

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #83 (2000-2001)

September 25, 2000

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: A STATEMENT RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT RECORDS

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the School Board approve the statement in Attachment A.

PERTINENT FACTS:

In response to concerns expressed by members of the community over the School Board's use of executive sessions to discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation and Contract, the School Board desires to publicly reiterate their support of the Open Meetings Act and public access to decision-making. The statement, along with the referenced work session, will be the basis for future determination of whether executive sessions are appropriate and how they are noticed.

The School Board worked with the Assembly in 1994 to add a new section (1.25.005) to the Anchorage Municipal Code that clearly defines different types of meetings and notice of those meetings. The Board has had numerous work sessions and discussions since then over implementation of both the Open Meetings Act and The Municipal Code Chapter 1.25. Board members have attempted to follow the letter and the spirit of the law in their decision-making process. Since it has been some time since the Board had a thorough legal review of the Act, a work session to review the requirements will be beneficial. The Board will invite the Assembly and the Municipal Attorney to join them. The date, time, and presenter for the work session are not yet finalized.

PRW/mt

Attachment

Prepared and Approved by: Peggy Robinson, School Board President

ATTACHMENT A

A Statement Recognizing The Importance Of Public meetings And Public Access To Government Records

The Anchorage School Board recognizes the importance of public meetings and public access to government records. The Board acknowledges and fully supports both the letter and the spirit of the laws requiring open meetings and public access. The Board has received training on the Open Meetings Act in the past and has strived to perform its duties in accordance with the Act, both as a group and individually.

It occasionally can be difficult to determine whether particular topics may be discussed confidentially. Whenever the Board is uncertain as to whether an Executive Session is appropriate, the Board will either remain in open session or obtain legal advice on that issue.

The Board recognizes the value of public participation in its decision-making process. When specific topics must be discussed in Executive Session, the Board will endeavor to provide sufficient notice of the general concepts being considered so interested individuals can submit comments.

The School Board is scheduling a work session to refresh its working knowledge of the Open Meetings Act. This will be a public work session, and the Assembly and Municipal Attorney will be invited.