

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM #6 (2003-2004)

August 11, 2003

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: DISTRICT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROJECT
EVALUATION REPORT FOR THE 2002-2003 SCHOOL YEAR

PERTINENT FACTS:

During the 2002-2003 school year, the Training and Professional Development Department oversaw the Federally funded and State administered Recruitment and Retention Grant. Kay Bennett was the contract coordinator, for the grant, which had specific areas of permitted focus. The Anchorage School District focused their participation in the following areas:

New Teacher Fair - 174 new educators attended the New Teacher Training Fair in August (before the start of school).

Year-long coursework for new teachers - 35 new teachers signed up for Practices For Effective Teaching utilizing Harry Wong teaching videos, ASD materials and guest speakers.

Teacher Mentor Program - 142 new teachers participating in the ASD mentoring program were matched with 82 current and retired mentors.

Mentor Training - 80 new mentors of post-service (first year+) were trained through TPD in addition to the collaborative training sessions conducted with the UAA APTE pre-service mentor program.

Retention Incentives - Reimbursements for required three-credit course work for certification purposes (i.e., Alaska Native Studies and/or multicultural education classes) were processed for those new hires considered by the District and state to be "hard to fill."

Principal Mentor Program - The Principal Mentor Program matched 17 first-year and new-to-ASD principals with ASD mentor-trained principals at the beginning of the school year.

Evaluation processes and findings for the above focused areas are included in the attached report, which was submitted to the Department of Education and Early Development in late May 2002. It appears from those evaluations the most successful areas of focus were the New Teacher Fair, the Teacher Mentoring Program, Mentor Training and the Principal Mentoring Program.

Attachment

CC/JC/RB/KB/CS

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Robb Boyer, Director

Kay Bennett, R&R Contract Coordinator

District Recruitment and Retention Project Evaluation 2002-2003 School Year

1. Rural Practicum – ASD did not participate.

2. New Educator In-service

•*What were the objectives of the 3 days of new teacher in-service?*

174 new educators attended the New Teacher Training Fair in August.

Objective #1

The New Teacher Training Fair was developed to support new educators and to minimize the disruption to the classroom by providing curricular and mandatory training requirements before school starts.

Objective #2

Introduce Alaska and ASD standards and curriculum to orient the new teachers to the requirements of their grade level or content area.

Objective #3

Set a positive tone for the classroom, and a productive climate for the school year. Meet other new teachers and district staff. Identify Mentors and introduce district practices and procedures.

Training was centered on the curricular areas and the State and Federal mandatory training requirements. For K-6 grade teachers there were specific sessions for Literacy, Everyday Math, and K-6 Science,

Literacy training provided participants with an overview of the ASD reading and language arts content and performance standards. Literacy activities appropriate to each grade level were demonstrated. Other topics included assessment, classroom management, and scheduling.

Everyday Math training introduced the program philosophy, content and process of teaching. Teachers learned strategies for program management, such as how to use the various program components, and the importance of games for teaching and learning math.

The Earth Systems Science training participants experienced hands-on inquiry activities related to the classroom kits. A support network was introduced to new teachers that they could call upon during their career to help them with teaching the science curriculum.

(See attachment A)

Evaluation

Participants evaluated their experiences at each session of the New Teacher Training Fair by using a written evaluative tool. Training facilitators used the evaluation tool to assess for each participant the need for further training. If a new educator indicated a need for more training, follow-up was assigned to the appropriate coordinator or teacher expert. If the new educator indicated an interest in the Beginning Teacher Support Program, Kay Bennett provided the follow-up.

New teachers reported that having training prior to the beginning of the school year helped with not being pulled out as much during the first year of teaching. The ASD Superintendent has posed a moratorium on new teacher training pullouts during the month of September. The R&R contract no longer includes the funds for the supplemental inservices. This means that all curricular areas and mandatory training will be conducted throughout the school year by taking new teachers out of their classroom. New teachers and their administrators feel that this is a drain on the new educator and it is a drain on the substitute system. The ASD will try to look at alternatives but without funding for stipends, it is difficult to provide training outside of the AEA contract hours.

