

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #59 (1999-2000)

September 27, 1999

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: ENROLLMENT STATUS UPDATE FOR FY 1999-2000

PERTINENT FACTS:

Enrollment figures as of September 24, 1999 indicate that the Anchorage School District has experienced an unexpected decline in membership this school year. The total membership on September 24, 1999, was 49,224, which is a loss of 327 students from the September 30, 1998 official membership of 49,551. The September 24 total is 977 under the Fall projection of 50,201.

The decline in membership in this school year was not expected. Historically, a decline in enrollment is preceded by downward trends during the previous school year. That was not the case during the 1998-99 school year. There was nothing in the trends observed last year that could be interpreted as indicating a significant drop this year. In fact, the trends observed last year continued to support the projections for this year.

Table 1 compares the September 24th enrollment by category for this school year to the comparable figures of Sept. 30, 1998.

<b>Table 1</b> <b>Enrollment Comparison</b> <b>September 24, 1999 vs. September 30, 1999</b>			
<b>Programs</b>	<b>9/30/98</b>	<b>9/24/99</b>	<b>Change From Previous Year</b>
Pre-Elementary Housed in Elem. Schools	231	229	-2
Elementary Schools	27,455	27,204	-251
Middle Schools	7,324	7,220	-104
Senior High Schools	11,858	11,880	22
Other Secondary Schools And Programs	1,734	1,774	40
Special Education Elementary - Level 3	232	227	-5
Special Education Secondary - Level 3	179	177	-2
Special Services	538	513	-25
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,551</b>	<b>49,224</b>	<b>-327</b>

Table 1 clearly shows that the majority of the observed decline this year is in the elementary schools with a decline of 251 students from last year. Middle schools are down 104 students from last year, but are only 49 below their projection as shown in Table 2 below. Senior high schools, other secondary schools and programs, special education, and special services are at similar levels from last year.

Table 2 presents the September 24, 1999 enrollment by category and the Fall budget projections for September 30, 1999.

**Table 2**  
**Sept. 24th Enrollment 1999-2000 and**  
**Fall Budget Projections for September 30, 1999.**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Fall Projections for Sept. 30, 1999</b>	<b>Sept. 24, 1999</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Kindergarten — Full	2,311	2,328	17
Kindergarten — Half	1,425	1,292	-133
<i>Sub-Total Kindergarten</i>	<i>3,736</i>	<i>3,620</i>	<i>-116</i>
Elementary Gr. 1-8	24,121	23,584	-537
<i>Sub-Total Elementary</i>	<i>27,857</i>	<i>27,204</i>	<i>-653</i>
Middle Schools Gr. 6-8	7,269	7,220	-49
Senior High Schools	12,071	11,880	-191
Other Secondary Gr. 7-12	1,779	1,774	-5
<i>Sub-Total Secondary</i>	<i>21,119</i>	<i>20,874</i>	<i>-245</i>
Pre-Elementary, Level 3 Spec. Ed., Special Services	1,225	1,146	--79
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,201</b>	<b>49,224</b>	<b>-977</b>

The District has analyzed enrollment data this year and compared it to data from the past two school years in an attempt to better understand the unexpected declines observed this school year. Table 3 below presents data that addresses this question.

**Table 3**  
**Anchorage School District**  
**Enrollment Decline Analysis September, 1999**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>New to District Students</b>	<b>No Show Students</b>	<b>Difference Between Number of "No Shows" and Number of "New to District"</b>
1997-1998	2,257	2,938	681
1998-1999	2,537	3,157	620
1999-2000	2,090	3,299	1,209

Notes:

"New to District" students are defined as those students new to the Anchorage School District, excluding Kindergarten students. Students who were previously enrolled, left the District, and returned are not counted in this category.

"No Show" students are defined as those students who were in Grades K-11 at the close of the previous school year who did not return to the Anchorage School District for the start of the new school year.

Table 3 shows that the decline observed this school year can be attributed to the following factors:

- The difference between the number of "New to District" students and the number of "No Show" students was nearly twice as large this year as in the previous two years.
- Fewer "New to District" students enrolled this year. The inference can be drawn that fewer families moved into Anchorage over the summer months this year. In fact this figure was 447 less than the previous school year.
- More "No Show" students were observed this year. There were 142 more "No Shows" this year than last, and 361 more "No Shows" this year than two years ago.

The question then shifts as to why these differences occurred this year. The District called the private schools in Anchorage and asked for their enrollment figures for this school year. Of the 25 private schools contacted, their total enrollment this year was 3,157. This compares to a total for these same schools of 3,209 last year. In other words, private school enrollment this year is 52 less than last year. Therefore, the hypothesis that our declines can be attributed to increases in private school enrollment is not supported.

The District also called a random sample of 300 of the "No Show" students to determine why they were not enrolled in the Anchorage School District this school year. Table 4 presents the summary results of that action.

<b>Table 4 Anchorage School District Enrollment Decline Analysis September, 1999</b>		
<b>Withdrawal Reason</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Left District to Live Elsewhere in Alaska	39	13.0%
Left District to Live Elsewhere in Lower 48	110	36.7%
Unable to Contact No Working Phone	74	24.7%
Drop Out, Not Attending School	7	2.3%
Home School	16	5.3%
Attending Private School	26	8.7%
Other*	28	9.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	
* The "Other" category includes students who indicated they had graduated over the summer, had obtained a GED, had enrolled in other ASD programs but had a new ID number, or for which an exact reason could not be determined.		

Table 4 clearly shows that private and home schooling account for only fourteen percent of the "No Shows". The majority of the "No Shows" were students whose family had left Anchorage to reside elsewhere.

Communication with the State Demographer, Greg Williams, supports the hypothesis that negative migration is the primary factor influencing the enrollment decline observed this year:

"...Alaska's population is experiencing a net loss currently through migration. We normally turnover about six percent of the population annually. Those leaving are currently not being replaced by new immigrants from our feeder states. This is partly because of the tight job market and lots of good jobs close to where people are. Secondly, as Alaska's average income continues to slip relative to feeder states, Alaska becomes less attractive. Every state on the West Coast has a higher median income except Oregon and Hawaii, and if you factor in cost of living the advantage over Oregon disappears."

In summary, the primary reason that the enrollment in the Anchorage School District declined this school year is that more families moved out of Anchorage and fewer families moved in.

Enrollment projections were not met this school year because of this same reason. Enrollment projection methodology rests on the assumption that enrollment patterns and migration patterns observed for the past several years will continue during the time period of the projection. That assumption was obviously not a valid one for this school year.

BC/CC/NDH

Prepared by: Norman D. Holthouse, Executive Director, Technology/MIS

Approved by: Carol Comeau, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction