratic power by the superintendent and school board.

I hope you will support the Pearl Creek STEAM school and choice for families in Fairbanks, like the FNSBSD strategic plan claims to be one of the important pillars of success for our communities education system.

Thank you,  
Dawn Fitzpatrick  
Fairbanks, AK 99709



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**FW: Approve Pearl Creek Charter**

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**From:** D Herrmann [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 7:15 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Approve Pearl Creek Charter

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I am writing to urge you to approve the Pearl Creek Charter School application. It would make an important contribution to school choices in Fairbanks and would be attractive to many families in my area. My children attended Pearl Creek School, and this charter effort is being spearheaded by the types of dedicated parents that I knew back then (as well as some former students). I hope you allow them to build this high-quality school for our community.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,

Diane Herrmann

[REDACTED]  
Fairbanks, Alaska USA



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**FW: The Cost to all students for Pearl Creek Charter**

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**From:** Dodie Delaney [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 8:53 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Cc:** Dodie Delaney [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** The Cost to all students for Pearl Creek Charter

You don't often get email from [dodelaney719@gmail.com](mailto:dodelaney719@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear State Board Members,

Thank you for all your work and time you devote to being a board member. I am sure it is more than most of us know.

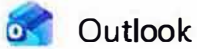
I have read several articles about the issue with the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter and the FNSBSD. According to these sources, the cost of operating and opening this school if you approve it, will be several million dollars. That is a LOT of money to spend on a few kids, I might add, privileged kids in my opinion. Pearl Creek is located out of town and no school bus service is provided for charter schools. This will be a problem for a number of students who might want to attend but cannot because of transportation issues. To me, to spend several, probably over 2.5 million on a small number of students, while the rest of the students do without, is not fair. Fairbanks has a variety of charter schools and the people that have pushed for Pearl Creek Charter have been over aggressive and I believe, selfish, is pushing for this charter. The building will need quite a bit of work, one of the reasons the school was chosen for closure. I would rather that money be spread over the entire school district than one charter school.

Please consider a no vote. I do not think it is fair or ethical for a state board to leverage a decision for a local school board on what type of schools a local school district should allow. The decision should be local. It is even more concerning as you, the state board, if you vote to allow this charter and do not provide one cent towards funding of this charter school.

3/20/26, 3:22 PM

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Dodie Delaney, RN, NP



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**FW: Pearl Creek Charter approval**

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**From:** Elise Poole [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 11:40 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Pearl Creek Charter approval

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Hello,

I would like to voice my support for the approval of the Pearl Creek STEAM charter in Fairbanks, AK. This school would help strengthen the educational system in Fairbanks and in Alaska.

Sincerely,  
Elise Poole



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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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**From:** Emily Sousa [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 5:01 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to share my strong support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School. As a supporter of this effort, I have seen how much work, care, and community commitment has gone into building this school. Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would give Fairbanks families another strong public school option and create new opportunities for students through its STEAM-focused approach.

There is real community support behind this school, and I hope you will recognize the need and excitement surrounding it. Fairbanks families deserve more public school choices, and Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would be a valuable addition to our district.

I am a parent to two kids who would enroll in Pearl Creek STEAM Charter school. There are many families excited about this!

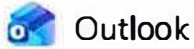
Please support the opening of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

3/20/26, 3:03 PM

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Emily Sousa  
Fairbanks

Sent from my iPhone



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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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**From:** Emilie Wright [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 17, 2026 3:01 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

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Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to share my strong support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

As a supporter of this effort, I have seen how much work, care, and community commitment has gone into building this school. Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would give Fairbanks families another strong public school option and create new opportunities for students through its STEAM-focused approach.

There is real community support behind this school, and I hope you will recognize the need and excitement surrounding it. Fairbanks families deserve more public school choices, and Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would be a valuable addition to our district.

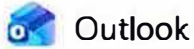
Please support the opening of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Emilie Wright

Fairbanks, AK



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**FW: SUPPORT for Pearl Creek Steam Charter**

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**From:** Emily Potter [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 10:00 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored)  
<eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:** SUPPORT for Pearl Creek  
Steam Charter

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I will make this short as I am sure you have many letters coming through. The Pearl Creek STEAM Charter would be a wonderful educational addition to the Fairbanks community. Schools of choice in our area have long waitlists and the families want these options.

Thank you

Emily Potter and family



**FW: Concerns about proposed Pearl Creek Charter**

**From:** Erika Burr [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 2:35 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Concerns about proposed Pearl Creek Charter

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [learn why this is important](#)

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Dear State School Board members,

I am contacting you today to express my concerns about opening another new Charter school in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. I feel strongly that **it is not the right time** to be channeling resources **to open a new school in our district**. (This is a second email reiterating concerns that I shared earlier this year.) With a very tight budget and difficulty finding and retaining qualified staff for existing schools, among other complex challenges, it is key to **focus** our resources and energies **on fortifying our current** neighborhood **schools** and their programs. Opening a new charter school will weaken currently operating schools. It will take funding from reopening elementary school music programs, pull teachers from current schools, and undermine efforts to reduce class sizes at neighborhood schools.

As a former Innovations Academy teacher, I know that **opening a new school is a serious, complex undertaking that is not guaranteed to be a success**. Innovations Academy pulled experienced, well-qualified teachers out of other programs where they were effective and valued. It placed them in a situation with an exciting idea and funding, but, in fact, little guidance or detailed advance planning about how to achieve the vision placed before them. Those were the hardest years of my career so far (harder than the COVID years) because we were "flying the plane while building it," being frustratingly inefficient and seeing little "success." We were all experts in our subject area and committed to what we understood to be the vision, but the format and the expectations were unclear, and/or often mismatched with the students' needs and strengths. We went home most days feeling like we were failing our students and each other. It was an expensive experiment that suffered from "dream without details" and jumping into action without a tested plan.

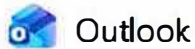
It is very **exciting** to hear the **ideas** for programs that could be part of a future school in times with more generous and sustained state and federal funding. For now, the proposed Pearl Creek STEAM **programs can be piloted at existing local schools**, especially Anne Wein and University Park, over the next few years. This way they can benefit a range of students in their neighborhood schools, they can be **refined** so that they can **spread** to other schools, once successful, and be proven by the time our district can reasonably support opening another school.

Our district does not have the personnel or money to experiment with a new school in this funding environment, we must focus on serving students and families at the schools currently operating. I am asking you to **please oppose** the appeal filed by **the Pearl Creek Steam Charter School APC**, because it is not in the best interest of the Fairbanks community served by our district, and the **decision** to open a new experimental school **must rest with our locally elected school board**.

**Thank you for taking my concerns seriously and for taking the time to deliberate carefully and thoughtfully.**

Erika G. Burr

Parent, Teacher, FNSB



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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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**From:** Fabian Philipp [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 4:44 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important.](#)

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to share my strong support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School. As a father of two young children, I am planning to have them both attend this school once it opens.

As a supporter of this effort, I have seen how much work, care, and community commitment has gone into building this school. Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would give Fairbanks families another strong public school option and create new opportunities for students through its STEAM-focused approach.

There is real community support behind this school, and I hope you will recognize the need and excitement surrounding it. Fairbanks families deserve more public school choices, and Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would be a valuable addition to our district.

Please support the opening of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Fabian Philipp

Fairbanks, AK



**FW: Possible Pearl Creek Charter School**

**From:** Felicity Hall [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 9:52 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Possible Pearl Creek Charter School

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Board Members,  
I am very concerned about the possibility of reversing the closure of Pearl Creek School and it becoming a charter school. One concern is the impact of the requirements for funding the proposed charter school and the impact that will have on all the students throughout the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. The cost of completing just the needed maintenance on the school is a big concern. In addition, the precedent of reversing a local school board's decision seems dangerous. Local decisions by elected officials seems to me to be very important and valuable. Please do not allow the charter school at this time. Thank you.  
Felicity Hall

[REDACTED]



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**FW: Support for Pearl Creek Steam Charter School**

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**From:** Susan Harvey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 10:37 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for Pearl Creek Steam Charter School

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [learn why this is important](#)

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Dear members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

We are writing to strongly support the Pearl Creek Steam Charter school application. As grandparents we recognize how important this initiative is for the kids and parents of Fairbanks, and are excited to see how the community has rallied in support of this STEAM focused approach.

There is little downside in developing a school that will offer a different focus than is currently offered in Fairbanks. What currently is available for K-5 education will be greatly enhanced.

Please vote to open the Pearl Creek Charter School

Glen and Susan Harvey



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**FW: Pearl Creek Charter School**

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**From:** Glenn Villeneuve [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 9:12 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Pearl Creek Charter School

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I'm writing to urge you to approve the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School in Fairbanks. This school will be the best option for my family and I know many of my friends and neighbors feel the same way.

Sincerely,

Glenn Villeneuve  
Fairbanks, AK

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone.](#)



**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

**From:** Gwen Lieb [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 2:54 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to share my strong support of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

I am a practicing Pediatrician in Fairbanks, and witness first hand the impact quality education can make in my patient's lives. Over the past few years I have seen more and more families choose to homeschool their children due to the lack of quality public school options. The ripple effects of this are enormous: less funding to existing schools, more parents staying home and out of the workforce, more children missing important social experiences that school provides, even some missing valuable special education services because children fell through the cracks without teachers advocating for them. Quality public schools support the entire community. Over the past two years there has been overwhelming support and enthusiasm around Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School, and it would likely bring many families back into the district.

Even more, I have seen the impact that closing schools has had on physician recruitment and retention in the Fairbanks Community. One of our dear Pediatrician colleagues made the decision to relocate her family when Pearl Creek was closed. This represents a huge loss for our community. It will be difficult to fill her position, as physician families are looking for solid

public school options when making the decision to move to a new community. Fairbanks families are looking for more choice in public schools, and Pear Creek STEAM Charter School is a valuable addition with tremendous support.

Please support the opening of Pear Creek STEAM Charter School.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gwendolyn Lieb MD  
Fairbanks, Alaska



**FW: Opposition to Approving Pearl Creek Steam Charter School**

**From:** Heather Aruffo [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 12:42 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Opposition to Approving Pearl Creek Steam Charter School

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important.](#)

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing in opposition to the approval of the Pearl Creek Steam Charter school. I have lived in Fairbanks for nearly a decade, am the wife of an elementary school PE teacher in the district, and hope to have children attending neighborhood schools in the near future.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School Board voted to close Pearl Creek Elementary after a long and judicious process. Pearl Creek was selected for closure due to high costs of deferred maintenance and upkeep, a lower number of walkers than other nearby schools, and low birthrates in the Pearl Creek attendance area. While some opposed the closure claiming that it was the highest performing school in Fairbanks town, in fact the students at neighboring Woodriver had the highest test scores.

The children of one school board member voted to close Pearl Creek even though her children attended that school. Another who voted to close it was an alumni. It was a decision not taken lightly but based on what was best for the community given the current budget situation, and the declining birthrate in the Fairbanks area.

