

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #228

April 14, 2003

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: BILINGUAL/BICULTURAL PLAN OF SERVICE APPLICATION  
MODIFICATION

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the Bilingual Education Program Modification Request to the Board and State approved 1999-2000 Plan of Service as presented in Attachment A of this document. It is further recommended that the Board authorize the Superintendent to submit the Bilingual Plan of Service Modification Request to Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

PERTINENT FACTS:

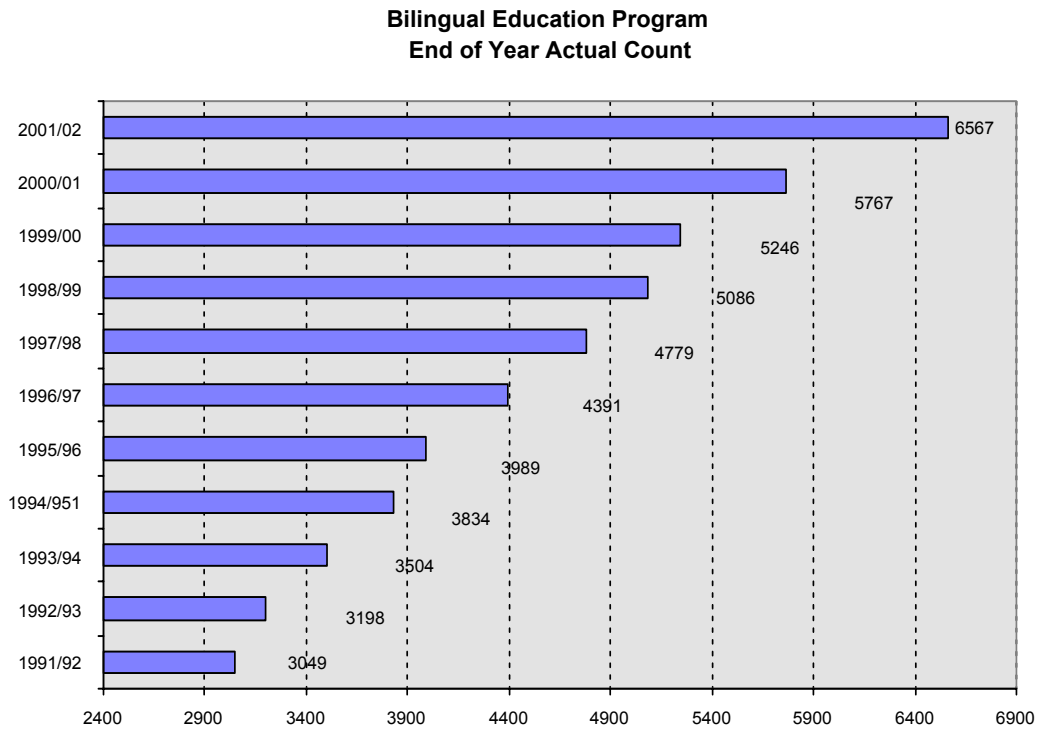
Alaska Education Regulations Chapter 34 (Attachment B) governs the provision of bilingual education in the state of Alaska. The purpose of the regulation is to provide direction and guidance to school districts to ensure compliance with AS 14.30.400 and AS 14.17.420 (b), and assist in compliance with federal requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs that receive federal financial assistance. This step has been interpreted in the public school context as requiring appropriate steps to ensure that equal opportunities are afforded to national-origin-minority (NOM) students who are limited in their English-language proficiency.

The student population of ASD is very ethnically diverse. The minority enrollment has continued to increase over a period of about 10 years. Simultaneously, the number of linguistically and culturally diverse students, many of whom are limited-English-proficient (LEP), continues to grow in ASD. An instructional program, using students' first language to varying degrees, has been designed and implemented in ASD since the fall of the 1977-78 school year. Beginning with a program serving 361 students, the bilingual program has grown to serve 12.5 times that number during the current school term (2002-2003). The most recent count (February 19, 2003) confirms 3,706 students in

grades K-6, and 2,210 in grades 7-12, for a total of 5,916 students who are currently being served. This represents approximately 12% of the total district enrollment of 49,551. Ninety-two (92) languages are spoken by these students; the five most common languages are Spanish, Filipino (Tagalog), Samoan, Hmong, and Korean (Appendix D of Attachment A). The fastest-growing language groups are Spanish, Hmong, and Lao.

