

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #92 (1999-2000)

October 25, 1999

TO: SCHOOL BOARD
FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
SUBJECT: CLASS SIZE REPORT

PERTINENT FACTS:

For many years, the District has compiled an elementary and secondary class size report; six years ago information relative to bilingual and special education classes and staffing was added to the report. This report for the 1999-2000 school year is divided into the following categories: Elementary Education, Middle School Education, High School Education, Special Education, Bilingual Education, and Charter Schools. In addition, the Administration has compiled information on class sizes in the alternative programs and the student to counselor ratio at the six major high schools.

In addition to the class size statistics, information is provided on the high school student to counselor ratio and the class size information for the ninth and tenth grade core classes (language arts, math, science, and social studies). The additional counselor positions were authorized for the six major high schools as a result of the additional funding from the Legislature through Senate Bill 36 two years ago; this same source was also used to fund additional teaching positions in the high school core classes and in grades 1 and 3 and has had a positive impact on services to students in the high schools and the elementary schools. The information is based on the September 30, 1999 enrollment.

For the most part, the class size information for this year continues to be dramatically different in the elementary schools in the primary grades and in the high schools in grades nine and ten in the core academic classes; these reductions to class size are a direct result of the School Board's commitment to use some of the additional revenue from Senate Bill 36 to reduce class sizes two years ago. Middle schools were not impacted by additional teaching positions to reduce class size since the middle schools already receive additional teaching positions to accommodate the middle school teaming and additional team planning period. Senate Bill 36 funds were also used to add one additional safety

officer at each middle school and last year additional counseling positions were added to the middle schools to better serve students.

In addition to the increase in teaching positions from Senate Bill 36 described above, the School Board continued the increase in the number of teaching positions available to help with elementary and high school classes over 30 and with level 2 special education students at all three levels who are included in the regular classrooms, by the addition of extra FTE during the January budget process.

Bilingual education enrollment is at an all time high and there has been an increase in the number of intensive needs special education students again this year. Since both special education and bilingual education programs have federal and state requirements, this increase in their enrollment is having a noticeable effect on the educational programs at the schools where the students are located. There are also increasing requests by parents and staff for ADA, 504 Office of Civil Rights, and transportation accommodations in order to meet the individualized needs of students.

Each major department in the Instructional Division has provided detailed information on class sizes and, at the middle school and high school level, the counselor to student ratio. This information follows.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

A summary of class size information for the elementary schools is shown as Attachment A. This information is based on the enrollment data of September 30, 1999. A comparison chart of the last eight years for classes 30 and higher (including 1999-2000) is provided in Attachment B; also shown are the total number of classes for the eight year period.

Attachment C compares class sizes in kindergarten through grade three for 1998-99 and 1999-2000. It continues to illustrate the impact that Senate Bill 36 funding had in reducing class sizes in grades K-3. Attachment D contains part-time student data. Attachments E and F are new this year and have not been contained in previous reports. Attachment E compares full and half day kindergarten for 1998-99 and 1999-2000 and Attachment F does the same for first grade, showing the effects of the 40 additional first grade teachers hired through the Class Size Reduction Grant.

The total number of kindergarten classes (both half day and full day) increased from 166 in 1998-99 to 172 in 1999-2000 (excluding K-1 combinations, multi-age and pre-K classes). There are 44 fewer kindergarten students in 1999-2000 than there were in 1998-99. Major shifts occurred in the 24-26 category, which went from 27 classes in 1998-99 to ten classes in 1999-2000, and in the category classes under 18, which grew from 16 classes in 1998-99 to 37 classes in 1999-2000. Attachment E compares the number of full and half day kindergarten classes as well as the concurrent class sizes for the years 1998-99 and 1999-2000. The number of full day kindergartens increased

in 1999-2000 by 38 and the number of half day kindergartens decreased in 1999-2000 by 29. This is certainly due to the increase of full day kindergartens authorized by the School Board in 1998-99 for the 1999-2000 school year.

There are a total of eight more grade 1 classes this year than last. The number of first grade classes in the under 18 category almost tripled. The number of classes in the 18-20 category grew by 2.5 times. Conversely, the opposite occurred in the 21-23 category, which decreased in 1999-2000 by 2.5 times. The 24-26 category decreased from 24 classes in 1998-99 to six classes in 1999-2000 as shown in Attachment F. This illustrates the positive impact of the CSR grant, which obviously resulted in the intended effect of lowering class sizes in grade 1.

Grade 2 classes were staffed using the same divisor as last year, 24:1. Changes include the number of classes in the 18-20 category, which decreased from 21 in 1998-99 to 13 in 1999-2000. The number of classes in the 21-23 category almost doubled from 1998-99 to 1999-2000 and the number of classes in the 24-26 category decreased in 1999-2000 by almost one third. The number of second grade classes in the 27-30 category decreased from 12 in 1998-99 to four in 1999-2000.