As for the argument that consolidating and right-sizing Fairbanks schools has been a disaster - from my husband's perspective it has been anything but. As a PE teacher at a nearby school he regularly saw classes of up to 35 students in class pre school closures. He often had large gaps of time during the day due to the low number of students in the building and therefore lower numbers of classes attending PE. By consolidating and right-sizing, class sizes have decreased from 35 to 27 and his schedule is full,

3/20/26, 3:20 PM

without the wasted time waiting between classes. His classes are much easier to manage with the smaller sizes. His school is at capacity without empty classrooms. Closing schools and right sizing was a prudent decision.

I am strongly against approving this school  
Thank you for your time and consideration  
Best Regards  
Heather Aruffo



**FW: Support for Pearl Creek STEAM**

**From:** Heidi Wood [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 8:57 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for Pearl Creek STEAM

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Esteemed Members of the State Board of Education,

I write to you today not as the chair of the Pearl Creek STEAM APC, but as a parent of two young school aged children. I write to you as a third generation life-long Alaskan who has made a conscious choice to live here in Fairbanks. I am a product of the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, I am the child of a single parent who grew up in Goldstream in a cabin. Today I am a Doctor of Physical Therapy and a first generation college graduate.

Over the past five years, I have fought with our school district as they have dismantled programs and eliminated resources. They have voted time and time again to eliminate opportunities for children. Opportunities that my children will not be afforded, opportunities that this community's children will not have exposure to. This is a significant problem and is a dramatic contributor to the outmigration of students from our district. I witnessed numerous medical providers and professionals leave this town, individuals which make our Golden Heart beat. They are individuals who bring deeply needed services to this community. I have also witnessed a large number of families choose to homeschool their children as they watched our school district gut our neighborhood schools. Today, over 30% of the school aged children in Fairbanks North Star Borough attend a homeschool that is not part of the FNSBSD. This is atrocious. We must ask ourselves, why? And, how do we bring these students back? How do we attract families to live in Fairbanks and put down their roots? Parents will not move here if there are no good educational options for their children.

Pearl Creek STEAM aims to do just that. A large group of parents, myself included, have worked tirelessly to develop, dream, and establish a plan for a STEAM place based education

opportunity in Fairbanks. This opportunity is proving to be highly sought after, with hundreds of families expressing intent to enroll. Selfishly, I originally got involved as I have two highly energetic kids who want nothing more than to learn and engage with the world around them. My children thrive the moment education becomes the world they live in. And they struggle with worksheets and screens, sitting in a classroom all day in order to achieve a test score. My children are curious about the world asking why? and how? at every turn. This is what makes an independent thinker, this is what changes the world. This is not the education they are getting this year, and it has deeply affected their attitudes, motivation and demeanor.

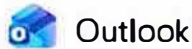
This town needs a change in the educational structure and Pearl Creek STEAM is the catalyst to do it. Pearl Creek STEAM will be a place for curiosity and invention. Pearl Creek STEAM aims to serve those children who attend, and the entire district. As a life-long Alaskan I care deeply about this town and community. We have a model for other schools to come and use the campus, for teachers throughout the district to use the curriculum components and lessons, and we have a plan to join with the educators of tomorrow at UAF. We are creating something different, a community hub for education, we have decided we are unwilling to settle for good when great is possible.

The Department of Law resoundingly found that the local School Boards decisions to deny the charter application were contrary to law. This is not a surprise. This school and application should have been approved at the local level, however it was not. Please recognize Dr. Deena Bishop's decision and vote to approve this exciting new educational opportunity for the families of Fairbanks!

My heartfelt gratitude, the Mom of Maddie and Theo,  
Heidi Wood

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Fairbanks, Alaska



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## Public Comment Regarding Pearl Creek Charter Application

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From Helen Graves [REDACTED]  
Date Mon 3/16/2026 12:23 PM  
To EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Alaska State School Board,

I am writing to express my concerns after listening to the public testimony regarding the Pearl Creek Charter application at the recent school board meeting on Wednesday, March 11.

While I believe the organizers of this effort genuinely feel they are acting in the best interest of the community, I am concerned that the vision presented is somewhat short-sighted and does not fully reflect the broader needs of our district.

First, the claim that this initiative was created to provide options and access for the entire borough does not accurately reflect how the effort began. The movement to create this charter school originated as a reaction to a specific school closure. Had that school not closed, it is unlikely that this group would have organized around opening a charter school. In other words, this was primarily a reactive response to a particular situation rather than a long-term, forward-thinking plan focused on what would best serve the entire community.

I know this because many of the individuals involved are my friends, and I was present for many of the conversations and reactions as the closure situation unfolded. For that reason, it now feels somewhat misleading to suggest that the mission has always been centered on serving the needs of the broader community.

Additionally, the strong support reflected in the testimony at this week's meeting appears to be, at least in part, the result of a well-organized and effective social media campaign that mobilized supporters. While there is nothing inherently wrong with that, it likely amplified certain voices while others were underrepresented. Many residents who may have concerns did not have the same organizational reach to fill testimony slots or the flexibility to take time off work during the middle of the week to participate. As a result, the testimony may not fully represent the range of perspectives within our community.

There are several specific ways in which I am concerned that opening this charter school could negatively impact the broader district.

First, opening this school would likely require redistricting once again, drawing a significant portion of students from University Park Elementary and Anne Wien Elementary in particular. The majority of students in the district would not be able to attend the charter school, particularly once priority placement for founders and early supporters is filled. Meanwhile, many other families and students would be forced to reconsolidate into new schools, creating another year of disruption and instability for a large number of families.

Looking further ahead, education funding across Alaska continues to face significant challenges. If Pearl Creek were to reopen as a charter school, it would be largely insulated from future closure decisions that may become necessary due to funding constraints or enrollment changes. Other neighborhood schools do not have that option. The broader community cannot simply launch campaigns to guarantee continued funding for their preferred school if difficult financial decisions must be made in the future.

I have personally spoken with several families who have already experienced multiple school moves and district changes in recent years. Many have expressed that they may leave the district—or even Fairbanks entirely—if they are forced to change schools again. People are understandably weary of the ongoing instability. While opening this charter school may create additional choices for some families, it may simultaneously create significant disruption for many others who would have little say in the outcome.

Thank you for taking the time to carefully consider this matter and for extending the review process rather than relying solely on the supportive testimony of those who would directly benefit from this decision. There is a much larger picture to consider in Fairbanks, and many voices that were not represented during the meeting. The absence of a coordinated opposition campaign should not be interpreted as the absence of concern within the community.

If there is a way to create innovative solutions to educational concerns in our community then I am all for it, but I am concerned that opening a new school may not be the best path forward for the majority of families at this time.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,  
a concerned Fairbanks resident and district parent



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**FW: Request to deny the PCCS**

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**From:** Holly Dean [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 3:59 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Request to deny the PCCS

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon,

I'm writing to express my concerns about the Pearl Creek Charter School (PCCS) proposal. I am a parent of an elementary school child in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, and an alumna of Pearl Creek Elementary School. There are many flaws in the PCCS proposal, of which I will share some below, in addition to issues with their numbers, and I hope you will see that overriding the district's denial of this charter and forcing our publicly elected school board to support this new charter is to the detriment of our community.

None of us wants to see school closures, but the reality is that our population of school age students has been in decline for a decade and our schools weren't anywhere near capacity. While they may not be perfect, I believe our school board's decision to close Pearl Creek Elementary School last year made the most sense of any other elementary school on the west side of Fairbanks.

It is imperative that we have a healthy fund for emergencies, not to spend the 2.7 million dollars it would cost for the PCCS. We need to spend our finances on educating children and supporting school staff, rather than propping up half empty buildings and opening back up buildings which are in disrepair. By not opening the PCCS we could fund art and music programs for 11,000 students across the district. This versus just the 350 that might attend the new charter school, though their proposal lacks robust programs in these areas.

The PCCS group's claims that opening a charter school would increase our district enrollment numbers cannot be substantiated. Nor can their claims of widespread community support. If you choose to allow the PCCS to open, it will not only cost more each year, but it will prevent us from providing our teachers and staff the much needed 1% raise across the district that is currently in negotiation. We need to be able to attract and retain quality teachers with higher salaries, not open another school which does not meet the needs of and, in fact, may increase inequities in our community.

Additionally, charter schools are supposed to bring something new to a district. PCSC is not trying to create something new—our schools already have many of the things they claim to bring to the table such as school gardens, ski trails, ice rinks, STEAM education, and Indigenous learning opportunities.

Our community and school district has already faced many painful decisions and worked hard to do the best we can with the State's current support levels for education, please do not force us to open the PCCS to the further detriment of our community. Instead, we ask that you allow these decisions to be made at the local level and for the greater good of our community as a whole.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Holly Dean

A community member and parent in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District



**FW: Strong Support for Pearl Creek Steam Charter**

**From:** Jack Withrow [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 11:16 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Strong Support for Pearl Creek Steam Charter

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Alaska State School Board,

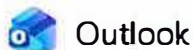
I urge the Board of Education to approve the Pearl Creek Charter. There are few tasks in society more important than educating our children and consequently we should encourage all the help we can in this endeavor.

As a parent, I want my children to attend this school and there is no higher endorsement.

When presented with an enthusiastic, competent, and hard-working group of parents, community members, and educators that want to help, you say yes. In this case, both the Fairbanks School District and the Fairbanks School Board have done nothing but cavil, prevaricate, and grouse. The application was exceptional in its detail and thoroughness, but the District has doggedly refused to meaningfully engage, has obfuscated at every turn, while falling back on dubious and opaque claims of financial exigency. There could be no better example of this incompetence than closing Pearl Creek School to save an advertised \$1.5M and then having such a large surplus the next year that the Borough claws back nearly 8 times that amount. This can't be chalked up to the vagaries of finance or conscientious austerity (the District's gaslighting to the contrary is demeaning); it's financial and actuarial mismanagement of the highest order and in a normal functioning system would result in the firing or resignation of the finance head if not the superintendent.

For these reasons and more it should be easy to approve with gusto the Pearl Creek Charter School.

Thank you,  
Jack Withrow



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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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**From:** jeannie cool [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 8:54 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:**  
SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to share my strong support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

As a supporter of this effort, I have seen how much work, care, and community commitment has gone into building this school. Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would give Fairbanks families another strong public school option and create new opportunities for students through its STEAM-focused approach.

There is real community support behind this school, and I hope you will recognize the need and excitement surrounding it. Fairbanks families deserve more public school choices, and Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would be a valuable addition to our district.

Please support the opening of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeannie Cool  
Fairbanks AK



**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

**From:** Jenny Norton [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 10:30 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored)  
<eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK  
STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

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**Support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School**

To Whom it May Concern,

My parents advocated for the building of Pearl Creek Elementary more than 40 years ago. As the surrounding neighborhood grew, they helped build many of the homes of the families whose children attended the school. Pearl Creek provided me with an exceptional education, both indoors and outdoors, in a truly unique Alaskan environment.

Years later, I returned to Pearl Creek to complete my student teaching and eventually taught there for many years. It was a meaningful full-circle experience to give back to a school that had given so much to me.

