



Special Education Advisory Council

The Anchorage School District Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) is a group of concerned citizens—parents, teachers, and professionals in the community who advocate for students with special needs.

Over the past several years SEAC activities have included:

- Testimony on high stakes testing at the ASD School Board, and State Board of Education
- Outreach advocacy project to encourage parents of students with special needs to contact their legislators about the impact of high stakes testing upon their child
- SEAC sponsored ASD School Board member visits to Special Education programs
- SEAC established a liaison with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education
- Serving on ASD Committees such as the Capital Request Action Committee, and Budget Review Committees
- Currently reviewing the ASD Student Transportation parent handbook for students with special needs

SEAC Areas of Concern and Priorities for Advocacy

High Stakes Testing: SEAC has significant concerns about the issue of high stakes testing and the negative consequences for students with disabilities.

- High stakes testing requires that students must fail before they can get the assistance the need to be successful.
- Settlement of recent lawsuit postponed the consequences of high stakes testing for students with special needs. This past school year was the last year for waivers under the settlement. To date, no students have been denied the opportunity to graduate and earn a diploma. The likelihood is great for more lawsuits addressing the consequences of high stakes testing for students with disabilities.
- High stakes testing will likely produce a new population of special education students with the potential to significantly impact Anchorage School District resources. Under federal law, school districts are obligated to provide special education services to eligible students with disabilities until the age of 21. How will ASD address the issues of students with disabilities who have enough credits to graduate but do not survive high stakes testing?

Funding: SEAC recognizes the need for adequate funding for all students, regular and special education. A lack of adequate funding affects many vital areas for all students, especially those with disabilities.

- Adequate funding is necessary for the recruiting and retention of highly qualified teachers—a requirement under No Child Left Behind
- Adequate funding is necessary to address intensive needs special education students
- Modify the final student count date to allow for more accurate funding for special needs students.