The total number of classes in grade 3 remained virtually the same this year with overall grade 3 class sizes very similar to those of last year. These numbers continue to reflect the beneficial effect of changing the staffing divisor from 26:1 to 24:1 in the 1998-99 school year. (Attachment C)

Grades 4, 5, and 6 retained the same staffing divisor of 27:1, so the changes in class sizes from last year to this year are incidental to the manner in which students happen to be distributed. Grade 4, for example, gained 11 classes from last year to this year. Overall class sizes stayed roughly the same except for an increase of 11 classes in the 18-20 category, an increase of 24 classes in the 21-23 category, and a decrease of 23 classes in the 24-26 category. The number of classes in the 27-30 and 31-32 categories remained close to the same both years. (Attachment A)

The number of classes in grade 5 remained virtually the same. Changes from one class size category to another are modest with the only difference which stands out being an increase of ten classes in the 21-23 category in 1999-2000 and a decrease of 11 classes in the 24-26 category in 1999-2000. (Attachment A)

Grade 6 had 118 classes in 1998-99 and 124 in 1999-2000. Changes among class size categories are not particularly remarkable. (Attachment A)

The number of combination classes remained close to the numbers of 1998-99 with an increase of four total combination classes this year for a total of 92. Multi-age classes decreased from 80 to 63 for a total reduction of 17 multi-age classrooms. Information related to both combination and multi-age classes may be found in Attachment A.

Overall in grades K-6, the percentages of class sizes illustrate a trend towards lower class sizes in 1999-2000 over those of 1998-99. (Attachment A)

MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND POLARIS K - 12 SCHOOL

On September 30, 1999, the average class size for all middle school classes was 30.3, a slight decrease from the 1998-99 average of 31. The average class size for the core academic classes of math, language arts, science, and social studies remained the same as 1998-99 between 27 and 28 students with a mean of 28.4. Middle schools are in the second year of a major inclusionary effort of level two special education students. FTE were included in each school's staff allocation to partially offset the inclusion numbers.

Attachment G gives a comparison of the class size frequency for the last three years. This year there is a slight increase in the percentage of classes in the 21 to 25 class size range and a decrease in the 31 to 35 class range. All other percentages showed no significant changes. The number of 35+ classes stayed relatively the same - 134 in 1998-99 and 137 in 1999-2000.

Attachment H illustrates a comparison of the average class size by academic area for the last four years. The class sizes in most of the teaching areas remained steady over the last few years. PE, once again, shows an increase in numbers of two students per class. Of the 137 classes with over 36 students, 85 of those classes are PE and 38 are music or art. Gruening and Hanshaw Middle Schools combine all students taking P.E. each period. The teachers group the students into instructional sections according to the activity. These students then rotate through the activities each year. Scheduling conflicts, specialized programs, and singleton courses cause the additional 14 large classes. The course number for health classes places them in the science category. All five science classes showing an enrollment of 35+ are health.

Attachment I gives the information for all of the middle schools; Attachments J through R give a picture of the class sizes for individual schools. The two foreign language classes over 36 students at Mears are Japanese immersion classes. There are 38 students in the seventh grade Japanese immersion program; too many students for one class and too few to be split. To adjust for these numbers, the teacher has been assigned four classes, two seventh and two eighth, and attends both team meetings.

Attachment S outlines the counselor-student ratios, and Attachment T identifies the part-time students in the nine middle schools in the Anchorage School District.

Polaris K-12

Polaris K-12 School reports all secondary 7-12 classes together because their classes integrate students at all grade levels. Attachment U gives the average size of Polaris secondary classes by distribution and by teaching area. The majority of the secondary classes fall in the 19-25-student range. The average size of a core (language arts, math, science, and social studies) class is 20. Attachment V is a report of the elementary

classroom sizes for Polaris. These classes are included in the Elementary Education report on class size.

HIGH SCHOOLS

In general, utilization of allocated teachers and the development of the master class schedules are local school decisions. Some items, such as holding ninth and tenth grade core classes to 25 students (begun in 1998-99 with Senate Bill 36 funds) and this year's .4 minimum choral music allocation for each comprehensive high school, are directives which all schools are expected to follow. Additionally, schools are instructed to minimize the number of classes under 20 students and those over 35 students. Explanations are necessary for each class outside those parameters.

On October 16, 1999, the high schools reported 254 classes under 20, an increase from 185 last school year, and 130 classes over 35 students, a slight decrease from 132 in 1998-99. Classes of 36 or more are generally physical education with a lesser number in music. Class sizes in those two curricular areas remain within guidelines established by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

High school average class size is reported Districtwide on Attachment W. Part I is class size frequency for all classes. Part II shows average class size Districtwide by content area. Attachment X provides the average class size analysis excluding special education, King Career Center classes, independent study, etc. Attachments Y-DD contain individual school class size frequencies and individual school average class size by content area. School to school variations are due to student interest and school-based scheduling decisions. Attachment EE shows the average class size by school for the targeted ninth and tenth grade core curriculum areas.

Alternative Schools

Class sizes at SAVE, Benny Benson, and AVAIL are all under 25 and are shown on Attachments FF-HH. Steller classes are under 25 with the exception of 13 sections between 26 and 30, and four sections between 31 and 35; this information is provided on Attachment II. Information on Polaris K-12 class sizes is provided in the middle school section.