•Were there follow-up activities for on - going support to meet the objectives?

Ongoing professional development is essential to providing support and collegiality for new teachers. R&R funding provided several classes and training opportunities that were developed for first year teachers:

Classroom Management and Organizational Skills

Teaching a Combo or Multiage Class

First Use Science Kits

Everyday Math K-6

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Training and Professional Development sends each beginning educator the *New Teacher News*, a monthly newsletter with information regarding

upcoming curricular and technology training, mandatory training bulletins, and articles about the first year of teaching.

3. Year Long Course

A year long credit course was offered titled, *Practices for Effective Teaching* utilizing the Harry Wong teaching videos in addition to ASD materials and guest speakers. Each new teacher was given the book, "*The First Years of Teaching*", by Harry Wong. Instruction generally focused on following the life of a teacher and specifically covered the areas of classroom management, teaching for lesson mastery, and practicing positive expectations.

(See attachment B)

•*Did the new teachers participate?*

Thirty-five new teachers registered for the yearlong course. By the end of the year, only about 18 teachers had met the requirements to earn credit for the course. Participants cited being overwhelmed by their first year experience as the reason that they were unable to attend all the sessions and complete the journal necessary to pass the class.

The first year teachers, who were hired in August, before school started, that registered for the yearlong class. Those who were hired during the inservice week and later in the fall were so overwhelmed with their classroom teaching assignment that they were not able to carve out the time and energy to attend a class. Most of the new teachers reported that they were in their buildings until 5:00 to 7:00 every night of the week during the first semester. Taking on the commitment of a yearlong credit course was more than they could do.

•*Who delivered the course?*

The instructors were Betsy Cooper and Jeanne Fiske, retired elementary teachers who taught the K-6 class and Pat Madden, retired teacher and ASD part-time Mentor Liaison who taught the 7-12 class. The University of Alaska, Anchorage awarded the credit.

•*What evidence could show improvement of new teachers that were involved in this course?*

Those who attended filled out an evaluation of the course. They indicated that the content was useful for orienting them into the ASD and helping them see how the district operates. They found the most support in the sessions on managing the classroom and teaching multi-developmental groups.

4. Mentor Program

The Mentor Program utilizes current and retired ASD teachers as mentors for new educators. This program was developed as a non-evaluative mentoring relationship and is designed to provide new educators with support and the confidence to be effective. There were 142 matches and approximately 3500 hours of mentoring during the 02/03 school year.

•*How many mentors participated from your district?*

There were eighty-two mentors of first year educators. All mentors were from inside the ASD and included both retired and current educators.

•*How many mentors came from out of the district?* None

•*How were the mentors chosen?*

To be eligible to become a mentor ASD requires that an exemplary educator have at least 5 years of successful teaching experience, the last three in ASD. The mentor applicant must take the ASD approved Mentor Training course and commit to follow-up training sessions throughout the school year. After the initial 15 hour training, an application must be submitted. The application includes the recommendation of a principal and an ASD colleague. Beginning Teacher Support Program staff checks the recommendations to make sure the applicant is ready to mentor.

ASD partners with the Anchorage Education Association to finalize decisions regarding the training, recruitment of mentors, qualifications for mentors, and other areas of the program.

•*What was the ratio of teachers per mentor?*

There were 82 mentors who worked with 142 mentees. 1: 1.73
Current educators usually had one or two mentees and the retired mentor cadre often had as many as three or four mentees.

•*What evidence shows the impact of the mentor program?*

The **evaluation** process of the mentoring program took on a three pronged approach. Data was collected from TPD Mentor Liaison mentee face-to-face interviews, written mentor surveys, and from summative reports, which document the strategies and services, that were provided to the mentee by the mentor. This information is used to help us plan professional development opportunities for mentors.

Data was needed to assess how the *mentees* felt about the learning they gained with their mentor and the support they received from the program. This

was accomplished by face-to-face interviews with 115 mentees (81%). Generally, we wanted to know what went well, what did not work out, and any suggestions for improving the way services are provided.