After the devastating and, in my opinion, unjust closure process, I took a leave of absence from the state and have since returned to teaching in a new position. At this stage in my career, I do not plan to move classrooms again—moving a classroom can feel harder than moving homes! However, I would be absolutely thrilled for our community if Pearl Creek were able to reopen with this new branding of a needed focus of choice for Fairbanks families.

During the closure discussions, I spoke with many parents who were considering homeschooling or even leaving the state for educational options that better fit their children's needs. I believe that many families who chose homeschooling may return to the district if there is an alternative calendar or schedule and a strong STEAM focus available.

I was born and raised here, and my children—seventh generation Alaskans—also received strong educations at Pearl Creek. I hope to see it return as a place that welcomes young learners, supports families, and helps develop

3/20/26, 3:19 PM

our future community leaders.

Respectfully,

*Jennifer Norton*

Registered Voter  
6th Generation Alaskan  
Business Owner  
Tax Payer  
k/1 Teacher  
Mother



**FW: Public Comment: PCSC Appeal in Fairbanks**

**From:** Jericho Williams [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 4:10 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Public Comment: PCSC Appeal in Fairbanks

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Hi,

I write as an educator who has taught at the middle school, high school, and college level for more than 20 years. I have taught and coached in large Title One Schools (Clark Middle School in Mountain View neighborhood in Anchorage), at gifted and talented summer programs operated by Duke University, and at a public charter high school with an emphasis on the arts.

I also write as a parent whose own children would directly benefit from overturning the denial of the PCSC charter application in Fairbanks. Our family lives a three-minute drive to the proposed school's location and my daily elementary school commute would decrease by 30 minutes everyday. It would save me 2+ hours each week.

Overturning this decision by the Fairbanks School Board is a mistake. It was made after much public discussion and debate, and it was made after reasonable budgeting plans in response to local fiscal realities in regards to education funding.

Fairbanks schools have been losing children, as families like ours with little ones exit for more affordable areas, in other parts of the state or the lower 48.

We love Fairbanks, but the truth is that right now we are supplementing our children's education on our own because arts, gifted education, and other programs have been cut severely in neighborhood schools.

Relatedly, finding affordable child care for the youngest ones is so challenging in Fairbanks that parents with elementary school age children depend heavily on supplemental and after school programs in order to work and support their families.

Opening another school (of any type) is not fiscally responsible right now. I've worked in a public charter school and am not opposed to them in principle. My concern, though, is that the Board of Education forcing the school district to open up another school without any evidence of an influx of people to the area will further erode conditions at neighborhood schools. I wonder, too, if it might also attract some students away from the district's excellent private school, Monroe Catholic. Altogether, overturning the prior decisions seems neither fiscally prudent nor making the best use of local resources for all of our students.

I also believe it might benefit a select few families like ours who would have the ability to meet charter school demands and drive our children to a school location at a significant distance from town and not those who do not have the means or ability to drive their child to school each day.

My plea is on behalf of education throughout this community and not what would personally be much easier for our family and our children.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jericho Williams, PhD



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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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**From:** Jan Plaquet [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 (2:29 PM)  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored)  
<eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK  
STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to share my strong support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

As a supporter of this effort, I have seen how much work, care, and community commitment has gone into building this school. Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would give Fairbanks families another strong public school option and create new opportunities for students through its STEAM-focused approach.

There is real community support behind this school, and I hope you will recognize the need and excitement surrounding it. Fairbanks families deserve more public school choices, and Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would be a valuable addition to our district.

Please support the opening of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jim and Jan Plaquet  
Fairbanks



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**FW: Support of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School**

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**From:** Judith Grunau [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 12:21 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Support of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School

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Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am the parent of two children in Fairbanks—one in middle school and one in elementary school. Over the course of their education, our family has participated in several educational models, including public school and homeschooling, and we have explored charter school options. I have long appreciated the flexibility Alaska's education system offers families to find the learning environment that best supports their children.

In recent years, however, educational opportunities within the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District have been steadily declining. Since 2022, the district has closed seven schools, including Ben Eielson Junior/Senior High School—the highest-performing high school in Interior Alaska—and several elementary schools that served strong and diverse communities.

**These closures suggest a district responding to financial challenges primarily by shrinking the system rather than reimagining it.** Programs are being reduced, class sizes are increasing, and schools are being closed. This approach risks creating a downward spiral: as opportunities decline,

families leave the district for homeschool programs or leave the state altogether, further reducing enrollment and funding.

**Charter schools are one of the few tools available within Alaska's public education system to respond to this challenge.** They allow districts to innovate, offer specialized programs, and retain families seeking strong academic opportunities within the public system. In Fairbanks, charter schools consistently have long waitlists, demonstrating a clear demand from families who want to remain in public education but are seeking programs that better fit their children's interests and learning styles.

The proposed Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School represented exactly this type of opportunity. It would have built on an already strong school community while offering a focused program in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math—fields that are essential to Alaska's future workforce and economy. **Approving innovative programs like this can help stabilize enrollment, strengthen community investment in public education, and expand opportunities for students.**

By denying this application, the district chose to limit opportunity at a time when creative solutions are urgently needed.

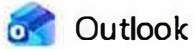
I respectfully ask the Alaska State Board of Education to carefully consider the broader implications of this decision. Alaska's education system benefits when communities are empowered to innovate within the public system and when families are given meaningful options that keep them engaged in their local schools.

Our children deserve a system willing to adapt, collaborate with communities, and create new pathways for learning rather than continuing to narrow the opportunities available to students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Judith Grunau



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**FW: Support for pearl creek steam charter school**

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**From:** Ju-Lin Tham [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 12:53 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for pearl creek steam charter school

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Hi,

I am sending this as support for the pearl creek school. As a resident in the Pearl Creek district and as a parent with not one but two children who were soon to come of eligible age, it was devastating to me to find out that pearl creek was no longer. I had heard nothing but good things about pearl creek school.

Please consider allowing this to become a charter school.

Julian FitzGibbon



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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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**From:** karin mensing [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 1:45 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

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Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to share my strong support for the approval to open Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School in Fairbanks, Alaska. For several years, our community has had several schools close, staff leaving, students unenrolling, and promises made that have not shown sustainability for our children's education.

As a supporter of this incredible effort, I have seen how much work, care, and community commitment has gone into building this school. Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would give Fairbanks families another strong public school option and create new opportunities for students through its STEAM-focused approach. This charter thinks out of the box and believes in a strong and sustainable future education system in Fairbanks, one that is in desperate need.

There is real community support behind this school, and I hope you will recognize the need and excitement surrounding it. Fairbanks families deserve more public school choices, and Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would be a valuable addition to our district.

Please support the opening of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.  
Thank you for your time and consideration.

3/20/26, 3:12 PM

Sincerely,  
Karin Mensing  
Fairbanks, AK



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**FW: Pearl Creek STEAM charter school**

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-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Sunday, March 8, 2026 7:41 PM  
To: EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Subject: Pearl Creek STEAM charter school

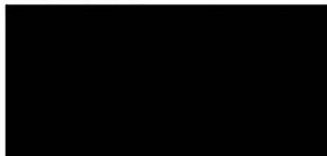
[You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Dear State Board Members,

Please support the upcoming vote to open the Pearl Creek Steam Charter school. Fairbanks desperately need more options for students, currently our students are rapidly leaving the district and choosing to homeschool much due to lack of quality options. I have worked for the school district as an elementary and high school counselor for 25 years and lived in this community over 40 years, I know that many of our homeschoolers would want this option as well as other students. The amount of heart felt time and effort that this community have put into make this happen is unheard of, I have no doubt that this school will be a huge success for all members of the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

Thank you.  
Karin Gillis





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**FW: Support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School**

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**From:** katie dillon [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 1:04 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School

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Hello,

I am writing to support the opening of Pearl Creek Charter School. Due to the school closures, and a dire outlook for local public education I made the tough decision of taking my three elementary age children out of the district and homeschool using Cyberlynx. I was tired of feeling like schools were barely getting by and doing the bare minimum due to budget cuts and program cuts. The one program that my children really enjoyed each week was ELP and learning that this too would be getting cut, I opted to invest in my children and provide them with an education that I feel they deserve. While this has been a good experience, I would love nothing more than to enroll them in a school that I can be excited about. This is an opportunity for the school district to have a school that is meeting the needs of parents and families and providing educational choices. The status quo that has been offered at the local elementary schools of increased class sizes, fewer programs, is not what I want for my children. I am excited about the idea of an educational setting that has parental involvement and investment. I fear that if we continue down the current path, parents will continue to leave the district due to not having options that meet their needs and desires of education for our children. I truly hope that you take advantage of this opportunity to do something proactive to bring students back into the school district.

Thank you,  
Katie Dillon



**FW: Pearl Creek**

**From:** Katie Richards [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 3:07 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Pearl Creek

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Dear School Board Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for the reopening of Pearl Creek Elementary as the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

My family recently moved into the neighborhood directly across the street from the school. Having a school within walking distance would be a tremendous benefit for our neighborhood and for many families in the surrounding area. Currently, parents must drive their children much farther to attend a neighboring school, placing unnecessary burden on families, especially those with children of varying ages attending different schools levels.

I grew up in Fairbanks and remember Pearl Creek Elementary as one of the staple schools in our district. It has long been an important part of this community, and it would mean a great deal to see it serving families again, especially in a charter school capacity

Over the past year, I have watched the effort, care, and commitment that parents, educators, and community members have put into developing Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School. The application is thoughtful and strong, and the level of enrollment interest clearly demonstrates that families want this option. With hundreds of students currently on waitlists for charter

schools in our district, it is clear that there is real demand for additional public school choices in Fairbanks.

This school has the potential to bring families back into the district and strengthen our local community. More importantly, it represents parents and teachers working together to create the kind of public school they believe will best serve their children.

Pearl Creek has always been part of the heart of this neighborhood and our Fairbanks community. Reopening it as a STEAM charter school would honor that legacy while also meeting the needs of families today.

Thank you for your time and for considering the voices of families in our community.

Sincerely,  
Katie Richards



**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

**From:** Katie Straub [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 5:01 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

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Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to express my strong support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

My children attended Pearl Creek Elementary, and our family experienced firsthand the special learning environment that existed there. The teachers, project-based learning and strong community culture created a place where students were encouraged to be curious, creative and engaged in their education.

The proposed Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School builds on many of the incredible things that were already working so well at Pearl Creek Elementary and expands them into a model that can serve students district-wide. By offering this as a charter option, more Fairbanks families will have access to a STEAM-focused learning environment that encourages problem-solving, collaboration and hands-on discovery.

This school model is clearly attractive to Fairbanks families, and it reflects the kind of innovative, community-driven education that will serve our student population well. There is strong local support

behind this effort, and many families are eager for this opportunity.

Fairbanks deserves this public school option. I respectfully encourage you to support the opening of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Katie Straub, 



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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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**From:** Keiko Herrick [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 9:31 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

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Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to share my strong support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

As a supporter of this effort, I have seen how much work, care, and community commitment has gone into building this school. Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would give Fairbanks families another strong public school option and create new opportunities for students through its STEAM-focused approach.