High School Counselors

This is the second year that every high school student has been assigned a certificated counselor according to their alpha group. Special education department heads are still assisting alpha counselors with IEP information, advising on course selections and implementing credit checks for special education students. Indian education community counselors (non-certificated) continue to work with qualified students and families as they interact with alpha counselors. Certificated bilingual counselors are assigned to some schools, based upon their specific populations. Beyond allocated counseling

positions (determined by school population), some schools have added additional FTE resources as a site-specific decision.

Average and Range of Counselor Loads by School

| School | Average Number of Counselors | Range* | Number of Counselors |
|----------|------------------------------|---------|----------------------|
| Bartlett | 342 | 56-358 | 5.4** |
| Chugiak | 343 | 279-392 | 6.0 |
| Dimond | 316 | 137-358 | 6.6** |
| East | 285 | 206-337 | 6.8** |
| Service | 312 | 0-359 | 7.4 |
| West | 329 | 0-375 | 6.0** |

* Department heads and bilingual counselors are often are assigned fewer counselees. Some schools reduce assignments (SHS has a .4 counselor with no students assigned) because the counselor handles special projects such as Student Assistance, Violence Prevention Task Force, etc.

** Includes certificated bilingual counselor FTE (.4 BHS; .6 DHS; .8 EHS; 1.0 WHS, but this counselor is new so has not yet been assigned a case load).

High School Part-time Students

Fifty-seven part-time students are currently enrolled in the high schools while also attending a private or correspondence school, UAA, or being home-schooled. This is a 38.6 percent increase over the 35 part-time students reported last year. Sixteen part-time students are enrolled exclusively at King Career Center. To our knowledge, no part-time student was refused placement and all received full consideration in selection of classes. Part-time students requested placement in world language, fine arts, some upper level math and science classes, the vocational programs at KCC, and JROTC. Ten students enrolled as ninth graders, ten as tenth graders, 13 as eleventh graders, and 24 as twelfth graders.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Special education enrollment for 1999-2000 has increased in the number of students with significant disabilities while showing slight decreases in the number of students with mild disabilities as compared to projections for 1999-2000. The total number of students certified for special education services has increased approximately 40 students when compared to last September. The trend for enrollment in special education continues to

follow from last year with a stabilization of enrollment for students with mild disabilities and a continual increase of students with more significant disabilities and behavior issues. This is especially evident in pre-school and secondary, with an overall increase of 34 students. Although the number seems slight, the impact is significant. This impact is seen in the increased need for related services such as adaptive physical education, speech language and occupational therapy.

The Anchorage School District provides special education services in a student's "least restrictive environment" as mandated by federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Placement for each student is determined individually by the IEP team composed of educators knowledgeable in the student's disability and the parents of the student. We are required to first consider the student's regular classroom for placement. The IEP team must consider if the student can receive educational benefit with appropriate supports and services within the classroom. If this is not possible, then the team may consider other placements as appropriate. This may include accommodating the regular education curriculum, assistance and instruction from a special education teacher or support from teacher assistants under the supervision of the special education teacher. It may also include instruction by the regular education teacher under the supervision of the special education teacher. Some students, especially those with more intensive needs, require additional related services from occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech language therapists, psychologists, health services, transportation and others. These services are determined on an individual basis and must be provided as required by the student's individual education plan.

For the past seven years, we have been moving the delivery model of instruction to serve students in the least restrictive environment. This is reflective of the philosophy of the re-authorization of the federal law, IDEA '97. We are using a neighborhood delivery model for special education with a full continuum of placements available as the student's needs warrant. In order to provide appropriate services for students with disabilities in sites close to their neighborhoods, we are providing services for students with intensive needs in several sites within the District in addition to neighborhood schools. This includes intensive service sites at regional schools such as Creekside Park, Denali, Bowman, Birchwood, Turnagain, Kincaid, O'Malley, Tudor, Airport Heights, Abbott Loop, Williwaw, and William Tyson Elementary Schools. Middle school sites include Clark, Goldenview, Mears, and Mirror Lake Middle Schools. Other sites include Bartlett, Dimond, East, Chugiak High Schools, Whaley School and Mt. Iliamna Preschool.

The program standards for staffing were developed in the early 1980s and adjusted in the mid-80s. They are developed for a segregated model of instruction with all special education students receiving their instruction outside the regular classroom. They have not been adjusted to reflect our current delivery of services. Currently the following program standards for teacher/pupil ratio are applied to each school. Staffing is adjusted to meet the needs of individual students attending the school. This is adjusted as needed throughout the year.

Program Staffing Standards

Schools and programs are staffed on an average as follows:

| | | |
|------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Preschool | 15 level 3 students (15 students = 7 or 8 in each half-day class) | = 1 teacher and 6 TA hours daily |
| Elementary | 20 level 1 students | = 1 teacher and 3 TA hours daily |
| | 10 level 2 students | = 1 teacher and 5 TA hours daily |
| | 8 level 3 students | = 1 teacher and 14 TA hours daily |
| Secondary | 18 level 1 students | = 1 teacher and 3 TA hours daily |
| | 10 level 2 students | = 1 teacher and 5 TA hours daily |
| | 8 level 3 students | = 1 teacher and 10 TA hours daily |

Students at Whaley and Special Schools Programs are staffed as Level III classrooms.