There is an increasing number of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students in the Anchorage School District as shown in Chart 1. The number of students served has nearly doubled over the past decade.

Chart 1



Source: Bilingual Education Program Data

According to *Lau v. Nichols, 1975*, “There is no equity of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum, for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.” Under Office of Civil Rights (OCR) policy districts are obligated to ensure that LEP students are afforded an equal educational opportunity to meaningfully benefit from a district’s educational policy. Districts must provide LEP students with sufficient resources in practice and be monitored for effectiveness, with improvements made when necessary.

Alaska State Education Regulations adopted in 1998 call for a Plan of Service (4 AAC 34.055). The Plan of Service (POS) must contain the following:

- a statement of the educational goals and instructional methodology;
- a plan of identification of pupils who are LEP;
- a procedure for assessing the educational progress of LEP pupils;
- a program of services and instructional model for LEP pupils;
- an identification of instruction staff and educational resources;
- a program evaluation that addresses the effectiveness of the program in meeting students' English-language developmental needs, in achieving student academic progress goals, and reflecting any identified needs for program modification; and
- parent/community involvement.

The current POS meets the standards established by both federal, "*No Child Left Behind*," and state guidelines and is fully grounded in research that supports the following principles:

- second-language skills needed for cognitive and academic pursuits typically take five to seven years to acquire;
- second-language acquisition does not need to come at the expense of developing first language skills and vice versa;
- high quality educational assessments for all students, including LEP students, are needed; and
- improved staff development, for both new and current teachers and aides, to teach LEP students for higher achievement throughout the curricula is tantamount for student success.

All of these principles have been addressed and are implemented in the POS. The following issues are addressed:

- identification of students with a primary home language other than English;
- annual assessment of identified students' English language proficiency;
- selecting an educational theory and approach;
- educational goals and objectives for the targeted students;
- designing a program of services for LEP/ELL students;
- staffing and resources;
- exiting students and monitoring performance; and
- program evaluation, review, and improvement.

The committee that developed the current POS reviewed, in depth, issues regarding assessment of LEP students; aligning curricula with content standards; and developing performance standards. Programmatic choices were driven by the needs of the language-minority students and are the best overall for students.

Factors such as age, aptitude, motivation, cognitive style, personality, and learning strategies that account for differences in learner success were taken into consideration. A major factor affecting the program in ASD is the great number of languages (92) spoken by students. The selected program delivery model, English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL), is designed for students in grades K-12. Two exceptions to this model are in effect in the District. The program at Government Hill Elementary incorporates a two-way developmental model; and the program at William Tyson, "Success for All," utilizes an inclusion-tutorial model. Both programs emphasize a restructuring plan based upon the Title III (formerly Title VII when the grants were awarded) Comprehensive Grants of which they are recipients and integrate services delivered to students for Bilingual Education, Special Education, Indian Education, Migrant Education, and Title I services.

Teacher training and preparation in the subject area in which the teacher is assigned are among the most important characteristics of a qualified teacher. Currently, less than 2 percent of teachers Districtwide instructing LEP students actually have an academic degree in English-as-a-second-language (ESL) or bilingual education. Not only is this important for Bilingual Education Program staff to have, but it is becoming increasingly important for all ASD staff (administrators, principals, teachers, support) to participate in and receive. The vast majority of our teachers who have LEP students in their classes have not received any training in teaching LEP students. Staff and professional development activities focusing on second-language acquisition and using effective strategies with LEP/ELL students have been in place over the last three years. Learning Opportunity Grant funds have been utilized on the elementary level to provide training to approximately 1,500 classroom teachers and support staff. Federal grants, *Reshaping Education for All Learners (REAL) Project* and *Bilingual/ESL Teachers for Anchorage (BETA) Project*, have enabled the BMEP to provide training to middle school teachers and high school teachers.

Proposed modifications in the current POS address:

- implementation of the inclusion of LEP students in regular State and District mandated assessments with reasonable accommodations;
- the procedural and program modifications;
- expected outcomes, what they will accomplish, and how success will be measured.

CC/JC/MH

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