There is real community support behind this school, and I hope you will recognize the need and excitement surrounding it. Fairbanks families deserve more public school choices, and Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would be a valuable addition to our district.

Please support the opening of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Keiko A. Herrick

Fairbanks, AK



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**FW: DENY Charter Application**

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**From:** - Shaner [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 9:32 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** DENY Charter Application

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Dear **Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,**

I am writing as a parent in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District to ask you to deny the application for the Pearl Creek Charter School.

Over the past several years, our district has gone through incredibly difficult changes. Schools were closed and families were asked to adjust so the district could right-size itself and stabilize for the future. Those decisions were painful for many families, but they were made so our district could move forward in a sustainable way.

Now, just as our schools are beginning to find balance again, opening a new charter school risks pulling the district backward. It would shift enrollment away from neighborhood schools and disrupt the staffing balance that has only recently been stabilized. As a parent, I worry about the ripple effects this could have on classrooms across the district.

I respect that some families want Pearl Creek to reopen, but decisions about public education must consider the needs of the entire district and all students.

Our local school board reviewed this proposal carefully and unanimously voted not to approve it. I hope the State Board will respect that decision and the work our district has done to move forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

3/20/26, 3:23 PM

Sincerely,

Kendra Shaner



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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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**From:** Kimberly Gaustad [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 12:12 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to you from Trondheim, Norway. My daughter is attending the local school here for three months. It's been an incredible opportunity thus far, and one made possible by the unfortunate school closure of Pearl Creek Elementary School last May. When Pearl Creek closed, my husband and I made the tough decision to withdraw from the FNSBSD. As a former FNSBSD certified teacher, I was saddened to step away from our local public school system. We enrolled our daughter in CyberLynx (the Fairbanks branch is AMAZING). I have never wanted to homeschool my child, but we were (and are still!) utterly disheartened by the actions and decorum from the FNSBSD administration and school board. Every step along the way has been met with pushback and daresay--arrogance. It was clear from the start that both the admin and the school board were not interested in opening Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School under ANY circumstance. The FNSBSD has lost a staggering number of students in the past few years, and I believe it has a lot to do with mistrust in our local admin and board. And yet, there has been little curiosity in regard to WHY families are leaving the district.

When families make the decision to leave our public school systems, the communities and state suffer. In order to attract and retain families statewide, we need strong schools. We need to offer families choice. The demand for school choice in Fairbanks is certainly evident by the charter school waitlist numbers. Watershed Charter School in Fairbanks, for example, had 464 students enter their 2025-2026 school year lottery for only 16 seats, 13 of which were kindergarten. The total enrollment

for Watershed is 198 students. For reference, my daughter was #56 on the waitlist for 3rd grade. The Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School would give families another great public school option.

I have been blown away by the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School APC and volunteers. The expertise, passion, and care that this group has put forth is utterly humbling. I am incredibly excited for the possibilities of this school and the myriad of ways that it will positively impact students, educators, our community, and beyond.

I hope you will support the opening of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

Thank you for your consideration and time!

Sincerely,

Kim Gaustad

Fairbanks



Outlook

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**FW: Deny the PCSC appeal, FNSBSD right sized the ship**

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-----Original Message-----

From: Kristen Erin [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 4:23 PM  
To: EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Subject: Deny the PCSC appeal, FNSBSD right sized the ship

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Dear State Education Board,

During the Mt.Edgecumbe report to the state board Commissioner Deena Bishop discussed how they "right-sized the ship." She described it as a good thing.

Well that's what the FNSBSD did these past few years, they "right sized the ship." This included closing schools to consolidate their footprint to more efficiently use their spaces and be able to put their money into educating children and supporting staff instead of half empty buildings.

Re-opening the Pearl Creek school would be counter productive to those goals.

And that's what it would be, re-opening. PCSC is not bringing anything new to the district, they literally keep the same name as their school that closed, everything they claim that they can offer is already in existence at one or more schools in the district. They also plan to bring back as many of the former PCE students as possible, which is also in contradiction to their claims of making the school accessible to the community.

PCSC is simply clinging to nostalgia and a myth of Pearl Creek exceptionalism. Notably some of their biggest advocates, including the APC president Heidi Wood, Mayor Grier Hopkins, and his wife, her sister(who is also on the APC) are all former Pearl Creek students. Mayor Hopkins also lives in the former PCE district and his child would have been at the now closed school.

Commissioner Bishop's designee's approval letter kept mentioning lawfulness or legality. But it is irrelevant for the application to be legal(which is in dispute) or for the FNSBSD board's denial to be lawful(which is in dispute) if the plan is illogical and the PCSC application insufficient, which it certainly is. When you go to a bank or a group of investors to open a new business they want you to have all the details sufficient to ensure a wise investment. The PCSC did not demonstrate that they would be a wise investment for our school district.

Of note, while the PCSC crew likes to claim large support from the community they are actually a very small but vocal community that has been quite effective in silencing any disagreement with them publicly by attacking anyone who doesn't support them, as well as generating unease about speaking out against the pet project of the Mayor and his political family.

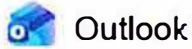
Please deny the PCSC appeal.

Please support our diverse and locally elected school boards decision.

Thankyou,

Erin Schupp

Former Pearl Creek student, and Parent of children who attended Watershed Charter School



FW: PCSC Fairbanks

From: Kristen Zayon [REDACTED]  
Sent: Sunday, March 8, 2026 10:06 PM  
To: EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Subject: Fwd: PCSC Fairbanks

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Kristen Zayon** [REDACTED]  
Date: Sun, Mar 8, 2026 at 8:45 PM  
Subject: PCSC Fairbanks  
To: <[eed.stateboard@alaska.gov](mailto:eed.stateboard@alaska.gov)>

To Whom It May Concern:

It pains me to do so, but I must oppose the proposed Pearl Creek charter school in Fairbanks. Why does it pain me? Because I worked at Pearl Creek for twelve very happy years and was there teaching on the very last day. I loved that school and everything it stood for. My own children attended there and it was a wonderful experience for them.

However, I cannot support the proposed charter school. Charter schools often seem like a good idea, but they create inequity. Though PCSC claims it will have transportation, there is no plan for that - if your family doesn't have reliable transportation, you would be excluded. Also, charter schools do not provide meals, so students who rely on free and reduced school meals would be excluded. Children with disabilities and special needs may not find the resources they require there, which would exclude them. All of those things create inequity, primarily in favor of the affluent. And giving priority to former Pearl Creek families means the school would be bathed in inequity from its first day.


I am also concerned about the effect on existing neighborhood schools. Elementary schools in Fairbanks have been very excited about the possible return of band and orchestra and perhaps district-wide art. The opening of PCSC would not allow for that expenditure and would also negate a possible reduction in the student to teacher ratio. Charter schools tend to siphon experienced teachers and involved parents away from other schools. Worst, the opening of PCSC would mean the likely closure of another west side neighborhood school. On the secondary level, I'm concerned that valuable options such as CTE and AP classes would be at risk. We need to be adequately serving ALL of the students of the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District not just the 350 potential PCSC students.

But I think the thing that concerns me the most is the government overreach. My locally elected school board - a school board that I get to vote for - unanimously voted to deny the charter. I firmly believe that they did this in the best interest of all students in the school district. For the state board - which is appointed and for whom I did not vote - to override the decisions of the local board, completely negates the process and destroys the good faith that people should have in the government. What's the point of having a local board to make decisions, if the state board is just going to overrule them? It sets a terrible precedent against local control.

The entire idea of establishing a new school is completely counter-productive to our district's efforts to consolidate services in a time of declining borough birth rates and enrollment. We need to better serve the schools that we currently have, and not allow one charter to monopolize our scarce resources. Despite the affection I have for the old Pearl Creek school, I must staunchly oppose the establishment of PCSC, as it will not provide anything that is not already available elsewhere in the district, and will pull resources away from our neighborhood schools. I urge you to uphold our local school board's decision.

Sincerely,

Kristen Zayon

  
Fairbanks, AK



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**FW: Support for Pearl Creek Steam Charter School**

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**From:** Kristina Blevins [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 7:13 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for Pearl Creek Steam Charter School

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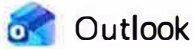
Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to put in my support for Pearl Creek Steam Charter School. There is a huge need in our community for this kind of innovation to draw more people into our community as well as to draw them back into the FBNSBSD. Over the last year, many, many volunteers have put thousands of hours into dreaming up this school we all wish we had to attend as a kid and the opportunities we want for our children. Just watching my own son attend the Steam After school program as a first grader has been amazing for him. His interest in science and math has flourished and his grades reflect that. I am ecstatic about this opportunity for next year to have a whole school based around this hands on model and applying it to the real life experience this curriculum is based on.

What I have seen as we've gotten closer to this vote to approve the application is that there is a ton of community support behind this school and we are excited to move forward and start getting ready for next year. My youngest son attended Pearl Creek as a 3 year old in the Pre-school program last year and my other son was in Kindergarten. I was so nervous sending my 3-year old to the "big school" but he thrived and he loved it. The atmosphere was welcoming and warm, a lot of family involvement which is how this charter came to be. Out of all of this family involvement and wanting that opportunity for more people to thrive in this.

Thank you so much to everyone who serves on this board, for your commitment to help our kids get the best education they can!!

Kristina Wood  
Fairbanks, AK



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**FW: Support of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School**

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**From:** Kyndall H. Powers [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 9:34 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored)  
<eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:** Support of Pearl Creek  
STEAM Charter School

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Dear Alaska State Board of Education,

I'm a lifelong Fairbanksan, registered nurse, mother of three, and currently homeschooling my kindergartner and 2nd grader.

I'm excited about and support the Pearl Creek Charter for many reasons: more input and control over my kids' education, the community that surrounds Pearl Creek Charter, and more education options in Fairbanks. Our current education model is one size fits all, we are not all one size.

Please let us move forward with our charter. There is a need and desire for this in Fairbanks (there are over 500 students on the waiting list for our current charters - we are one of those families).

Best,  
Kyndall Powers





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**FW: Pearl Creek STEAM**

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-----Original Message-----

From: Larsen Hess [REDACTED]  
Sent: Sunday, March 8, 2026 12:27 PM  
To: EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Subject: Pearl Creek STEAM

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Hi BOE,

My names is Larsen.

I will keep this short because of how busy you are.

I support PC Steam school and would like for all of you to vote in favor of grating the charter:)

Thank you for you time,

[REDACTED]  
Fairbanks

Sent from my iPhone



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**FW: Uphold Denial of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School**

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**From:** Lea Everson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 3:03 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Cc:** schoolboard@k12northstar.org  
**Subject:** Uphold Denial of Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School

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**Request to Uphold Denial of the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School**

Dear Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to respectfully ask that you uphold the denial of the proposed Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School. After closely following this issue and remaining actively involved in our local schools, I believe overturning the decision would not be in the best interest of the Fairbanks community or the more than 11,000 students served by the FNSB School District.