This process only sets the base. Adjustments must then be made based on current department allocations and the severity of the disabilities students are experiencing. The adjustments are made by the department supervisor upon the advice and guidance of the teacher consultants who are in direct contact with the individual schools. Unlike the regular education programs, special

education programs grow substantially during the school year as students are identified within the schools. Staffing that may seem adequate in September is usually over-taxed by January. In the past we have averaged an additional increase of 700-1000 students throughout the year.

This school year we have had the particular challenge of staffing our teacher allocation with qualified teachers certified for special education. This has also been a significant problem in the area of related services. We currently have 24 teachers with waivers to teach special education. Several positions in related services have been filled with individuals on special activity agreements. Several school psychologists have agreed to work overtime, taking increased school assignments and being paid additional addenda.

We are experiencing a critical shortage of certificated personnel in special education and related services available to work in our District.

Special Education Preschool

The special education preschool program has 49 classes to include integrated preschool/kindergarten classes at Bowman Elementary and Chugiak Children's Services in addition to the primary locations of Mt. Iliamna Preschool and Birchwood Elementary. We also have three additional classes at Northwood Elementary and one class at North Star Elementary. At the end of September, the enrollment was at projection with a total of 336 students. In past years the preschool program has experienced growth rates of 55-75 percent with additional 150-190 students throughout the school year. Currently PTR is 13:1. Most classes are close to capacity. Enrollment and its impact will need to be monitored closely due to the increase of 18 students with more significant disabilities.

Elementary Special Education

Elementary special education has shown an overall decrease of 60 students from last year and is approximately 100 students less than projections. We are experiencing a slight decrease in the number of students with mild disabilities being certified for special education. There was a decrease of 120 from projections for Level 1 students. Level 2 students, however, increased by 17 students from projections. Students requiring intensive special education services are at projections and slightly over last year's enrollment. We have held back two teacher positions due to lower enrollment of students with mild disabilities. While no additional teacher positions were needed, it was necessary to reallocate teacher positions to four schools which exceeded projected numbers.

Two significant factors are affecting the elementary special education program at this time. The first factor is the decrease in availability of teachers endorsed in special education. At the current time the elementary special education program has seven teachers who are not endorsed in special education and for whom waivers have been requested from the Department of Education and Early Development. This number is expected to increase. There are also five full-time teacher positions and three half-time teacher positions open at the present. Several of these positions are being filled on a temporary basis with substitute teachers while recruiting and hiring for permanent staff continues. This shortfall of qualified special education teachers will continue to present significant challenges in mentoring and training of the new and waived teachers.

The second factor impacting the program is increased requests by schools for teacher assistant support. Particularly notable are the increased supports being requested for students experiencing significant behavioral difficulties. Increased support is also being requested for students experiencing autism or multiple disabilities. Training for staff in support techniques and appropriate instruction for these students is ongoing. Four and one-half FTE have been converted into TA support time. Over 300 hours of additional TA time has been allocated from the federal special education grant, Title VI B. This is a

significant increase from last year when we had to convert three FTE with 170 TA hours from Title VI B. It is anticipated that this need will continue to rise throughout the school year.

Middle School Special Education

The enrollment of special education students in middle schools as of September 1, 1999 is 967. This total is an increase of 2.3 percent over the 945 enrollment of September 30, 1998 and 3 percent below projections. At this time of the year, there are students who are served, but not counted until annual reviews and three year re-evaluations are completed. The total number of students served should increase before the foundation count is complete.

Significant increases in enrollment occurred at Central and Hanshew Middle Schools, while Wendler Middle School had a decrease in enrollment. The students with significant disabilities are provided services in their home schools or cluster school sites located at Mirror Lake, Clark, Goldenvue, and Mears Middle Schools. In addition we have six sites for students needing significant behavioral supports or life skills. These classes are staffed at ten teachers for 97 students.

The students experiencing mild disabilities are provided supports and services within the middle school teams in addition to their IEP coordination provided by department chairs at each school. The staffing ratio average is currently 15:1 with 50 teachers for 782 students.

High School Special Education

The enrollment of special education students in high school and alternative school programs as of September 30, 1999, is 1,479. This includes the six high schools, six alternative schools and McLaughlin Youth Center. This total is an increase of 1.4 percent over the 1,428 enrollment of September 30, 1998. Special education student enrollment for the high schools is at projection.

The number of level 1 students is 2.6 percent above projections, while the numbers of level 2 and 3 students are 16 percent and 18 percent below projections, respectively. While the overall enrollment has increased slightly, there has been a shift in the distribution of students among schools. Enrollments at Service and West High Schools are very close to projections, while Bartlett High School showed an increase of three percent. The most significant discrepancies between projections and enrollment occurred at Dimond and East High Schools. Dimond was 5.7 percent below projection and East was a dramatic 15 percent below. Staffing allocations to the high schools may need to be adjusted during second semester in order to accommodate the shift in enrollment.

