

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #13 (98-99)

August 10, 1998

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: FOURTH QUARTER AND END OF 1997 - 98 SCHOOL YEAR
SUSPENSION/WEAPONS/EXPULSION REPORT

PERTINENT FACTS:

Information regarding suspensions and expulsions for various offenses, including weapons, is collected from the elementary, middle, and high schools each quarter. This information is shown in the narrative information below and as Attachments A-L. In addition, year-end summaries by school and category for each level for the 1997-98 school year are included in these attachments.

The 1997-98 school year should again be characterized as a year where the schools, the Administration, and the School Board continued to aggressively pursue the School Board's adopted goal of "Establishing a supportive learning environment by providing safe and caring schools which are barrier free, by promoting health and wellness, and by collaborating with other community agencies where appropriate." This goal has been supported by the employees at each school as well as by the students and their parents and the business and general community. The attached discipline/suspension reports from the elementary, middle, and high schools show the statistics for the recently completed school year and the fourth quarter and the schools' efforts to address this important goal.

It should be noted that the concerted efforts of the elementary, middle, and high school principals, assistant principals, deans, interns, their teaching and support staffs, their students, and their parents have resulted in schools with strong, yet fair, disciplinary standards and practices. There is a growing recognition on the part of everyone that parents and school staff must communicate more frequently and earlier when students are showing evidence of challenging the accepted rules and policies of the school and the District. The Instructional Division made this a priority goal for the 1997-98 school year; this will continue into 1998-99.

Extensive training was given to administrators during August on the newly revised Students' and Parents' Guide to the Statement of Rights and Responsibilities document; the administrators in turn made a concerted effort to inservice their teaching and support staff to ensure that they could explain these changes and the new expectations to the students and parents. These guides were distributed to all students at the beginning of the school year and will be again in the fall of the 1998-99 school year. The booklets were also given to all families when they registered during the school year. Principals were asked to remind students and parents of important rules and policies via assemblies, class meetings, and through newsletters throughout the year.

In the latter part of the 1996-97 school year, the policy relating to drug/alcohol violations was changed substantially and required significant discussion with the students and their parents. The number of suspensions and expulsions for first time violations of the drug/alcohol policy increased during the first quarter of the 1997-98 school year until students realized the significance. The Instructional Division worked closely with the middle schools and the high schools to design effective school-based programs that included a strong working relationship with students and parents of students who violated the new policy; this continued and was refined during the 1997-98 school year.

The Administration believes that the current case manager program works much better than the former REACH program that grouped all of the students who violated the drug/alcohol policy together; the case manager program insures that students and their parents work closely with their own school in order to quickly facilitate a successful return to school, even after expulsion. Elementary students with serious anger management problems and who violate the drug/alcohol policy continued to be served at the Elementary Conflict Resolution Program (ECR) at William Tyson Elementary School. The District feels these efforts continued to be very effective during 1997-98.

Fourth Quarter Expulsions

A total of six middle school and 29 high school students were expelled by the School Board during the fourth quarter for a total of 35; no elementary students were expelled. Of these middle school expulsions, three were for weapons (BB gun, look-alike gun, and knife), two were for second drug/alcohol offenses, and one was for willful disobedience. High school students were expelled for the following reasons: firearms (1), assault (4), threats (1), arrest for murders in the community (2), second and third drug/alcohol offenses (14), fighting and violence (1), harassment (1), drug/alcohol sales (5), and sexual harassment (1).

Expulsions During 1997-98

A total of 141 middle school and high school students were expelled by School Board action during the 1997-98 school year for various offenses; there were no elementary students expelled. In addition, 24 high school students were originally recommended for expulsion but that sanction was modified by either the Administration or the School Board after review; all recommendations for expulsion at the middle school level were sustained by the School Board and Administration.

Expulsions were recommended for offenses in the following categories: assault, second/third drug/alcohol offense; threats, harassment, dangerous acts; firearms; drug/alcohol sales; fighting; weapons other than firearms; vandalism; firearm offenses in the community; willful disobedience. Two students were not expelled because causality was determined as being related to their emotional disturbance and these students were placed at Whaley School so they could continue to receive educational services as required by their IEPs.