My husband and I both grew up in Fairbanks. After living outside Alaska for ten years, we chose to return six years ago with our five children because we believe in this community and in our public schools. Today we have two children in high school, two in middle school, and one in elementary school. I have served on the PTO board at Woodriver Elementary for the past two and a half years, and helped start the PTO at Ryan Middle School this fall. I share this only to demonstrate how deeply invested my family is in the success and long-term stability of our entire school district.

First and foremost, the responsibility of educational governance in Alaska rests with locally elected school boards. The Fairbanks North Star Borough School Board, representing a broad range of political perspectives and accountable to local voters, made the unanimous decision to deny this charter application after months of review. Those board members must balance enrollment trends, district finances, facilities, and the needs of every student across the borough. Overturning that decision would substitute the judgment of an appointed body for that of the elected officials who are constitutionally charged with governing local education and who must live with the consequences of these decisions. Local leaders understand the specific needs, resources, and realities of their communities, particularly in a state as large and diverse as Alaska.

If a unanimous decision by a locally elected board can be overturned, it raises alarming questions about the future. It also effectively creates an unfunded mandate: the state may require the district to operate a new school without providing the additional funding needed to do so.

The financial implications are significant. Opening Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School is estimated to cost approximately \$2.7 million annually. Those funds would come directly from the same limited pool used to educate the district's existing students. Redirecting limited funds to operate a new charter school would inevitably reduce resources available to the rest of the district. The school board has already done the incredibly difficult work of "right-sizing" our district, and I urge you not to undo that progress. After years of significant cuts, I was thrilled to see proposals to restore band, orchestra, art specialists, and ELP services at the elementary level.

This charter proposal comes at a time when our district is already facing declining enrollment. Birth rates in Fairbanks have dropped approximately 26 percent over the past decade, far exceeding the national decline. These demographic realities mean we need fewer elementary schools, not more. The district has already taken difficult steps to consolidate schools and more efficiently use existing facilities. Reopening another building would undermine those efforts and divert funding toward maintaining additional infrastructure rather than educating students.

Because of these enrollment trends, it is highly likely that opening a large charter school on the west side of town would eventually force the closure of another neighborhood elementary school. Even though the charter is described as "district-wide," its enrollment priorities give preference to former Pearl Creek students. In practice, this means the school would primarily draw students from nearby west-side schools such as University Park and Anne Wien. There are simply not enough elementary-aged students to sustain four west-side schools long-term.

Opening a charter school of this size would also have broader ripple effects. Pearl Creek STEAM Charter would be significantly larger than any existing charter in the district and would therefore have an outsized impact on funding, staffing, and programming across the system. Because charter schools operate under state authorization rather than direct district governance, the district would have limited control over what would become its largest elementary school. This would reduce the district's ability to make adjustments and decisions needed to respond to changing enrollment, financial realities, and local priorities.

Equity is another important concern. Charter schools can create barriers that limit access for many families, particularly in areas such as transportation, school meals, and required volunteer hours. While the PCSC Academic Policy Committee has discussed the possibility of addressing these barriers, no clear or concrete plans are currently in place. Additionally, the application prioritizes enrollment for former Pearl Creek students, which further limits equitable access and runs counter to the purpose of a public charter intended to serve the broader community.

Finally, the proposed program does not appear to offer innovations that are unavailable elsewhere in the district. Elements highlighted in the application, STEAM education, outdoor learning, gardens, Indigenous learning opportunities, and winter recreation, already exist in many Fairbanks schools. Charter schools are intended to bring something meaningfully new to a district's educational landscape. In this case, the proposal appears less about creating a new model and more about preserving a specific school community following a closure decision.

Our district must focus on strengthening the schools we already have and ensuring that resources are distributed in ways that benefit the greatest number of students. Investing millions of dollars in a single charter school serving a few hundred students would come at the expense of the many thousands of children across the district.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to honor the careful, unanimous decision of our locally elected school board and uphold the denial of the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School application. Protecting the stability, equity, and local governance of our public school system will best serve the students and families of Fairbanks.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Alaska's students.

Sincerely,  
Lea Everson

Fairbanks, AK



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**FW: Pearl Creek STEAM**

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-----Original Message-----

From: leigh strehlow [REDACTED]  
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 8:28 AM  
To: EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Subject: Pearl Creek STEAM

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Hello to whom is concerns,

I'm writing in support of Pearl Creek STEAM school. This school closing down has had a major impact on our family. In 2014 when I was looking and then purchased 6 acres, I did so BECAUSE it was in the Pearl Creek school district. My knowledge of this school first came when I was a science fair judge for 2 years in a row while I was finishing up my BS at UAF. I loved everything about pearl creek and it drove me to purchase property in the area. Fast forward to when the school closed, was the first year my daughter was going to attend in the fall. Needless to say it had us scrambling. We found another but we pay for it monthly without assistance. We also looked at other public school options, in which we purchased land so that we could use those options. But the lack of reliable and stable bus options would have us driving out of our way. Twice daily. The blow of losing pear creek in the community affected several families that I know. As kids developed friendships that would normally carry them through grade school were broken Crushing as Alaskan know most friends are the only family we have up here.

From the investment parents and future parents make long term in the community to the unreliable

3/20/26, 3:08 PM

public school options left and from the impact it had to those attending and working at Pearl Creek, it's reopening is one worth fighting for.

Thank you for your time and do the right thing for the parents, community and especially the kids that go to Pearl Creek.

May the lord forgive your sins, god bless

- Leigh Strehlow

Please excuse any spelling or grammatical errors. Sent from my iPhone.



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**FW: Pearl Creek Charter School Application**

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**From:** Liann Perye [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 12:28 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <[eed.stateboard@alaska.gov](mailto:eed.stateboard@alaska.gov)>  
**Subject:** Pearl Creek Charter School Application

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As a parent with a current hope for a child to attend this upcoming school year at Pearl Creek, I'd like to share why this application should be approved.

I already have one child in an out of district homeschool, and without stronger charter options and availability such as this proposed school, it's likely my other student will be transferring as well.

There are over 500 students in our district currently on waitlists for charter schools, which clearly shows the demand. Fairbanks families deserve more public school choices, and Pearl Creek STEAM would be a valuable addition to our district.

I want for my students a strong STEM foundation, and am struggling to attain that for them in our district. This Charter application brings a school environment focused on just that, and is a huge draw for our family.

Alaska IS a frontier and on the cutting edge of science and exploration, and our schools should be equipped and funded to train future scientists and leaders.

In Alaska, charter schools are an example of local control: parents and teachers coming together to build the public school their community wants.

Appealing the denial to the state is not an attack on local control. It is community members exercising their legal right to challenge a decision they believe was made in bad faith or based on unfounded reasons. That is not undermining local control, it is holding the system accountable.

The district claims it cannot afford this school, yet it recently had to return \$11.4 million in excess savings. Both of these things cannot be true!

Respectfully, please approve this application.

Sincerely,  
Liann M Peryea



**FW: Oppose Pearl Creek Charter Appeal**

**From:** Lindy Larson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 10:28 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Oppose Pearl Creek Charter Appeal

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To The Members of the DEED Board,

I am writing as a public school parent in opposition to the Pearl Creek Charter appeal. For years, our public school have been depleted of funding, resources, and support staff in schools. Badly needed teaching positions have repeatedly been on the chopping block or cut outright. Closing schools is the only lever left without cutting more staff, cutting teachers, raising class sizes, and cutting services that benefit underserved kids. Charter schools are a "nice to have" in times of excess funding not lean times when public school funding is being cut. As the DEED board and commisioner well know, charter schools are not required to have transportation or provide meals which are what underserved children need. It sets a bad precedent when a closed school can apply and be granted a charter. More charter schools opening negatively impacts surrounding schools and the likely possibility of another West Fairbanks school closure with another complete redistricting of Fairbanks students.

Pearl Creek Charter will negativity impact surrounding schools and cause major funding difficulties which will raise class sizes at many schools throughout the borough especially the schools nearest the the old pearl creek building. The charter will not enroll many out of district students into our district as stated during the application process.

The STEAM curriculum model replicates the STEAM/STREAM efforts already present in the district which would benefit all students not just those fraction of students in the borough that would attend Pearl Creek Charter. The application also contains an illegal lottery system that ensures surrounding area students can attend.

3/20/26, 3:13 PM

It is the responsibility of the local school board to make decisions for all students in the borough not just those with the most connections and resources that can usurp local control. I stand with the board's decision to deny Pearl Creek Charter and I hope you look at all students in the North Star Borough School District when making your decision.

Sincerely,  
Lindy Larson



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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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**From:** Lisa Bishop [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 8:47 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

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Hello,

I am writing in support of the proposed Pearl Creek Steam Charter School. I am a long time Fairbanksan and former Pearl Creek Elementary School parent and teacher. I am excited and hopeful that we will be able to add this exciting new school to the local community. As the former intermediate Resource Special Education Teacher at Pearl Creek, I was dismayed and shocked when the school was targeted for closure. As one of the highest performing elementary schools, with strong parent and community involvement as well as highly skilled teachers and staff, this was a mistake on many levels. Many options were suggested by administration, staff and parents to keep the school open, including magnet and charter options ,that were rejected by the administration and school board. I currently teach at Barnette Magnet School. a school with a similar model to the one proposed. The waiting list for Barnette is approximately 400 students, which clearly shows that there is interest and need for more schools with this model. There is a large homeschool population that has shown an interest in a STEAM school charter, which would help boost the local population that attends a brick and mortar school. Many of the former teachers and admin from Pearl Creek continue to have strong ties to the school despite being assigned elsewhere and plan to return. The parent and volunteer involvement in this proposed school is amazing and I have every confidence they will step up to work hard and make this school a success. The administration and school board's job should be to respond to the wants and needs of its community. Please do not allow their short sighted and prejudicial feelings against this project overrule the clear need for more schooling choices in the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

3/20/26, 3:18 PM

Thank you,  
Lisa Bishop





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**FW: Pearl Creek STEM Charter School**

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**From:** Margaret Durst [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 9:11 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored)  
<eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:** Pearl Creek STEM Charter School

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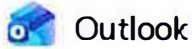
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I understand that the state board will be considering overturning the Fairbanks North Star Borough's decision to reject the charter school application for Pearl Creek STEM Charter School. While I support the idea of a STEM school in Fairbanks, I think overturning this decision is a poor idea for several reasons. First, I think that the state overturning a local school board's decision is a bad precedent. This school board is a locally elected board of people who have carefully thought through the application and the governor appointed board at the state level should not be involved. Second, if the school district is forced to reopen this school, even as a charter school, then they must pay for it. As you know, school districts across the state are in financial difficulties and FNSBSD has been forced to close many of its neighborhood schools in the last few years. This has caused much consternation among residents and challenges for students who have to be bussed long distances to attend different schools. Opening another charter school would continue this process and probably force

the closing of another wonderful neighborhood school. I think it is not right for the state to cause this unfunded mandate. Third, I think the idea of charter schools may have some purpose, but making too many in one district makes it unfair to parents and children who can't transport their children to these schools or fulfill the requirement of putting in volunteer hours at a school farther away from their home. Since neighborhood schools are closing, children are already sometimes attending schools that are no longer in their neighborhood, making it harder for parents to be part of the school, especially those who are working two jobs or long hours in the lower income areas. We have many great teachers in this district. The state is not funding our educational system at the level we need and required by our state constitution which has caused many challenges across the state. Our neighborhood schools are important to providing a quality education for all children, not just those whose parents can drive them to these specialized schools.