Each high school offers a continuum of services for students with mild disabilities ranging from special education resource classes to collaborative services within the regular classroom, behavioral supports for students who need them, vocational support

services, and a unit-based (ReOpen) component. The majority of each school's allocation of teachers provides specialized supports and services for students with mild disabilities within the regular education classroom. One teacher at each high school is designated as the department chair to coordinate services. All schools have implemented some form of case management through which management of IEPs and communication with parents is decentralized from the department chair's office. Teachers are directly responsible for caseloads of 12-20 students each under this model.

Classes for students with intensive needs are provided in two high schools, Bartlett and Dimond, with four FTE allocated at each school for 27-31 students. Staffing for these positions has been a challenge with an open position in each school. One school has hired a teacher on a waiver while the other school has converted FTE to TA time.

Life skills classes now are provided in four high schools, East, West, Bartlett, and Service. Bartlett and Service each designated a teacher from the school's allocation to serve their ninth grade life skills students in their home attendance area this year, rather than have them attend East or West as in the past.

The addition of teacher positions in this year's special education budget brings the staffing closer to the staffing formula. When all FTE are included in the ratio without weighting for level 3 students, the overall student/special education teacher ratios for the high schools are:

| | |
|----------|------|
| Bartlett | 19:1 |
| Chugiak | 18:1 |
| Dimond | 13:1 |
| East | 13:1 |
| Service | 18:1 |
| West | 14:1 |

The teacher-pupil ratios for alternative schools are significantly different because all the students served in those programs are level 1:

| | |
|---------------|------|
| SAVE | 21:1 |
| Benson/Search | 23:1 |
| Stellar | 20:1 |
| Polaris | 20:1 |

At this time there are three teacher positions allocated to high schools and alternative schools, which have not been filled. These positions are being converted to teacher

assistant and added duty hours for this year only in order to provide the direct services of students IEPs.

Whaley School

Whaley School enrollment has exceeded projection by 20 students with 70 elementary and 134 secondary students. This is a significant increase in high school students attending Whaley School. When this enrollment is combined with 34 students who are transitioning part-time to area/neighborhood schools, the impact on the teaching staff is enormous. The average class size in the elementary unit is 8.9 with classes ranging from 8-12 students. The secondary unit has been re-configured to improve effective supports for students. These examples combined with three teaching positions that are currently open, have created large class sizes in the secondary unit. Average class size is 13 students with ranges of two classes with seven students and two classes with 15 students. This creates many challenges when working with this population.

The significant challenge this year with the increased enrollment is the need for additional classroom space and staffing all the teaching positions. The school has had to utilize the teacher lounge and library as classroom space this year. They look forward to additional class space when related services are relocated to the Curriculum and Instructional Support Center in the next few weeks.

Related Service

The overall number of school sites in which students receive related services continues to increase. This challenges itinerant staff members who must drive to numerous schools in order to provide needed services to students. It is extremely difficult to fill specialist positions due to the limited number of candidates possessing appropriate certification and the current ASD salary scale. Related services administrative staff continues to aggressively recruit qualified candidates. To date, nine school psychology positions remain open (two of these positions are being used for added days); two speech pathology positions remain open; .5 BVI (though we are looking for 1.5 teachers with BVI certification); and .5 OT/PT/APE remain open.

Speech-language enrollment is slightly below projections (26 students) as of September 30, 1999, with additional students currently being evaluated for certification. There are currently 67.3 FTE providing direct therapy services to students, yielding a caseload average of 45 students per therapist. Last year at this time, the average caseload size was 48 due to unfilled positions. Caseload size typically swells during the year, peaking in April. Average caseload size for April over the past three years has been approximately 50 students.

Enrollment for OT/PT/APE services is 1,191, which is 25 students over projections. Physical therapists (8.2) average a caseload of 28 students while occupational therapists (19.8) average a caseload of 30 students. This is compared to adaptive physical education

specialists (6.5) average of 57 students. Due to increased enrollment, and being 29 students over projection, the caseload size has increased significantly for OT.

There are four hard of hearing itinerant teachers who serve 102 students Districtwide. They have an average caseload of 25.5 students. There are an increasing number of students with severe to profound hearing loss in our schools who require more hours of service from this itinerant staff.

There are 5.5 FTE BVI teachers to provide services for 83 students who are requiring services as blind/visually impaired or deaf/blind. This is an average caseload of 15 students. There is also an increasing number of young Braille readers who require more hours of instruction and materials adaptation from this itinerant staff.

Gifted Education

The enrollment in the gifted enrichment program is currently below projections. Projections last year were 1,924; the actual enrollment currently is 1,792 (-132). This will be less significant in the next several months as the new second graders are identified and enter the program. Caseloads for enrichment teachers vary from a low of 34 to a high of 61. The average class size is 43, a decrease of one from the previous year.

The Individualized Acceleration program at Rogers Park has a current enrollment of 122 students. This is 15 below our projection. Class size in the IA Program at Rogers Park varies from 11 in the Pre-kindergarten/kindergarten class to 23 in fourth grade.

