

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #246 (2006-2007)

April 9, 2007

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: BILINGUAL EDUCATION PLAN OF SERVICE

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the Bilingual Education Plan of Service proposed by the Bilingual/Multicultural Education Program (BMEP) and presented in Attachment A of this document. It is further recommended that the Board authorize the Superintendent to submit the Bilingual Education Plan of Service to Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

PERTINENT FACTS:

Each school district with a school that is attended by at least eight limited-English-proficient (LEP) pupils is required to file a Plan of Service (POS). The POS requirements are based on Alaska Regulation 4AAC 34.055, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs that receive federal financial assistance. This step has been interpreted in the public school context as requiring appropriate steps to ensure that equal opportunities are afforded to national-origin-minority (NOM) students who are limited in their English-language proficiency.

The Anchorage School District has provided an instructional program to meet the needs of LEP students since the 1977-1978 academic year. Initially addressing the needs of 361 students, the number of LEP students has consistently increased over the years. During the current school year there are 9,374 students identified as LEP (March 16, 2007 BMEP enrollment count-Attachment B). Of that number, 6,218 students are actively receiving service from the BMEP. Currently, there are 94 languages spoken by students in the ASD; the five most common languages are Spanish, Tagalog, Samoan, Hmong, and Korean (Attachment C).

The proposed POS meets the standards established by both NCLB and Alaska State regulations. It is grounded in research that supports the following principles.

- All students can learn and experience success in a second language, but they learn in different ways.

- Language acquisition is a long-term process; students acquire proficiency at different rates.
- Language learning occurs through meaningful use and interaction.
- Language processes develop interdependently.
- Language learning is cultural learning.
- High quality assessments are needed for all students, including LEP students.
- Improved staff development, for both new and current teachers and paraprofessionals, to teach LEP students for higher achievement throughout the curricula is tantamount for student success.

All of the above highlighted principles have been addressed and are proposed in the POS, which is integrally linked to the Anchorage School District Six-Year Instructional Plan as well as to the District Improvement Plan. The process to develop the POS transpired over two school years (2005-2006 and 2006-2007). The supervisor in conjunction with the BMEP staff, principals, administrators, mainstream teachers, and Parent/Community Advisory Committee collaborated on the plan and how to make the plan a viable tool to meet the needs of this unique population of students. Initial meetings focused on building community within the BMEP based on three key factors: understanding the new federal and state regulations; gaining knowledge of the newly developed and state approved English Language Proficiency Standards; and meeting the challenge on how these factors would impact the students upon whom our attention is focused. Upon establishing and building a foundation the BMEP could articulate, other important and vital stakeholders were invited and encouraged to participate in the process. The supervisor met with executive directors and principal groups to review the process to date and to request participation from the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Representatives, inclusive of principals and mainstream teachers, from these levels participated. The BMEP also collaborated with Assessment & Evaluation staff and the coordinator of the Social and Emotional Learning Program to develop the program evaluation component of the plan.

During these two years, the committee participated in a total of eight full-day workshops in which it reviewed, in depth, issues regarding the alignment of the ELP Standards with State and District content standards and grade level expectations (GLE); the assessment of LEP students; and the six components of the Plan of Service. The committee also looked at the variables that may affect the way in which LEP students acquire a second language and the rapidity with which they progress in learning academic content. Some of these variables are:

- **Age** - Younger students often develop oral language skills more quickly, especially pronunciation and fluency. Also, the academic demands of English in the lower grades are not as complex and therefore the students in the earlier grades may appear to attain English language proficiency more quickly and with greater ease.

- **First language** – the more similar a student’s primary language is to English, the easier it is for the student to acquire the new language. Students can rely on cognates and similar linguistic structures to aid their English language acquisition. However, when the first language uses a different alphabet, when the vocabulary is unrelated, and when the structures have little in common, the student has more difficulty transferring skills from the first language into the second.
- **Education** – Students with a strong educational background adapt to the American school with greater ease. They are able to transfer content skills and knowledge into the new classroom.
- **Life Experience** – Some language minority students have lived in difficult circumstances. They may have grown up in poverty, may have survived wars and violence, and may have been separated from family members. Their life experiences may affect their readiness and willingness to learn.

The committee addressed the following components required by NCLB and the State in the development of the POS:

- Identification of students with a primary home language other than English.
- Assessment of students’ English language proficiency.
- Selecting an educational theory and approach to meet the needs of LEP students.
- Educational goals that address both English language development and academic success and that are based on the District’s plan to meet the Alaska Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMOs) for English Language Proficiency.
- Professional development provided for teachers and paraprofessionals that serve LEP students.

The committee concentrated on developing goals that would enable LEP students to achieve academically. Goal development related to what experts have identified as successful results under the approach selected by the District. Elements taken into consideration were the following:

- The District’s individual circumstances (i.e., number of LEP students, number of languages spoken, and available resources etc.).
- The fundamental Title VI requirement for LEP students to have meaningful access to the District’s educational program.
- The goals for success for LEP students should relate to the goals maintained for all students throughout the district.

As the committee dissected the requirements of NCLB and State regulations, the picture of LEP students became clearer. LEP students are held accountable for three sets of standards and two sets of objectives as compared to other students who are held accountable for two sets of standards and one set of objectives. Thus, the goals and objectives of the POS demonstrate how the District will meet the obligation of Office of

Civil Rights (OCR) policy to ensure that LEP students are afforded an equal educational opportunity to meaningfully benefit from the District’s educational policy.

Three Standards/Two Sets of Objectives

<u>All Students</u>	<u>LEP Students</u>
Academic Content Standards	English Language Proficiency Standards
Student Academic Achievement Standards	
Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (Academic)	Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (English Language Proficiency)

The Alaska English Language Proficiency Standards are central to the academic achievement of LEP students and were created to do the following:

- Provide the criteria for determining when a student has reached a level of proficiency in English.
- Provide links to the Alaska English/Language Arts Content Standards, Alaska Math Content Standards, and Alaska Science Content Standards to enable limited English proficient students to meet the academic content standards at grade level.
- Provide guidance to teachers, schools, and districts in developing and aligning curriculum and instruction for LEP students learning academic English to achieve high standards set for all students.
- Provide the foundation for Alaska’s English Language Proficiency Assessment that has been developed to assess a student’s progress in learning English until the student exits LEP status.

The models currently in practice and proposed for continued practice by ASD for LEP students are outlined in the following chart and are described in more detail in the POS.

Model	Description
English-as-a-Second Language	The goal is fluency in English. Programs are focused on ELL students who are integrated in mainstream, English-only classes. Instruction is aimed at developing English grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills, and academic content. Content-ESL: Augmented ESL, which includes academic content, vocabulary, and beginning concepts.
Sheltered English	Teachers develop students’ academic language through activities that elicit content-specific language. Generic

	strategies and principles for teaching are used to teach language and content; instruction is shaped to learner proficiency levels.
Dual Language/Immersion (Government Hill, Romig MS, West HS)	The goals are to develop strong skills and proficiency in students' first language and English with the expectation that students will become bilingual, bi-literate, and have multicultural competencies. Half the students are native speakers of English and half are native speakers of Spanish. Instruction is in both languages (50% Spanish, 50% English for all students from the beginning).

CC/RG/ES/MH

Attachments

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