

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #201 (2001-2002)

February 11, 2002

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF DELAYING THE SCHOOL  
DESIGNATIONS UNTIL 2004.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the attached resolution in support of delaying the school designations until 2004.

PERTINENT FACTS:

The Anchorage School Board urges caution in labeling schools on the basis of test scores alone and supports legislation that delays the effective date of the school designator process from August 2002 to August 2004.

Senate Bill 36, which became AS 14.07.020(b). 5., requires the State Board to develop an annual system of rating schools, and designate each school by August 2002 in one of four categories: distinguished, successful, deficient, and in crisis. The categories are to be based on a school's student test scores and other indicators of student performance.

The Anchorage School Board supports assessment of student progress and the accountability implicit in this legislation. However, designating a school as deficient or in crisis on the basis of test scores alone ignores certain factors such as the high level of mobility that occurs in our schools. This means that the students being measured on the benchmark exams in the spring may not be the students who started at the school in the fall. In addition, such labeling has the high potential to be misleading and adversely affect families and neighborhoods. Schools in low socioeconomic areas, schools in highly transient communities, and schools designed to serve high needs populations are more likely to be labeled deficient as a result of factors other than the quality of education being delivered.

A committee of educators and community representatives are currently developing criteria to measure the annual yearly growth essential to fair designations. The lack of historical data does not allow for this to be measured at this time. The delay will allow annual yearly growth to be determined so as to be fair to all schools.

The Anchorage School Board also supports delaying the effective date until 2004 to align it with the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam.

CC/law  
Attachment

Prepared by: Lawrence Wiget, Executive Director, Public Affairs  
Approved by: Carol Comeau, Superintendent