The middle school gifted program has an enrollment of 748 students with three FTE divided into partial FTE to serve the middle schools. Several middle schools have over 100 students, and need more FTE to adequately meet student and program needs. The cluster group of highly gifted students at Romig has an enrollment of 26 students with an additional 1.5 FTE for those students.

The high school mentorship program anticipates having 50 students enrolled by the end of October. In addition, the new highly gifted cluster group at West High School has an enrollment of 21. These students are currently being served by one of the mentorship coordinators until a suitable applicant can be hired to meet their needs. An additional 1.5 FTE has been allocated for the West group.

The gifted program is 66 students (about one percent) below our actual enrollment at this same time last year.

Alaska State School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

ASSDHH generally fluctuates between 50 to 60 students. The projection for this year was 49 students with a current enrollment of 50. The preschool classes usually experience growth during the year and we expect to add three students this year. We also expect to get one student from an outlying community within the next month. The demographics of

this program have changed over the years as more of the students experience multiple disabilities. This requires a higher staffing ratio, especially for teacher assistants. Staffing is a significant challenge this year with the need to staff three teacher positions. The need for interpreters continues to be very significant, as many of the secondary students require access to regular education content classes. This school/program provides special education services to students who are deaf or hard of hearing from ages three through 22 at Russian Jack Elementary, Clark Middle School and East High School. Four students access KCC classes with interpreters.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

As of October 11, 1999, the number of students targeted to receive services (Attachment GG) is slightly lower than the actual funding count submitted October 30, 1998 (4,540 students). This can be attributed to the decrease in student enrollment Districtwide. Seven hundred twenty-two (722) students are new-to-the-district (NTD) with 529 on the elementary level and 193 on the secondary level.

Historically, enrollment of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students in the Bilingual Education Program (BEP) has steadily increased as shown in Attachment HH. This graph provides the total number of students receiving service during each designated school year.

An intensive articulation process initiated five years ago which involved a more direct approach to the articulation process from elementary to junior high/middle school, and from junior high/middle school to high school has continued to gage staffing. Students were properly exited from the program (if that was the need) and others were more closely monitored to make sure they were assessed and properly placed on the next level. Elementary bilingual resource teachers visited receiving schools and appropriate assessment was conducted. This has resulted in the retention of students (that need to remain in the program) when they are promoted to the next level, and to an increased number of students on the secondary level.

Elementary School Level

Students of limited-English-proficiency are enrolled at and staff is assigned to, all but one of the 62 elementary schools (Girdwood). The existing staffing standard attempts to provide a student/staff ratio (SSR) of 30:1, albeit, relatively high in comparison to the overall District SSR. The primary modes of delivery consist of both individual or small group (two to eight students) tutorial, and in-class delivery. The goal for staffing within this program is to adhere to Alaska Statutes, AS 14.07.060 and AS 14.30.410, which mandate that, "the bilingual/bicultural program student-to-staff ratios must not exceed district student-to-staff ratios." The current data reflects inequities in SSR in some schools. This is due to the fact that the assessment and placement of students is still in progress with a high number of students on the "pending" list. Once all assessment is complete they will be removed from the pending list, assigned to the appropriate Lau category, and placed in appropriate service. The final reporting (October 29, 1999) will

reflect a more accurate picture of actual students scheduled for services. Upon receiving this information decisions will be made to shift staff from places with low enrollments to schools with increased enrollments. Many changes to staff assignment have already been made. Decisions for these changes were made at the end of the last school year. Variables to determine these changes were projected enrollment, reopening of closed schools, and staff leave requests and terminations.

A restructuring of the schedule for resource teachers has provided for weekly service to students, particularly those in the Eagle River area elementary schools with low enrollments by the resource teacher assigned to the school. These schools are Alpenglow (eight students), Homestead (three students), Ravenwood (two students). Girdwood (six students) is not staffed and students are not receiving BEP service.

On the elementary level, Bilingual Learning Centers are located at schools with a high concentration of LEP students (generally 90 or greater). Ten sites on the elementary level have been identified: Chinook, Fairview, Lake Hood, North Star, Northwood, Mountain View, Turnagain, William Tyson, Williwaw, and Willow Crest. Each elementary learning center is staffed with one certificated teacher and tutors who are non-certificated. Turnagain and Northwood are exceptions to this. Because of boundary changes associated with the opening of the four new elementary schools during the 1996-97 school term, one-third of the LEP students from each of these schools were relocated to other schools. Therefore, one teacher is assigned to the learning centers at each of these schools. The learning center at one school is open in the morning. A schedule has been developed to service students during that time; the other is open in the afternoon with students receiving service then. Each of these schools has one full-time tutor who provides primarily, in-class service to Lau categories C, D, and E students. Tutors who work under the supervision of school principals and the bilingual supervisor staff the remaining elementary schools. Resource teachers work directly with Lau A and B students in those schools and provide technical assistance to tutors and regular classroom teachers on an ongoing basis. There are 78.8 tutors assigned to the elementary schools.