Findings: Generally, for the secondary mentees, the mentor/mentee relationship stood as primary rather than whether the mentor was working in or out of the mentee's building.

For elementary, the relationship was more productive if the mentor was in the same building as the mentee. However, if a retired teacher was the mentor, it was the relationship itself that was most important.

Mentors completed a written survey to provide data on whether the program was meeting their needs and what suggestions they have for refining the program next year. Thirty-five mentors (43%) returned the survey.

Findings: Answers to the rated questions were very positive overall. Of the 35 returned surveys, 175 total questions were rated on a scale of 1-disagree to 5-agree. All 5's were circled except, 4's were circled twenty times, 3's were circled eight times, 2 was circled one time, and 1's were circled two times.

Mentors felt well trained. Those with concerns reported a need for more hands-on curricular training.

The resources that mentors found most helpful were the sub release time with their mentee. Many felt the Fall Mentor Meeting was very informative as well as the mentor training. Mentors reported that the on-going mentor discussion groups were very beneficial.

Discrepancies between their expectations of mentoring and the reality of the task included not realizing the personal and social issues of the new teachers. Having a mentee in a different location added difficulty to the time issue. Mentors were not always sure when to "push" and when to follow the lead of the mentee.

Mentors reported finding the collaborative log and notebook very useful. Observing an exemplary teacher together was also mentioned. Useful ideas they had are to "team-up" with another mentor, to put the mentor forms on-line, and to clarify the duties of the mentor and the mentee.

Time to meet, time to talk, time to work together; these are listed as challenges reported by the mentors. Using the forms consistently was also a challenge.

Mentors turned in a *summative log* for payment of hours spent with the mentee. The log provided the program with valuable data showing what topics and strategies the mentor and mentee used to help deepen the mentee learning.

The three areas that mentor's marked the most were problem solving with the mentee, using reflection with the mentee and providing the mentee with resources, respectively. This follows along with what the mentees said they expected – guidance, feedback and resources. The critical topic of self-care for

mentees was also widely reported as an area that needed mentors non-judgmental feedback.

Unit planning and lesson planning were important mentoring strategies. Mentors also reported connecting the mentor session and focus of the classroom work to the mentee's professional goals. Observing each other or observing a demo classroom and then having the time to debrief were not mentioned as often as we would like. Mentors report that sometimes it is very difficult to find the time when they can get together with their mentee to do the observation. Also, the new teachers do not always see the benefit of the observation when it means they have to leave their students and plan for a substitute teacher.

Other topics of discussion that came up were, how to work effectively with parents, assessment, organizational skills, classroom management, technology, open house, and how to prepare for the end of the year, (See attachment C)

•Describe the community involvement.

There are two groups that provide the program with an important perspective and valuable insights.

The AEA Education Excellence Joint Committee was created in 1997 to collaborate with the ASD on developing the mentoring training and program. Members include a NEA representative, the president of the Association and current teachers and other District employees.

The Oversight Committee members are all ASD employees who represent a specific constituency. There are representatives from the areas of Indian Education, Recruitment, AEA, Special Ed., Principals Association, and the Mentor Liaisons who provide direct

5. Mentor Training

•What was the duration in hours of mentor training?

The Mentor Skills training is a 15-hour training that all mentors take to fulfill the requirements of the program. Beyond this there are additional mentor training opportunities that are not required but strongly suggested. The Mentor Learning Conversation training met second semester and focused on the practice of the mentor. Mentors found these 2-hour sessions extremely valuable and want to continue them next year. We used the R&R funding to pay a stipend for the mentors to meet off contract time.

Each year a Fall Kick-off district-wide meeting is provided for all mentors. This meeting focuses on the goals and objectives of the program for the year. It is a time to share updates in the program and any changes in the funding, forms, procedures, etc. Mentors have cited this to be very beneficial and we plan to continue to provide this training in the years to come.

•What university credit did mentors receive?

Mentors were given the option of taking the training for one graded graduate level professional development credit. The University of Alaska Anchorage, PACE Program awarded the credit.

•What activities fostered effective leadership development?

A discussion regarding the roles of a mentor. This activity started with a handout of a representative drawing of a person. There were “writing spokes” coming off the person in all directions. Participants were asked to describe the types of services that could be provided by a mentor and which activities are not mentoring. Then the instructors passed out strips of paper with scenarios on them and the participants decided to which role the strip applies. This activity helped mentors understand that they provide many different types of support to their mentee and that finding resources in the building, district, and community will also be an important role for them when mentoring a new educator.

•What activity was tied to learning research based best practice?

The trainers modeled a mentoring session. One trainer was the person with a problem or issue and the other trainer provided the mentoring. There was no script, the session was impromptu. Participants listened and watched for clarifying stems, and other techniques used by the mentor. When it was concluded, the class debriefed the session. Then participants were given roleplays about a struggling first year teacher. In triads with a mentor, mentee and observer, they enacted their own roleplays at their tables and discussed with the large group what they learned.

•What changes are planned for next year?

About 80 new mentors were trained this year. With the budget cuts still uncertain and the number of new teachers not yet determined, we may have only one training next year. The curriculum is constantly tweaked to fit the participants and to reflect the needs of the program. The training team is pleased with the flow of the agenda and the current activities.

6. Mentor/Mentee

a. What was the rate of retention of mentee?

The retention rate for first year ASD teachers was 98%. ASD has a high retention rate in the first two years of a new educators career. By the 3rd to 5th year, ASD falls within the national attrition rate. ASD loses about 30% of the new-hires by the 5th year of employment.

b. Was there evidence of effectiveness of teaching?

See **Mentee** evaluation above. Student assessment data is not available and there is not a research base set up to determine if mentored teachers are more effective by looking at test scores. Anecdotal data shows that many new educators say they have quit the profession if they did not have a mentor.

7. Mentor Support

- ***Give an example of support by district for the program.***

ASD has provided funding for the mentor resource library. Videos and materials are available to the mentors to use in their work with the mentees. The ASD has supported the Beginning Teacher Support Program by promoting mentoring as an effective way for principals to help their new teachers with classroom practice.

Principals and a school based Induction Liaison will be participating in an induction effort starting next year to acclimate and orient new educators to the ASD. This positive step will help inform beginning educators about the various support programs in the ASD.

ASD hired 2.5 positions as Mentor Liaisons. The Mentor Liaisons networked with the schools to support mentors and beginning teachers as well as principals.

As was mentioned earlier, the Oversight Committee met each month to support the efforts of the project. It was made up of ASD administrators and teachers.

- ***Was there community support (outreach)?***

The University of Alaska, Anchorage, APTE program has collaborated with ASD in the training of mentors. Not only did UAA award the credit but Janet Steinhauser, Mentoring Coordinator for APTE attended weekly meetings with the TPD team to further efforts at providing a seamless mentoring program from pre-service to first year teaching.

As mentioned earlier, the Anchorage Education Association was supportive of the program. The Educational Excellence Joint Committee met with the Beginning Teacher Support Program staff to discuss training and budget issues. Their dedication to the mentoring efforts of the district go back to 1996 when the AEA and ASD negotiated a mentoring option for all AEA educators.

- ***Please list any changes you would like to see.***

Research shows that second year teachers and new to grade level teachers require the support of a mentor. The needs usually do not correspond with those of the survival needs of first year teaching. Second year teachers are

ready to learn more about the art and craft of teaching. Providing a mentor to a second year teacher would go a long way to build in the sense of community, ensure a highly qualified teacher and boost the retention rate over time.

ASD was disheartened by the elimination of the supplemental inservice funding for first year teachers. We understand that the budget was cut by 40% but why not let the districts decide the best use of the funding available within the context of the categories used during 02/03? Eliminating a whole section of the contract seems unfair to those districts who utilized the funding for quality programs.

8. Retention Incentives

What incentives were paid for with these grant funds?