During the 1997-98 school year, students were expelled from the following Middle Schools: Central (4), Clark (2), Goldenview (1), Hanshew (2), Mirror Lake (2), Romig (4), and Wendler (3). Students were expelled from the following High Schools this past year: Benny Benson/SEARCH (4), Bartlett (18), Chugiak (14), Dimond (20), East (5), KCC/East (1), KCC/West (2), KCC/Service (2), SAVE (1), Service (19), Walden Pond (1), and West (17).

The elementary, middle school, and high school discipline summaries follow; these are shown for fourth quarter and for the entire school year. Cumulative suspension information by category for elementary schools is shown on Attachments A and B; school-by-school information is Attachments C and D; middle school cumulative information by category is Attachments E and F; school-by-school information is Attachments G and H; high school cumulative information by category is Attachment I and J; and school-by-school cumulative information is Attachments K and L.

Elementary Schools

The attached suspension reports for the 1997-98 school year (cumulative, reasons for suspension, and suspensions for the fourth quarter) are attached for your information (Attachments A-D). We have also provided you with a comparison between the fourth quarters of the 1996-97 and the 1997-98 school years on weapons, drug and alcohol, gang-related, and racially-motivated incidents. There were no expulsions of elementary students during the 1997-98 school year.

Suspensions during the fourth quarter increased 21 percent from the fourth quarter of 1996-97; 298 for 1997-98 and 245 for 1996-97. There were 18 weapons incidents; 12 of

which resulted in suspensions during the fourth quarter compared to 11 during 1996-97. There were no weapons in the firearm category.

There were 19 drug and alcohol suspensions for the fourth quarter compared to four during 1996-97. There were no gang-related incidents reported this quarter compared to four in 1996-97. There was one racially-motivated incident reported during the fourth quarter of 1997-98; two were reported for 1996-97. Six police contacts were made during the fourth quarter in elementary schools.

Middle Schools

The total number of suspensions for the fourth quarter of the 1997-98 school year was 682, a reduction of 30 suspensions or a 4.2 percent decrease from third quarter. This number shows the reduction from the third quarter spike which has been a pattern for the past few years.

Middle School Suspensions Quarterly Summary 1997-98 School Year

Qtr.	Drug/Alcohol	Fighting	Weapons	Firearms	Profanity
1	13	94	2	0	43
2	23	122	3	0	76
3	42	120	10	0	86
4	29	149	6	0	80

The number of suspensions for the 4th quarter of the 1997-98 school year in grades 6 (Mirror Lake only), 7th and 8th, is 682. Fourth quarter in 1996-97, had 568 suspensions. This is an increase of 114 suspensions during the 4th quarter. Eighty-one of these reflect increases in the categories of dangerous actions or materials from 47 to 102, and profanity from 54 to 80. The trend in the reduction of fighting and firearms suspensions should be noted. However, the number of drug/alcohol suspensions continued to increase reflecting the national trend.

Middle School Suspensions Fourth Quarter Comparisons

Offense	95-96	96-97	97-98
Fighting	136	130	120
Weapons	12	2	6
Firearms	3	1	0
Drugs/Alcohol	17	11	29
Total	542	568	682

**Middle School Suspensions
Year-to-Year Comparison**

Category	1995-96 (7-8)	1996-97 (7-8)	1997-98 (7-8 + 6 Mirror Lake)
Fighting	623	593	585
Weapons	45	12	21
Firearms	14	3	0
Drugs/Alcohol	66	80	106
Profanity	?	237	285
Total (all categories)	2,190	2,398	2,291

The total number of suspensions for the 1997-98 school year is 2,291. This is a decrease of 107 suspensions or 4.5 percent from the 1996/97 total of 2,398. Reflected in the decrease is the change in the truancy policy. There were 59 suspensions for truancy in the 1996-97 school year, and only nine during 1997-98. These procedures and the truancy policy have been revised for the 1998-99 school year. There were also decreases in excessive tardies from 61 to 31; harassment from 133 to 123, willful disobedience from 255 to 211, vandalism from 31 to 23, and general disruptive behavior from 272 to 259. Suspensions for profanity once again rose from 237 to 285. Of most concern is the rise in drug/alcohol suspensions from 237 to 285. The decrease in drug/alcohol expulsions for second offense from eight to four, however attests to the effectiveness of the case manager program in intervention.