Sincerely,  
Margaret Durst

  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709



**FW: Pearl Creek Charter School**

**From:** Martha Raynolds [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 11:08 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Pearl Creek Charter School

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Dear Board,

I have lived in the Pearl Creek neighborhood for 40 years. My two children attended Pearl Creek for K-6, where I often volunteered. I have been a Science Fair judge at Pearl Creek for decades. I have played with kids at the playground countless times.

I was very lucky to have been able to walk and sled to school with my kids, attending a neighborhood school. And Pearl Creek was a wonderful school, with great teachers and principals. It is very sad to see it empty and quiet.

However, we have to deal with the reality of declining student populations and increasing facility expenses. This year, the Fairbanks School District is one of the very few in the State that is not facing a budget crisis. This is because our School Board made the difficult decisions last year to close schools and not accept new charter schools.

It would be unfair to all of the district to saddle us with the cost of the Pearl Creek Charter School, against the wishes of the School Board. We should support better education for the whole district rather than a better education for the few that are able to attend a charter school.





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**FW: Pearl Creek STEAM**

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**From:** Mathew Fuelling [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 3:04 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Pearl Creek STEAM

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Dear Members of the State Board of Education,

I support moving forward with the Pearl Creek STEAM School. The application is strong, enrollment interest is clear, and the school is positioned to succeed.

The district claims it cannot afford this school, yet it recently returned \$11.4 million in excess savings. Additionally, over 70 students have expressed intent to enroll this fall, many returning from outside the district—bringing nearly half a million dollars in BSA funding back into the district.

Fairbanks families want more public school options, and Pearl Creek STEAM responds directly to that demand. Charter schools are an example of local control, with parents and teachers working together to build the schools their community wants. Appealing this decision to the state is simply exercising a legal right to ensure accountability.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mathew Fuelling

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)



**FW: Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School appeal**

**From:** Megan McBride [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 2:17 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School appeal

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Members of the State Board of Education,

I am deeply concerned about overreach by the board and the dangerous precedent that would be set if the board were to overturn FBNSB school district's decision regarding Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

Note Alaska Statute Section 14.12.020 (b): Each borough or city school district shall be operated on a district-wide basis under the management and control of a school board.

FNSB School District members are elected representatives of the local community. They are the appropriate body to make budget decisions. Having made the tough decision to close several schools recently, it is wild to consider that the state board could consider forcing the district to open a new school.

I live in Anchorage, I have no stake in the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter school. My own Kindergartener attends a lottery school in Anchorage; I am no anti-charter, but I am deeply concerned by the dangerous precedent that could be set by superseding a local school district's budgeting authority.

Do not overturn the school board's decision.

Thank you,  
Megan McBride  
Anchorage, AK 99517



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**FW: Pearl Creek STEAM charter school**

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-----Original Message-----

From: Michael Hopper [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 8:19 PM  
To: EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Subject: Pearl Creek STEAM charter school

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I am writing in support of the pC STEAM application. While both my kids are long grown up, my affection and respect for Pearl Creek elementary remains as ever. When it was summarily disregarded in the board's recent closure, frankly I was shocked and dismayed. PC had always had a reputation as one of the highest performing public schools in the district if not state! It was known for its excellence in special education. And it was surrounded by a vast track of hiking and ski trails kids like mine enjoyed and explored.

I know all this because for 40 years I served my community as a child/adolescent clinical psychologist and I kept a sharp eye out for the best resources for my clients and their parents. PC was always on my radar .

PC was always the heart of our Goldstream community. So it doesn't surprise me that the folks who once taught there and the folks they served have fought back when told thanks but no thanks for all their effort .

PC is what public school should be. It lives and breathes inside tge families past and present it serves. Respect their voice and their hearts and let them prove once again what public education should be.

3/20/26, 3:05 PM

Respectfully,

Mike Hopper, Ph.D.  
Retired clinical psychologist and lifetime Puffin

Sent from my iPhone



**FW: Pearl Creek STEM Charter proposal is not in line with AK school board mission statement**

**From:** nancy little [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 6:03 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Cc:** letters@newsminer.com; Bobby Burgess <bobby.burgess@k12northstar.org>  
**Subject:** Pearl Creek STEM Charter proposal is not in line with AK school board mission statement

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important.](#)

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To. Alaska State Board of Education

I urge you to reject the appeal of the Pearl Creek Stem Charter school at this time based on the board's mission statement: "An excellent education for every student, every day."

Although Pearl Creek school has been excellent and the building and setting is wonderful, and the STEM emphasis is very appropriate, in this current drought of education funding, it is not in the best interest of the other 11,000 plus students to resurrect Pearl Creek School at this time. It would have the potential to give 400 students, who live close enough to be driven and lucky enough to be among the chosen. It would not benefit those that are not chosen, or live too far, or have family situations where this is not possible. It's location is not conducive for equal opportunity in a borough the size of Connecticut.

I purposely moved close to Pearl Creek in 1990 and had seven students there over 21 years, and have also been on the APC at Effie Kokrine Charter school for 13 years. I appreciate the charter school concept and the desire to reopen Pearl Creek School, but in good conscience and based on the principles of equality in education, I strongly believe the limited funding that the FNSB school district should be used to enhance and return opportunities for all 11,000 students. Those could include reducing classroom/ teacher student ratios, reintroduce art, music, before/after school programs, and gifted and talented programs. Funds could also be used toward teacher enhancement and retention.

If the FNSB school district was forced to pay for this charter school every year, it would be yet another unfunded mandate, and would deprive all the other students as equal an opportunity. If the governor and majority of legislators would adequately tax corporate entities, and distribute adequate funds to education and building maintenance of schools, I would say "yes " to Pearl Creek, but that's not the political climate we are in this year. It must be a "no" to Pearl Creek Charter School at this time, if the Alaska Board of Education is to make their decisions based on their mission statement.

Nancy Schupp, Ester, Alaska, 99725, 

Love From, Nancy



**FW: Not every charter is the right charter. Please Oppose the PCSC appeal**

**From:** Nicole Eiseman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 10:43 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:**  
Not every charter is the right charter. Please Oppose the PCSC appeal

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear State Board of Education Members,

First, I'd like to genuinely thank you for your service on the State Board of Education. You're being asked to make a very important decision that may have lasting effects for public education in Fairbanks and the state as a whole.

I'm a 50-year resident of Fairbanks and a retired school librarian and elementary teacher. My now-grown children attended our neighborhood schools, and my grandchildren currently attend their neighborhood school. I am an unabashed proponent of public education.

The State Board of Education has **never** overturned a decision of a local school board regarding a charter school, and I urge you not to overturn the decision of the Fairbanks school board now. Please uphold the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District's (FNSBSD) denial of the Pearl Creek Steam Charter School (PCSC) and deny the PCSC appeal.

The appeal should be denied for several reasons: **(1)** Respect for local governance; **(2)** The financial and programmatic implications to the other 11,000+ students in the FNSBSD; and **(3)** PCSC's unfounded claims of providing equity.

**Local Governance**

On October 21, 2025 the FNSBSD voted unanimously to deny the PCSC application. The unanimous vote is significant. While our municipal elections are non-partisan, the board members nevertheless represent the full spectrum of party affiliations and beliefs. These duly elected board members acted in the interest of the taxpayers and community members they represent. In its denial, the School Board found that the PCSC application did not demonstrate a likelihood of success. The district's 52-page decision sets out their reasons for this conclusion. While Commissioner Bishop found the charter application to be lawful, she did not prove that it had a likelihood of success.

As Alaskans we value independent choice and by extension, we value charter schools. But that doesn't mean that every charter school is the right charter school. It must be looked at within the context of the broader school community. While I respect the work you do at the state level, I also ask you to respect the work done by our board at the local level.

### **Financial and Programmatic Implications to the Other 11,000+ Students in the FNSBSD**

In January of 2025 the School District administration, in an effort to provide long-term sustainability for our district, recommended a consolidation plan. This plan included closing five schools and creating new neighborhood school boundaries. Ultimately the School Board voted to close three schools. Pearl Creek was one of them. While this was an incredibly painful process for the entire district, it ultimately allowed the district to put its financial resources into students - not buildings. The district moved from 31 schools to 28.

The PCSC, with its goal of opening a 352 student charter – as big as three other charter schools combined - will essentially undo the painful work our community went through the last years, forcing a return to 29 schools. PCSC will cost the district \$2.7 million per year in FY 2027 and more every year if the charter enrollment increases as proposed.

It should be noted that the FNSBSD was recently recognized as the 2024-2025 Outstanding School Board by the Alaska Association of School Boards for improving student achievement and effective local governance. They have worked hard to live within their means and done the hard work that other of the "Big 5" districts are just now beginning to do.

Forcing the district to open PCSC will undo all the hard work our board has done through right-sizing and belt tightening. Rather than allowing the district to rebuild, it will instead result in a likely increase of 2 students per class, a reduction in advanced placement and career technical education opportunities, and the eventual closure of another neighborhood elementary school - disrupting families and school communities once again. It will also result in further scarcity of hard-to-fill positions such as nurses, and music and special education teachers.

### **False Claims of Equity**

The PCSC claims to be designed around equity across race, socioeconomic status, gender, culture, and ability. This claim is inherently false. Fairbanks charter schools don't provide transportation, and PCSC will be no different. While some charter schools have large walking boundaries and can be reached by public transportation. Pearl Creek has neither. The majority of families who will attend PCSC must have both reliable transportation, and parents or guardians with enough flexibility in their jobs to be able to drive their children to and from school each day. This is fundamentally self-selecting and therefore unequitable.

In its appeal, the PCSC claims that it will provide equitable and transparent access to a community-based public school, yet its admissions policy is at odds with this claim. It gives preference to children of staff, children of founding members of the charter school, grandchildren of founding members, and to students in the SY 2024-25 Pearl Creek Elementary School boundary area - basically the same students who attended Pearl Creek Elementary before it was closed. This policy does not provide equitable community-based access to the charter school. The PCSC seems to be attempting an end run around the School Board's decision by reopening Pearl Creek Elementary under a new name.

### **In Closing**

The School District's decision to close Pearl Creek Elementary earlier this year was based, among other things, on declining populations of school-aged children. Recent data from the FNSB's 2024 Community Research Quarterly Winter publication shows a 26% rate of decrease in birthrates in the Fairbanks North Star Borough from 2013 to 2023. The decision to consolidate schools was both warranted and fiscally responsible.

PCSC's mission does not provide any opportunities that aren't or couldn't be provided in other neighborhood and charter schools. The application and subsequent appeal stem from a group of families deeply disappointed by the closure of their elementary school during the consolidation process. While I understand their disappointment, it does not warrant opening a new school at the expense of the other 11,000+ students in the district.

Please respect the hard work done by our local board and reject the PCSC appeal.

Sincerely,  
Nicky Eiseman  
Fairbanks, Alaska



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**FW: Support for Pearl Creek Charter School**

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**From:** Patty Miller [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 4:40 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for Pearl Creek Charter School

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Dear Alaska State School Board Members

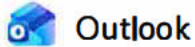
I strongly support the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School. After working as an engineer in Alaska for over 40 years, I know how important strong science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics education is for our future.

I have been connected to Fairbanks schools as a student and through my children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. I have seen firsthand how charter schools give families valuable educational options and help students succeed.

The organizing group behind this school is hardworking and capable, and I am confident the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School will be a success and a benefit to Fairbanks families.

Thank you for your service to the children of Alaska.

Sincerely,  
Patricia Miller  
Fairbanks



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## Pearl Creek Charter

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From Princess Johnson [REDACTED]

Date Thu 3/12/2026 1:16 PM

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Dear State Board members,

I'm writing to say that I have seen firsthand how much work, care, and community commitment has gone into building Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School. There are over 500 students in our district currently on waitlists for charter schools, which clearly shows the demand. Fairbanks families deserve more public school choices, and Pearl Creek STEAM would be a valuable addition to our district.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration,  
Princess Johnson, Fairbanks

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*We recognize that we work throughout the unceded territories of the Indigenous Peoples of Alaska; that our homes are located on the traditional territories of the lower Tanana Dene Athabascan Peoples. We acknowledge the ancestral & present land stewardship and place-based knowledge of the peoples of these territories.*



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**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

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-----Original Message-----

From: Robert Herrick [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 11:00 PM  
To: EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Subject: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

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Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

I am writing to share my strong support for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School. Our community desperately needs this school. Overall the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District has been hemorrhaging students through mismanagement to the point where it can be considered a driver of outmigration of families with school-age children. The citizens of our borough were generally outraged by the local School Board's decisions and statements in 2025, particularly those regarding the closing of Pearl Creek and the unlawful refusal to consider the PCSCS charter application. While District Administration and the School Board have a small but vocal set of adherents, public sentiment is reflected by the ouster of the local School Board President in the October election despite a more than 2:1 funding advantage.

The principal and staff who would be running the school have capably run a school, in the same location, before. They will be advised by an APC that contains some of the most capable professionals in

3/20/26, 3:07 PM


Fairbanks. The people of Fairbanks want this school, and its approval will help stanch the departure of families with children from our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Robert Herrick

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Robert Herrick

  
Fairbanks, AK 99709



Re: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

From Ronni Grapenthin [REDACTED]

Date Thu 3/12/2026 3:23 PM

To [REDACTED]

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Dear Alaska State Board of Education,

I want to thank you for giving the Pearl Creek Charter decision the appropriate time and consideration!

I also would like to reaffirm my strongest support FOR the Pearl Creek Charter school!

The lack of legal grounds for the FNSB school board has been shown by other sources. I maintain that the charter would be beneficial for the district:

- We have been bleeding public school students for years, many - some that we know in person - have left into homeschool or other arrangements because of the poor leadership (as evidenced by the mismanagement of \$11M+ that had to be returned to the borough). The Pearl Creek charter will attract many of these children back into the district, and increase revenue. I have yet to see a revenue increase proposal from the school board that isn't closing schools.

- It has broad support. The Pearl Creek Charter has grown out of a desire of parents to improve children's education and make our community better. This is a grass-roots effort, supported by a broad slate of the community. The process has been and remains open to participation from anyone who is interested. I am in awe of what has been accomplished, and the level of rigor that it is based on.

- I am a UAF scientist with a project that recently co-funded a teacher workshop "Alaska Volcanoes for Educators" (ED 593) that offered the required continuing education for Alaska teachers (middle-high school, 25 in total, we flew in 10 from remote villages in Alaska) and educated them on the volcano materials we've recently developed at UAF: <https://culturalconnections.gi.alaska.edu/curriculum/peyuluk-volcano/> ... While federal funding has been in limbo for much of the year, federal science agencies were just flat funded. The collaboration between the Pearl Creek Charter and UAF scientists can include fund raising through such means, and I would love to do that and even further innovate on Fairbanks elementary school education. I know that some grants are being developed. This is another benefit of how Pearl Creek

Charter can benefit the community - the tools developed this way will be available to all. I am at the edge of my seat to work on such collaborations.

I hope you see the level of excitement and positivity that reverberates through much of the community in support of the Pearl Creek Charter. I very much hope you vote in favor of it and give this community a shot at innovative elementary education.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ronni Grapenthin, Fairbanks, with 2 children at University Park School.

On Sat, 7 Mar 2026 at 13:37, Ronni Grapenthin [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Alaska State Board of Education,

I write in the strongest support of the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.

While there are many reasons for my support, I will limit this email to laying out 2, and try to keep it short.

1) The Pearl Creek Charter School provides a positive vision for education in our school district.

In the years long discussions around budget issues of the school district what has been most disappoint was the complete lack of vision by the school board on how to achieve a balanced budget long term and achieve academic excellence. The school closures only addressed a small fraction of the problem, but created substantial issues (large class sizes, children leaving public schools, general disruption of the school communities). This has happened several times now, with - it appears - no end in sight. Pearl Creek provides a positive vision, has established strong partnerships, and promises to attract new students to the district and generate new revenue streams. This is exactly what is needed in a climate of dwindling funds: creatively reorganizing and finding new income, guided by a strong vision and positive community. This is what Pearl Creek has created. We need positive choices for the education of our children.

2) Strong school choices have substantial positive ripple effects throughout the community.

I am a professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. When we try to recruit new faculty, researchers, staff from out of state, school quality and options play an important role. We've had highly qualified people not accept offers because of the negative news around schools, school closures etc in the borough over the last years. Pearl Creek Charter can turn this around. It would be the first time in years that I could look applicants in the eye and say there's a vision for excellence here - bring your children, they will thrive. If we can attract highly qualified workers, the whole community will benefit through the great work these people can do. It is in our best interest to strengthen our local economies through excellent schools.

Thank you for your consideration. Again, I very much hope you decide for Pearl Creek.

Ronni Grapenthin, Fairbanks, with 2 children at University Park School.



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**FW: Support for the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School**

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-----Original Message-----

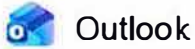
From: Russell Wood [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 11:45 AM  
To: EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Subject: Support for the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School

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Dear Members of the Alaska State School Board, I am a product of the Fairbanks School District from 1956 to 1969 and six separate schools. I have never seen before in any Fairbanks School the support and volunteering of parents and community members that the former Pearl Creek School had. I have two daughters that graduated from Pearl Creek and four grandkids that were attending Pearl Creek at closure. I support opening the Pearl Creek Steam Charter school.

Russell Wood  
Fairbanks



**FW: Pearl Creek Charter - Fairbanks**

**From:** Sara Tabbert [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 7:40 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored)  
<eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:** Pearl Creek Charter - Fairbanks

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Dear State Board of Education,

I am writing, briefly, to express my dismay that the application for the charter school in Fairbanks at Pearl Creek is being reconsidered.

I was raised in Fairbanks in the better times of the 70's ad 80's when school funding was at its peak, and charter education was a thing far off in the future. There were differences between parts of the community and the schools that served them, but it was nothing like the economically tiered system we have moved to with the charter schools.

It was a bit of a shock to me when I began working on a contract basis within the elementary schools in Fairbanks to see the inequity between schools, and the siphoning off of energy, resources, and better-resourced families to the "special" charter schools. I am friends with many of the Pearl Creek parents; I suspect this letter would surprise them. I am adamantly against this proposal.

I will quote from the excellent letter by Sarah Lewis, published recently in the Newsminer in Fairbanks. She wrote:

Opening PCSC would put borough neighborhood schools' class sizes at risk of increasing.

Opening PCSC would put our neighborhood schools' ability to offer gifted programs, band and orchestra at risk.

Opening PCSC would put expanded and continued career and technical education options at risk.

Opening PCSC would put our remaining neighborhood schools at risk of closure.

Last but not least, opening PCSC would set a precedent of state overreach into local spending and local policy.

All students in the FNSB deserve the SAME access to education. A poorly considered proposal that serves an economically advantaged group of parents and students is not what we need right now. I was as sad as anyone else to see Pearl Creek close, my younger sister was in one of the first groups of students to attend, and I realize it changes the dynamic of a neighborhood, just as the closure of any neighborhood school would. However, what works best for the most is what we need now, and this is not an equitable use of education resources.

Sincerely,

Sara Tabbert





**FW: Please do not over-ride the decision of the Fairbanks School Board regarding the Pearl Creek Charter School**

**From:** Steven Masterman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 5:41 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Please do not over-ride the decision of the Fairbanks School Board regarding the Pearl Creek Charter School

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Dear Members of the State Board of Education,

I am writing to urge you to reject the appeal by the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School (PCSC). In the past few years, the Fairbanks North Star Borough School district closed six neighborhood schools because declining enrollment meant that keeping all these schools open was inefficient and a poor use of funds. One of the schools closed was Pearl Creek Elementary. The decision to close the school was not an easy one, and it was not made lightly. Factors that were considered when deciding which schools to close included the cost of operating individual buildings. Creating this new charter school in the building that was closed will risk the financial stability of the school district at a time when the district has finally gotten its financial house in order. Students would again be spread among too many buildings, and the costs involved would mean larger class sizes and poorer education for all the students in the district.

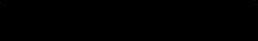
Despite the fact that a new charter school is being proposed in a building that is expensive to operate at a time when the district is short on funds and has had to close schools, the district was open to hearing what the PCSC proponents had to say. They listened, they gave feedback and they asked for clarifications. They did their best to determine if opening such a school would be in the best interests of all the students in the district. Their determination, after thoughtful consideration, was that opening this school would not be beneficial. This was a decision by the elected leaders of our school district. They and the citizens they represent are the ones who have had to make tough choices and sacrifices to keep our

3/20/26, 3:16 PM

district solvent. We who live in this district are the ones who will bear the costs if this school is approved. Please do not over-ride this local decision.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sarah Swift Masterman

  
Fairbanks, AK 99709



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**FW: SUPPORT for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School**

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-----Original Message-----

From: Sharon Baker [REDACTED]  
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 12:43 PM  
To: EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Subject: SUPPORT for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School

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Board of Education,

Please vote in support of the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School. I have realized that most of what is reported in our local paper about our school district not being able to afford the charter school is not true. It seems quite likely that opening PCSCS would attract and encourage more families to enroll their kids in school, especially those near Pearl Creek.

As a 50-year member of the Fairbanks community, a parent of 3 kids who once attended Pearl Creek Elementary (as well as MS and HS in Fairbanks), and a retired educator in the FNSBSD, I thank you for considering to support this important option for our school district.