Reimbursement for required three-credit course work for certification such as Alaska Native Studies and/or Multicultural Education classes. (hard-to-fill only)
Professional development incentives were offered to encourage new educators to participate in the New Teacher Training listed above under supplemental inservices.

Professional Development incentives for attendance at mandated curricular and state and federal inservice programs when a Saturday option was taken.

Mentor Program (Administrators)

The Principal Mentor Program matched first year and new to ASD principals, as defined by the ASD/APA negotiated agreement, with ASD mentor trained principals at the beginning of the school year. Plans were developed between the new principal and the mentor to assist the new principal in establishing learning goals and addressing the skills required by the State Performance Standards for Administrators. All communications between the mentor and the new principal were confidential and the program was separate from the evaluation of the new principal. There were nine matches spanning all three division levels (elementary, middle, and high school).

- ***How many mentors participated from your district?***

There were nine mentors for the first year principals. All mentors were current practicing principals from ASD. Each first year principal that requested a mentor receive one.

- ***How many mentors came from out of the district?*** None

- ***How were the mentors chosen?***

To be eligible to become a mentor, ASD experienced principals needed to complete the training and course work for mentors and complete the Mentor Program Application Packet. The Oversight committee, consisting of representative from ASD and APA, selected the mentors and matched them with the new principals.

What was the ratio of principals per mentor? 1:1

- ***What evidence shows the impact of the mentor program?***

There were approximately 104.5 hours of mentoring during the 02/03 school year.

A survey of the Principal Mentor/Mentee Program was conducted at the end of the current school year. The survey included both quantitative and qualitative statements and questions. 14 of the 17 participants responded for an 82% return. (One principal mentor died in a car accident early in March before the survey was administered.)

Quantitative Survey Statements:

The nine quantitative statements were rated from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree.

- 1. The principal mentorship program was valuable in socializing new principals/APs to the Anchorage School District.**
- 2. The principal mentorship program was valuable in orienting new principals/APs to the Anchorage School District.**
- 3. The principal mentorship program was a personal "resource" to me.**
- 4. The principal mentorship program was NOT a personal "load" to me.**
- 5. The principal mentorship matching of mentor and mentees was appropriately done and effective to my mentoring relationship.**
- 6. In my specific mentoring relationship, I was able to set and use a formal time for mentorship.**
- 7. The relationship in my mentoring match was strong.**
- 8. The Collaborative Log was valuable in helping structure the professional dialogue between the mentor/mentee.**

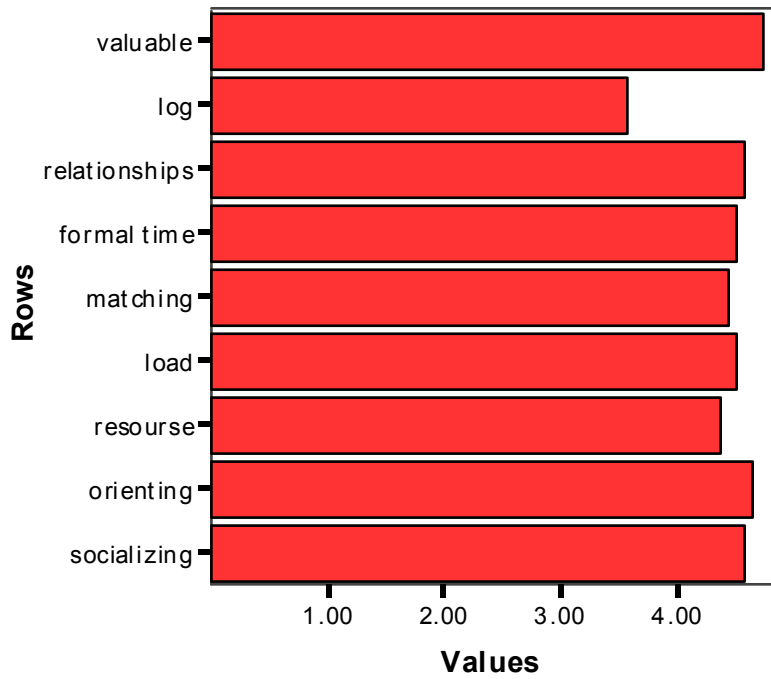
9. The mentorship was valuable to both parties and I would encourage others to involve themselves in the program.