**Middle School Expulsions
Year-to-Year Comparison**

Category	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98 (7-8 + 6 Mirror Lake)
Fighting	6	6	5
Weapons/Firearms	21	4	7
Drugs/Alcohol	0	8	4
Other	1	4	2
Total	28	22	18

Eighteen recommendations for expulsion were upheld by the School Board during the 1997-98 school year. This is a decrease in expulsions of four from the 1996-97 school year. The major decrease of 50 percent was in the drug/alcohol expulsion category from eight to four. An increase in the expulsions for weapons from four to seven took place. However, it should be noted that although the weapons included look-a-likes,

there were no actual guns. Seven of the middle schools expelled at least one student. The most students expelled at any middle school was four.

**Middle School Repeaters
Year-to-Year Comparison**

Repeaters	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
4th Quarter	135	88	110
By school year	483	499	499

The number of students who had more than one suspension during the 1997-98 school year, were 110 for the quarter and 499 for the year. This compares to 88 for the 4th quarter in the 1996-97 school year, and 499 for that year. Taking into account the number of repeaters, 1,928 individuals were suspended during the 1997-98 school year.

High Schools

During the 1997-98 school year, the total number of fourth quarter suspensions for grades 9 through 12 is 653. This compares to 893 suspensions for third quarter this year, and represents a drop of 26.9 percent for the quarter.

**Quarterly Summary
1997-98 School Year**

Quarter	Total	Drugs/ Alcohol	Fighting/ Assault	Weapons	Firearms
1	587	101	98	14	3
2	756	97	150	13	0
3	893	144	140	27	2
4	653	76	85	15	1

Compared to last year, the total number of suspensions for High Schools during the fourth quarter of 1997-98 has increased by 14.7 percent from 569 to 653. There was also an increase in weapons violations from 4 to 15 and a decrease in firearms violations from 2 to 1 during the fourth quarter of the 1997-98 school year.

**Fourth Quarter Comparison
1996-97 and 1997-98 School Years**

Year	Drugs/ Alcohol	Fighting/ Assault	Weapons	Firearms	Total
1996-97	73	97	4	2	569
1997-98	76	85	15	1	653

**High School Suspensions
Year to Year Comparison**

The total number of suspensions for the year is 2,890 compared to 2,520 for the 1996-97 school year. The major areas of increase for suspensions were: smoking/tobacco (133 to 190), drugs/alcohol (326 to 418), weapons (50 to 75), refused option to suspension (163 to 248), willful disobedience (164 to 267) and false witness/lying (88 to 166). Fighting/Assault decreased (515 to 473). Firearms incidents at the high school level were stable with 6 last year and 6 this year.

**High School Expulsions
Year-to-Year Comparison**

Year	Drugs/ Alcohol	Fighting/ Assault	Weapons	Firearms	Total
1996-97	326	515	50	6	2,520
1997-98	418	473	75	6	2,890

**Repeaters
Year-to-Year Comparison**

The number of students who had more than one suspension during the year was 81 for fourth and 576 for the year as a whole. This compares with 60 for fourth quarter and 523 repeaters for the year as a whole during the 1996-97 school year. Of the repeaters, most (82 percent) repeated only once.

The high school level had 147 expulsion recommendations to the School Board for drug/alcohol, weapons, or dangerous activities such as assaults, etc. Of these, 123 were expelled (57 for drug/alcohol violations and 41 for violence or weapons related offenses and 49 for other offenses); four were modified to long-term suspensions. Two cases are pending.

BC/CC/AJ/GO/PM

Attachments

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