

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #36 (2001-2002)

September 10, 2001

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD MISSION STATEMENT AND GOALS FOR
FY 2001-2002

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and adopt the Anchorage School District Mission Statement and Goals as shown on Attachment A.

PERTINENT FACTS:

The Anchorage School Board annually reviews and adopts their mission statement and goals for the school year. In 1996, the School Board revised the mission statement to clearly and succinctly indicate the major purpose of the District: **"To educate students for success in life."** This mission statement has provided focus for the students, the staff, parents and the community and has provided guidance as the budget has been prepared. We believe that it has served us well as it succinctly summarizes our purpose.

In addition to the mission statement, the goals have been adopted annually in order to communicate to students, staff, parents, and community members the priorities that guide all activities of the staff and students to achieve that mission. It is the Administration's belief, and in recent years the School Board has concurred, that the goals should not be radically changed each year if long-term improvement is expected. This has been positively received by the staff in the schools and departments. It has allowed them to continue their efforts in focusing on student achievement and increasing participation in district activities, rather than stopping and starting new initiatives so prevalent a few years ago.

Each year, the School Board receives recommendations for some modification to the goals by the Administration, and is given the opportunity to communicate recommendations for change prior to adoption by the Board. The various departments have provided input as have representatives of the Instructional Division. The School Board held a discussion on the Mission and Goals at the August 27, 2001 Board meeting (ASD Memorandum #35 (2001-2003). The recommendations on Attachment A reflect that input and discussion.

The proposed goals for the 2001-2002 school year continue the major emphasis from the past four years on reading, writing and spelling, and mathematics. The Administration is recommending the continuation of the emphasis on teaching to the adopted performance standards and benchmarks so that our students successfully pass all three sections of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) and become proficient in the Benchmark Exams in grades 3, 6, and 8.

We are trying to focus on growth and student progress as measures of successful attainment of our goals; it is difficult with the limited comparable data available. The order of the HSGQE tests has changed each year, the questions have also changed, the student populations are different, and now the CAT 5 will no longer be given and is not comparable to the new CAT 6. These are challenges we are working through with the ASD staff and the Department of Education and Early Development.

All training and staff development is focused on this task so that our students have the best chance possible from the beginning of their school careers. The Administration has received the HSGQE and Benchmark data from the Department of Education and Early Development for the past two years and has analyzed it carefully on a District-wide basis as well by the Instructional Division and on a school-by-school basis. Each school staff has reviewed each student's progress individually and as a grade level or department group and have begun to develop programs and learning interventions necessary for students in order for them to meet or exceed the Benchmarks and to pass the HSGQE. This effort has been enhanced with increased funding from the Legislature through Senate Bill 174 and the Learning Opportunity Grants.

Each school is required to develop a plan of assistance for each student identified as below proficient on one or more on the tests; specific and targeted interventions are then applied. The staff is required to report on the results at the end of the school year; results are then sent on to the State EED and are incorporated into the annual Profile of Performance.

It is essential that the school staff become more directive in registering high school students who are not proficient into classes which will increase their skills in reading, writing, or math; other students who have shown proficiency will continue to be able to select their electives and courses as is the current practice. Schools have to balance the need for a comprehensive curriculum for all students and the need to assure parents and students and the public that we are doing all we can to increase the number of students reaching proficiency. The same principles apply for the elementary schools and the middle schools; strong encouragement should be given to students to enroll in remedial summer school opportunities and after school offerings. Waivers are available for those students who cannot afford the fees for summer school. Many of the middle schools have developed transitional classes in June and August to assist the students in making a successful transition into the middle school program.

The critical role of the family is recognized as an essential component in the academic success of students. Partnerships between the school and the home are the key to increasing this academic success. Our employees are our most valuable resource in providing a strong educational program to our projected 50,000 young people; they deserve recognition and compensation that helps us retain and recruit the best employees in all job categories to support our mission of educating students for success in life. The District is also striving to build coalitions with parents, business community representatives, and political leaders to understand and support issues of critical importance to the District. This is especially important as we deal with revenues which are not inflation-proofed or adequate to support our instructional and non-instructional requirements, and an increasing student population which is more diverse and complex in composition. We were very successful in this effort during the 2000-2001 school year and are very grateful to the Legislature, the Governor, the Assembly and the Mayor for their willingness to support an increase in revenues and to support our budget requests.

Continuing our outreach to the media and to community groups will also continue to be a focus. The Administration is committed to reaching out in various ways in order to better educate the community and our employees on a year round basis, rather than just during budget development and when asking for support for school bonds. The School Board, Superintendent, and staff are becoming more engaged in community events and with community groups in order to best represent the district's and the community's needs and to make decisions which are balanced and responsive.

Upon adoption, the goals will be shared with all schools and departments in the District as well as with our many external audiences. Adoption now will allow the District to incorporate these goals into the budget development process and

allow the schools to continue their academic focus developed in the School Report Card process and with the Learning Opportunity Grants.

We have much to be proud of in the Anchorage School District; we can do better and we are always striving to improve. Our staff and students deserve the best teaching and learning conditions possible within our available resources.

CC

Attachment

Prepared/Approved by: Carol Comeau, Superintendent