Middle School Level

Staffing for the middle school is a challenge because of the need to avoid homogenous grouping on teams. Challenges faced by the BEP on the middle school level are reconfiguration of space, reallocation of staff resources to support the curriculum philosophy, which is so closely tied to curriculum strategies, appropriate forms of collaborative teaching, and coordination of services necessary to meet the unique needs of LEP students. The learning center concept has been discontinued at the Romig/West complex. This is due to the middle school philosophy and the difficulty with accommodating the block scheduling at West High School. Staffing is a major concern and issue at all middle schools. Clark Middle School has the largest concentration of LEP (202 students). Mears (92) and Romig (118 students) also boast a large enrollment of LEP students. However, the remaining six middle schools have about the same numerical enrollment range. The difficulty in staffing is providing a teacher or tutor for each of the teams since LEP students are spread over all teams. Ideally, a teacher for Lau A and B

students and a tutor for each of the teams with category C, D, and E students would address the needs of LEP students.

Based on research and work with LEP student populations consideration for staff is urged to ensure that the BEP provides students some of the following:

- Informed understandings of the school's goals, programmatic design, and focus.
- A program structure and class size limitation of 15 students, allowing students to learn at their own pace without the stigma associated with limited proficiency in the English language.

Currently, middle schools in the Eagle River area, Gruening (five students) and Mirror Lake (14 students), are not staffed and students attending those schools are not receiving BEP service.

High School Level

Overall, staffing on the middle school level and the high school level consists of 14 certificated teachers and ten tutors. All high schools provide ESL courses and tutorial assistance for students depending upon their Lau category. East High School has the largest number of LEP students on this level. An increase in the number of credits required for graduation, the emphasis on students acquiring a basic knowledge of algebra, coupled with the need to address the skills required to successfully complete the newly required Graduation Qualifying Examination has caused students to enroll in more ESL math and science content area courses. These classes are large and because of the limited English proficiency skills of the students should be capped at 15. East and Dimond are the high schools currently understaffed. An additional teacher (1.0 FTE) and an additional tutor (1.0 FTE) would provide the necessary staffing at East; and an additional tutor (1.0 FTE) at Dimond would provide the tutorial assistance needed by students.

The changing demographics in the ASD have brought the challenge of addressing the needs of "low-literacy" immigrant students. The Newcomers' Center (NC) developed for students who are new to the country and need more intensive language and cultural assistance, is in the third year of operation. Students enroll in a combination of social studies and English language arts classes. Students at the NC are generally three years or more below their age-appropriate grade level. Many factors contribute to this: students come from poor rural areas where education is not readily available; some have not used print in their native language; some are victims of war and postwar poverty which bars many from formal education. Currently, there are 43 students in two separate sessions (22 in the morning and 21 in the afternoon session) and three students pending. The NC is also understaffed and would benefit by the addition of 1.0 FTE certificated staff. All of the students are monolingual speakers of another language. They have no school experience in U.S. schools and limited if any schooling at all in their native countries.

With the addition of bilingual/ESL counselors in four of the high schools, LEP students are receiving comprehensive support services that address the affective as well as

intellectual aspects of their overall development. In addition to promoting linguistic and cognitive growth, LEP students receive exposure to an occupational, career awareness, vocational component that offers functional, hands-on experience and job readiness skills. The District's program design at the King Career Center (KCC) permits them to receive academic study for half the day and vocational education/job training the other half. This year is the first year that KCC has experienced a need for bilingual staff support. Thirty students identified as LEP are enrolled in classes. A bilingual/ESL tutor is greatly needed for that location.

Plan of Service

The program is operating on a one-year extension of the three-year Plan of Service (1996-99) which was developed and approved by the Anchorage School Board, and received final approval by Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. The extension was provided to all districts in Alaska because of the extensive time involved with the approval and adoption of the revised Bilingual Regulations. The plan of service contains a parent community involvement component; a curriculum/instructional component; a materials development component; a staff development component; a description of the District's process for implementing and coordinating the plan of service; and an evaluation component.

The language dominance category into which each student falls, as well as his/her overall achievement level, determines the type of program which must be provided for students. The following categories are used:

- A. student speaks a language other than English exclusively;
- B. student speaks mostly a language other than English, but also speaks some English;
- C. student speaks a language other than English, and English with equal ease;
- D. student speaks mostly English but also speaks a language other than English;
- E. student speaks English exclusively, but the student's manner of speaking reflects the grammatical structure of another language.

Appropriate programs must be provided to all students in categories A and B; and to those students in categories C, D, and E whose overall achievement is at or below minus one (-1) standard deviation on a norm referenced test; or one year below grade level as measured by the District's ongoing student achievement testing program. Students in the latter three categories are referred to as underachievers.

- Students in categories A and B receive ten to 15 hours of direct bilingual education service per week.
- Students in categories C, D, and E receive three to five hours of direct bilingual education service per week.

