

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #57 (98-99)

October 12, 1998

TO: SCHOOL BOARD  
FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT  
SUBJECT: PROFILE OF PERFORMANCE: 1997-98

PERTINENT FACTS:

The enclosed Profile of Performance: 1997-98 reviews the achievement of the Anchorage School District for last year. Attachment A provides a summary of some of the high lights from the over 650 pages of statistical information and analysis.

The demographic composition of the Anchorage School District continues to change. The Anchorage School District reached a record student enrollment of students on September 30, 1997. Anchorage had another year of increased enrollments, record levels of cultural and linguistic diversity, high student mobility, and substantial numbers of students eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Overall student academic performance continues to be strong. Norm referenced test scores have remained stable. College entry examination scores improved. Anchorage test scores are above those of the nation on both the norm-referenced tests (CAT) and on college entry examinations (ACT/SAT).

Results on Anchorage Curriculum Referenced Tests and Performance Assessments show that performance is strong but could be improved in some areas. Writing performance improved over last year. New grade six pre-algebra qualifying exams show notable school-to-school performance differences. Grade eight science and social studies assessments suggest that there may be differences in coverage of course content from school-to-school.

While absolute student performance on the California Achievement Tests remains very strong with an overall score at the 64<sup>th</sup> percentile, we did not achieve the School Board goals of a three percentile increase in spelling and

year-to-year gains for students in all academic areas. Students did demonstrate increasing grade-to-grade performance in Language Arts, with overall stability in other areas.

Other District performance indicators remain positive. Students attend school regularly with more than 93 percent in class on any given day. Just over three percent of Anchorage students were reported as dropouts during the year. Close to 15 percent of the class of 1997-98 left school as dropouts over their four years of high school. This is almost 500 students, and must be a concern.

The above average performance shown in the overall profile averages does not apply to all student groups. American Native, Black, and Hispanic students do not do as well as White and Asian American students. Differences show up across indicators including test scores, grades, credits earned, and drop out rates.

Parent, staff and student responses to School Report Card surveys at elementary, middle, and high schools indicate a substantial level of satisfaction and support for local school programs. Parents find Anchorage schools to be positive environments where students and academic success are valued.

The most notable change in the Profile of Performance for this year over prior editions is an expansion of the individual school profiles. Individual school profiles now include a description of the individual school program and analysis of major areas of success by the school principal. Taken from the ASD Budget and School Report Card, these written descriptions combine with the traditional statistical descriptions of school staff, students, and academic performance to provide a better picture of the aspirations and successes of each ASD school.

Two appendices are also added this year. The first appendix identifies the number and percent of students tested with the California Achievement Tests at each grade, in each school. The numbers of students specifically excluded from testing are also shown.

The second appendix provides a summary of local performances on Advanced Placement Tests in 1997-98. Overall, two out of every three students taking the advanced placement examinations scored at the level of three or above showing success on college level content. More than 1,500 different AP Tests were completed by Anchorage students in 1997-98.

Our continued focus on goal setting, accountability for performance, and the improvement of District programs should allow the District to maintain or improve our high level of student achievement.

BC/RF/sh

Attachments

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