School Board To Oppose ASAA Tobacco, Alcohol, Drug Policy

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The Kodiak Island Borough Board of Education will adhere to, but not fully support, a new statewide policy regarding tobacco, drug and alcohol abuse by students participating in extracurricular activities. KMXT’s Casey Kelly has more.

The new policy was adopted by the Alaska School Activities Association, or ASAA, at its board meeting earlier this month. Districts must abide by the policy in order for sports teams and clubs to participate in statewide competitions and events. So Kodiak is not planning on boycotting the policy, but the school board will write a letter opposing parts of it.

The district’s own policy prohibiting tobacco, alcohol or drug use is actually stricter than the statewide policy in some respects. For instance, a first offense in Kodiak will get a student a three-week suspension from the activity, rather than the five-day ban that the new state policy put in place.

But in other respects, Kodiak’s policy is seemingly more lenient. The state policy says a student can’t participate in activities after a fourth offense. Kodiak High School Principal Bill Watkins says that takes away his ability to deal with each individual student.

Superintendent Larry LeDoux agrees. He says it’s a tough situation, because obviously the district wants to stop drug and alcohol abuse. But at the same time, this policy takes away local control.

School board members offered to write a letter to the ASAA board opposing the new policy. But they wanted to make sure the district offered its own policy as a model. School board member Peggy Tuttle.

Watkins says that’s the idea. He says there are already plenty of consequences for students who get caught using drugs or alcohol. The school’s role should be to teach and nurture those students rather than turn them away.

ASAA covers just about every extracurricular activity that Kodiak High School has, from sports to music and student council, so this new policy will affect a broad range of students when it goes into effect this fall.