The Anchorage School District provides a variety of models and strategies to English language learners:

- **Transitional bilingual/bicultural (TBB)** curriculum for category A and B students at the elementary level (primary and intermediate grades), at the middle school level (grades 7 and 8), and at the high school level (grades 9 through 12). The transitional bilingual/bicultural program makes use of the student's language other than English and cultural factors in instruction until the student is ready to participate effectively in the English language curriculum of the regular school program. Once this occurs, further instruction in the language other than English is discontinued.
- For categories C, D, and E students (on both the elementary and the secondary level) an **English-as-a-second-language (ESL)** model is utilized. This model has culturally relevant material in its curriculum and provides instruction in other subject matter. Strategies emphasize content-area classes and sheltered English classes in social studies, English language arts, math, and science.
- The **two-way developmental bilingual** program is the mode of delivery in the immersion program at Governmental Hill School for students in grades K-6. The model targets students whose dominant language is Spanish. Students receive instruction in both English and in Spanish over the course of each instructional day. The District requested and received a variance to the Plan of Service from the Department of Education in order to implement this model. This program has expanded to Romig Middle School this year.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

There are four charter schools approved by the School Board and in operation at this time. Lower class sizes and more personalized instruction characterizes each of the programs.

The **Aquarian Charter School** had an enrollment of 188 students in grades K-6 as of September 30; they will continue enrolling students until the end of the Foundation Count period. As of October 6, they had 206 students enrolled. This school is in its third year of operation and is currently housed in two locations: relocatables behind the King Career Center and modular classrooms on the APU campus. They will move to the former Northern Lights facility in January after Baxter moves out, and co-locate with the Village Charter School and the Family Partnership Charter School. Class sizes for the ten classrooms are listed below (as of October 6, 1999):

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----|------------|----|
| Full Day Kindergarten | 20 | Grades 2-3 | 20 |
| Full Day Kindergarten | 22 | Grades 2-3 | 21 |
| Grades K-1 | 22 | Grades 3-4 | 18 |
| Grade 1 | 19 | Grades 4-5 | 20 |
| Grade 1 | 17 | Grades 5-6 | 27 |

The **Family Partnership Charter School** office is located at 3339 Fairbanks Street by Loussac Library. The school formerly had one classroom at Huffman Elementary School, which had to be vacated this fall due to an increase in the Huffman enrollment. The District has offered them space at the former Northern Lights facility in January along with Aquarian Charter School and possibly the Village Charter School. The enrollment, as of September 30, 1999 was 674 students in grades K-12; as of October 8, the school had enrolled 690 students. The school will continue to enroll students until the end of the foundation count period. This charter school has an individualized program and class sizes vary from one to small groups of students working with one teacher as part of their contract with the teacher. In its third year of operation, the Family Partnership Charter School leased office facilities in a non-District facility in order to accommodate parents and students in a more centralized location. The students by grade level are as follows:

| | | | |
|--------------|----|----------|----|
| Kindergarten | 65 | Grade 7 | 51 |
| Grade 1 | 73 | Grade 8 | 48 |
| Grade 2 | 87 | Grade 9 | 36 |
| Grade 3 | 69 | Grade 10 | 36 |
| Grade 4 | 69 | Grade 11 | 21 |
| Grade 5 | 66 | Grade 12 | 12 |
| Grade 6 | 57 | | |

The **Village Charter School** is beginning its second year of operation. The school is currently leasing two spaces at the Z Plaza Mall, which has been remodeled to E-1 occupancy. The charter school is intending to partially occupy some of the classroom space at the former Northern Lights facility along with the Family Partnership Charter School and the Aquarian Charter School in January. This charter school currently has 39 students in grades K-8 with two teachers.

| | |
|--|----|
| Primary Class (5 to 9 year olds) | 20 |
| Intermediate Class (9 to 14 year olds) | 19 |

The **Walden Pond Charter School** is located in the Dimond Center and had enrolled 170 students in grades 7-12 by September 30, 1999. Classes are taught in interdisciplinary blocks in the morning and average 17 - 21 students per class; electives are taught in the afternoon. Class size for these electives/workshops ranges from 9 - 20.

Core Classes

| | | | |
|------------------------|----|----------------------------------|----|
| High School Math (5) | 20 | High School Social Studies (5) | 19 |
| Middle School Math (3) | 18 | Middle School Social Studies (3) | 17 |

High School Science (5) 21 High School Language Arts (5) 20
Middle School Science (3) 17 Middle School Language Arts (3) 17

Electives

Special Education

| | | | |
|----------------------------|----|------------------------|----|
| P.E./Health (5) | 20 | 7-12 Special Education | 14 |
| Spanish (3) | 13 | Resource (2) | |
| Computers (3) | 14 | | |
| American Sign Language (2) | 15 | | |
| Art (2) | 15 | | |
| Science (1) | 9 | | |
| Language Arts (3) | 18 | | |
| Social Studies (2) | 18 | | |

BC/CC/PM/GO/PM/RR/MH

Attachments

Prepared by: Carol Comeau, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
Patricia McRae, Executive Director, Elementary Education
Gail Opalinski, Executive Director, Middle School Education
Pat McDowell, Executive Director, High School Education
Robyn Rehmann, Executive Director, Special Education
Maxine Hill, Supervisor, Bilingual Education

Approved by: Carol Comeau, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction