

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #301 (1999-2000)

May 8, 2000

TO: SCHOOL BOARD  
FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT  
SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE

PERTINENT FACTS:

The Alaska Kindergarten Developmental Profile is an assessment required by the State of Alaska in an effort to develop additional information about the status of students as they enter Alaska schools. Planning for the statewide assessment began in 1998. The planning resulted in a system where the state specifies the areas to be assessed and leaves it to local school districts to implement the assessment.

The purpose of the Alaska Kindergarten Developmental Profile is to:

- Assist schools with establishing an individual developmental baseline for each child as they enter school so teachers and schools can plan programs for individual students.
- Assist schools with looking at the combined range of developmental readiness of entering kindergartners in a given classroom, as well as across the school.
- Provide data to families, communities and schools to assist them in supporting learning opportunities in their communities for young children.
- Provide the state with an overview of what children are like as they enter school and how this profile compares to national data and future benchmark levels for children.

The Anchorage School District responded to the state requirement for the assessment of all kindergarten and new to school first grade students with a comprehensive review of the commercial assessment instruments available. The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory suggested some instruments. Anchorage teachers and the Assessment and Evaluation staff suggested others. After a review of the alternatives and the discovery that no commercial product

covered all of the areas specified by the state, the Anchorage School District developed its own Kindergarten Developmental Profile assessment.

The Anchorage School District Developmental Profile Committee strongly recommended that the first four days of school be delayed for kindergarten students at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year in order to provide time for individual kindergarten student conferences. This conference time would provide an opportunity for individual parents, students and teachers to meet and begin the process of gathering information in order to support each child's school success. The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Instruction endorsed the committee's recommendation.

Kindergarten teachers were trained in the administration of the Developmental Profile assessment during an in-service day in August 1999. Teachers had the opportunity to view a video, developed by the Developmental Profile Committee with help from the Audio-Visual Services Department, which modeled a parent interview as well as student assessments. Additionally the electronic data collection system was explained to the kindergarten teachers during the training session.

Conferences were held on August 31, September 1, 2, and 3. Regular kindergarten classes started on September 7, 1999. By October 15, each kindergarten teacher entered student information into an electronic data collection system. On November 1, 1999, data was sent directly to the Department of Education and Early Development from the Assessment and Evaluation Department.

Upon completion of the data collection, each school was provided with a survey to assess the kindergarten profile content and implementation. Principals and kindergarten teachers were asked to meet and discuss their experience with the profile and the recording system and to complete and return the survey to the Assessment and Evaluation Department by November 1, 1999.

Principals and teachers also had the opportunity to provide individual responses and suggestions. A number of people commented about the benefits of early identification of students with potential problems and the advantages of getting to know students and parents individually prior to the beginning of the kindergarten year (Attachment A).

In January 2000, all kindergarten parents were sent a survey regarding the Developmental Profile and the delayed start of school. Parents were generally positive about the assessment with 92 percent reporting that it was a good way to begin kindergarten. About three out of four (73 percent) supported the delayed start but a number would have liked the kindergarten assessment to take place in the week prior to school. There were a number of parents that felt that they had not been given notice of the delayed start in 1999-2000 (Attachment B).

The Districtwide results of the Developmental Profile show that teachers assessed 3,562 students between the start of school and October 15, 1999. The data from most categories suggested that students were prepared for school. Nearly all children were nourished, rested, and dressed for the environment. Most students could complete the fine motor and gross motor tasks. Some students had difficulty building a structure and labeling a picture (Attachment C).

Elementary principals were notified in March 2000, that the delayed start for kindergarten students will occur this fall for the 2000-2001 school year. Kindergarten parents who register their children during the April 24 through May 5 spring registration will receive a letter from the school principal notifying them of the developmental profile process. New-to-school first graders will be assessed by the teacher and/or other school staff, as the numbers will probably be minimal. Seven informational meetings to learn about the Developmental Profile are being offered this spring for first grade teachers, and training sessions for new kindergarten and first grade teachers are being planned for next August.

A notebook with complete information has been prepared for Board members.

BC/CC/PM/JG/jb

#### Attachments

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