Sharon Baker



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**FW: Support for Pearl Creek Charter School application**

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**From:** Susan Rice [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 9:59 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for Pearl Creek Charter School application

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter application that is being heard this week for the Fairbanks community.

For context of my positionally and my letter, I am a retired educator and school leader of 30 years, who most recently served the last decade as the Head of School (Superintendent) of two K-12 private schools, in CA and WA, respectively. I returned to Fairbanks and took a teaching job that I left mid-year to take stable employment elsewhere due to the workplace dysfunction and insecurity that I would have even a job the following fall. Prior to that, I was an award-winning arts educator in private and public schools, most prominently, I was the Nevada Music Educators Association's "Music Educator of the Year" as a public school music educator in 2019. I hold degrees in Music Education, a Masters in Conducting, and am ABD on an EdD in Organizational Leadership and Change Management from USC. I also hold two post graduate certificated from Cornell University, in non-profit finance and executive leadership, respectively. I also have many years experience in arts non-profit leadership and non-profit board membership.

Additionally, I am the parent of a grown 26 year old son, the product of public schools, who after earning a full-ride scholarship to college singing opera, earned a dual degree in Astronomy and Physics (cum laude), and is now teaching science at Lathrop High School in Fairbanks — and a 7 year old daughter, currently in the second grade at Woodriver Elementary, who has been playing piano since age 4, is a voracious reader, and who loves science, visual art, and theater. Both of my children have an AuDHD diagnosis and a giftedness profile. She needs a school like Pearl Creek STEAM Charter to thrive particularly without the once cutting-edge and robust GT program that my husband and I grew up with in the 1980s.

My husband and I are both graduates and products of Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Schools. We are multi-generational Fairbanksans, born and raised, who recently returned after 30 years living in the lower 48 to retire here and raise our daughter. We own two businesses here, work for Alaska businesses, and are voters, homeowners, and very involved community members.

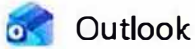
I am confident that these experiences and qualifications qualify us to speak with authority on the merits of the Pearl Creek Charter. Fairbanks needs more Charter options. One only need see the lengthy wait lists of our existing Charters to see that this is what parents want.

I hope that the State Board will see what the biased and ineffective FNSBSD board cannot, despite their strangely organized effort to discredit and stop this Charter application — that we need more innovative schools and school choice — not less. The rejection of the initial application and refusal to even hear the application when originally submitted is very telling. It speaks volumes about how FNSBSD Board feels about Charters in general and the Pearl Creek community specifically, much more than they care about the needs and wishes of families and children in Fairbanks. We are counting on you to uphold the thorough and articulate evaluation and decision made by Deena Bishop that fully evaluated the application and the subsequent comments from the FNSBSD Board without bias, ruling them as not having merit.

Thank you for considering our request in your vote this week. Fairbanks families and children are counting on you.

Susan and Timothy Rice

**Susan Rice**



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**FW: Please Reject PCSC application**

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**From:** Sydney Mullen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 10:25 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored)  
<eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:** Please Reject PCSC application

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To whom it may concern:

I am writing to ask you to reject the Pearl Creek Charter School application.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough's seven member school board unanimously decided to deny the charter— which is not a small thing because the school board members are a diverse group with varying political beliefs and affiliations.

I am concerned that if this charter is approved, rejecting the decision of our local— elected— school board, it would establish a concerning precedent. Would this mean that no local school board could ever deny a charter school application? This is essentially an unfunded mandate.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Sydney K. Mullen



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**FW: Pearl Creek Charter School Application**

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-----Original Message-----

From: Tamara Hambright [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 5:15 PM  
To: EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Subject: Pearl Creek Charter School Application

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Members of the Board:

I am urging you to vote "no" on the Pearl Creek Charter School Application. Fairbanks North Star Borough School District has had to close several schools over the last few years due to decreasing enrollment and funds for public education.

Our students have lost Band and Orchestra classes at the Elementary School level, and had class sizes that are larger than ideal because of less funding. My kindergarten grandchild had 29 students in his class last year, and my 5th grade grandchild had substitute teachers for the first half of last year because of difficulty in recruiting teachers.

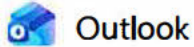
Opening a new charter school will spread funds even thinner, and perpetuate a 2-class system, in which some kids are guaranteed small class sizes, and the rest get what is left over.

Please do the right thing for ALL of the kids and say "NO" to the Pearl Creek Charter School Application.

Sincerely,

Tamara Hambright  
Fairbanks

Sent from my iPad



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## Please vote against the Pearl Creek Charter

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From Taryn Lopez [REDACTED]  
Date Sun 3/15/2026 1:29 PM  
To EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Cc schoolboard@k12northstar.org <schoolboard@k12northstar.org>

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Dear Alaska State School Board (FNSB School Board, cc'd),

I'm writing to urge you to vote against the Pearl Creek Charter school. I am a mother of a four year old who will go to UPark next year. While I sympathize with the families that live near Pearl Creek and want a school for their children in their neighborhood, I'm concerned that opening a new school at a cost of \$2.7M per year will weaken and reduce opportunities for children at our existing neighborhood schools. In particular, I'm concerned that the neighborhood schools will not be able to retain quality teachers as we won't be able to give raises. I'm also concerned that some key academic programs such as music and art that have disappeared from many of our schools and are starting to be viable again, will not be viable with the added expense of a new school. Our school board has already done a lot of work to right-size our schools, so opening a new charter school that we can't afford will only spread resources too thinly again, and our children will be the ones to suffer.

Please vote against the Pearl Creek Charter! Thank you for your time and service!

Taryn Lopez  
[REDACTED]

Fairbanks, AK 99709  
[tarynmlopez@gmail.com](mailto:tarynmlopez@gmail.com)



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**FW: Pearl Creek Steam Charter School**

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**From:** Tree Miller [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 12:29 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:**  
Pearl Creek Steam Charter School

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Dear board members,

I would like to voice my concerns regarding the opening of Pearl Creek Steam Charter School in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

During this period of budget deficits, I do not support investing millions of dollars in one school to the detriment of the 11,000 students enrolled in the currently established schools in our district.

If this charter school is approved, class sizes in the district will increase, more programs will be eliminated and the overall quality of education will decrease.

The concept of PCSC is commendable, however, at this time, it is not feasible.

Thank you,  
Teresa Miller, RN



**FW: SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL**

**From:** Tigan Donaldson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 8, 2026 4:40 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov> **Subject:**  
SUPPORT FOR PEARL CREEK STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL

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Hello,

My name is Ti Donaldson, a Fairbanks resident, writing to you in support of the proposed Pearl Creem STEAM Charter school, which is due for a final decision soon.

I have no personal ties to the former elementary school, but grew up with many friends who went there as kids, and now know so many families who are now without a reasonable option for educating their elementary-age kids using the public education system. The Goldstream community - which the former elementary school served - is vast, and is completely gutted without a reasonable option to take their kids to school.

The loss of Pearl creek notwithstanding, the manner in which the local school district has conducted its application review process is appalling to me as a resident. I work as an environmental engineer and frequently conduct work that is subject to severe governmental oversight, and am so surprised by the lack of cooperation demonstrated by FNSB school district.

Again, I do not have current personal ties to Pearl Creek; however, I am tied to the community of Fairbanks, and recognize the profound impact that quality education has on this community. Also, I soon plan to have kids of my own, and will be evaluating if it even makes sense to remain in Fairbanks based on the education my future children may receive. The biggest factor that will affect that evaluation will not be whether a specific school has specific teachers or class sizes, but whether the governing local and state education systems have enabled quality and

transparent processes by which students and faculty are focused on learning, not whether or not their school will be cut or having gigantic class sizes.

With that said, I strongly believe that affirming and approving Pearl Creek as a STEAM charter school is not only crucial for enhancing educational resources for our community, but is also an imperative check of power on the FNSB school district, who has proven to be unethical and dishonorable in its dealing with Pearl Creek.

Thank you for reading this,  
Ti Donaldson  
Fairbanks, AK



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**FW: Conflict of Interest in Pearl Creek Steam Charter School**

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**From:** Tori McD [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2026 11:08 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Conflict of Interest in Pearl Creek Steam Charter School

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Dear State School Board Members,

This board should be aware that FNSB Mayor Grier Hopkins appears to have a conflict of interest in any decisions involving the PCSC or, if not a direct conflict, his involvement certainly raises questions. The Mayor has friends and family on the PCSC's APC, including his sister-in-law, Jennifer Redmond who serves as treasurer. He and his wife live within the former Pearl Creek boundary. His wife has been an open proponent of the charter and is likely a founding member, guaranteeing admission to their preschool child. His brother-in-law has written numerous letters in support of the charter. Additionally Mayor Hopkins uncle serves on the assembly.

A Fairbanks Daily News-Miner article reported that Mayor Hopkins had been meeting with the PCSC APC to make sure that they get access to the building that formerly housed the Pearl Creek Elementary School if the charter school moves forward - and that he would push for a long-term lease as his top priority. This New-Miner article was dated November 10, 2026, three weeks after the FNSBSD had voted unanimously to deny the PCSC's application.

To avoid the appearance of impropriety, the Mayor and his uncle should be recusing themselves from any decisions involving the PCSC.

Sincerely,  
Victoria McDermott



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**FW: Do not approve the Pearl Creek STEAM charter school**

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**From:** Viletta Knight [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 9:19 AM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Do not approve the Pearl Creek STEAM charter school

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I have lived in Fairbanks for 44 years and have three grandchildren in the FNSB School District. I am also a borough tax payer. In regard to the application, I'm concerned about two things -  
1) taking away local control when Governor Dunleavy has been underfunding schools for years. I trust the locally elected school board. I DON'T trust the governor.

And 2) Other schools were closed and have had to move forward because of lack of funding. Mostly Title I schools by the way, i.e., poor kids and minority students. It appears that Pearl Creek has more higher income families thus more resources to try to "get their school back" while other families are dealing with their students being displaced and accepting the reality of limited education funding.

This is purely government overreach to approve a school that our local taxes will be forced to fund.



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**FW: Support Pearl Creek Steam**

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-----Original Message-----

From: Travis Johnson [REDACTED]  
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 10:07 AM  
To: EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
Subject: Support Pearl Creek Steam

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I'm a lifetime Farmers Loop resident. Started Pearl Creek 84/85, it's second year of being a school. My sister was first year, brother 4th!

I know for a fact people buy/bought housing specifically for this school based on the quality it holds. Making it a Steam school might even enhance what it was offering.

My daughter Dayva went there the last 2 years for kindergarten and 1st grade, had to go to Anne Wein because of the closure. My daughter Bria will be starting kindergarten this fall. I would really like her to have the chance to go to Pearl Creek and not need to transfer until middle school. Dayva was pretty upset at being separated from friendships she built. I want a reunion and a sense of friend security for them both.

What the school board did was wrong, their arguments made no sense and they were trying hard to stand their ground just out of spite.

3/20/26, 3:09 PM

PLEASE OPEN PEARL CREEK BACK UP!!!

Thank you,  
William "Travis" Johnson

Sent from my iPhone