Quantitative Results:

	Mean
socializing	4.57
orienting	4.64
resource	4.36
load	4.50
matching	4.43
formal time	4.50
relationships	4.57
log	3.57
valuable	4.71

Quantitative Results:

Columns : Mean



Qualitative Statements:

What did you find to be most valuable in your mentorship relationship?

Mentors:

- Time together and the notebooks.
- The fact that we both work in the same community was very helpful –we were dealing with the same issues.
- Informal guidelines set by Colleen. This helped us establish our best time and method.
- The mentoring relationship was most valuable and the time to be involved adds to professional growth.
- Being available and a resource for someone outside my building.
- Reviewing standards, reflecting on my own professional growth and professional discussions.

Mentees:

- Sharing information with one another-linking with another team.
- Establishing a positive relationship with my mentor as well as the other mentor and mentees.
- Great input from my mentor. It was good to get “insight” from other buildings.
- Being able to talk to a neutral party-having an experienced principal to talk to.
- Talking about daily routines.
- To have someone I could run my thinking by-no matter what-no politics.
- I learned so much from the experience my mentor had to offer.
- Dialog regarding current practices and procedures.

What can the APA/ASD Principal Mentor Program do to improve the process or program during 2003-2004?

Mentors:

- Keep refining the training-keep the program!
- Trying to match people better.
- Make it mandatory for every new mentee.
- Start earlier.
- No Suggestions
- It was difficult being on two different levels. Our paths didn't cross much during the year. Could share general knowledge but “players” at each level were not known. Hard to give feedback.

Mentees:

- Please continue,
- Forum in the middle of the program just for a round table.
- I think it is effective as is.

- ?
- It is fine-keep it up.
- Keep it going.
- Less paperwork?
- Artifact collection for 2nd year relationship wasn't as helpful or needed.

From an overall standpoint how do you feel about the outcome of your mentoring relationship?

Mentors:

- Got to know and develop a very valuable relationship with a budding administrator.
- Very helpful for both mentor and mentee. The relationships have continued after the initial mentoring year in the past and I'm sure this relationship from this year will also continue.
- Good ☺ it helped me reflect on my practice. (To teach is to learn twice)
- Excellent
- It was ok, made a new friend. Need more release time for group meeting as indicated on mentor/mentee form.
- This year was very positive.

Mentees:

- Excellent
- Very positive and was a good experience for all involved. Mentor was flexible to discuss things at times not designated for mentoring.
- Great positive experience. It needs to continue!
- Great!
- I have learned to talk over decisions.
- Excellent.
- Great.
- I value it and hope to continue the relationship with my mentor.

- ***Describe the community involvement***

In January of 2000, the Anchorage Principals Association (APA), ASD Central Administration, ASD Staff Development, and the University of Alaska Anchorage Educational Leadership Program entered into a partnership to develop and implement a principal mentoring program for first year and new to the district administrators. The official program began in August 2000.

Currently the Oversight Committee consists of representatives from each of these groups. They select the mentors and match them with new principals at the beginning of the school year. They also evaluate the overall program and make recommendations for improvements.

5. Mentor Training

Mentoring training consisted of a credit class offered by the Educational Leadership Department of UAA. We currently have a cadre of 24 trained principal mentors. The class was not offered this year but will be offered in the fall for interested principals.

6. Mentor/Mentee

The retention rate for first year principals was 100%. The evaluations from the mentees strongly stressed the importance of this program and recommended that it continue. (See previous qualitative statements.)

7. Mentor Support

- *Give an example of support by district for the program.*

Each of the mentors and mentees received a certification of recognition and a pin at a luncheon with their peers. There was a celebration dinner sponsored by the Anchorage Principal Association for the mentor/mentee teams in May. Each of the mentors received a stipend for their support and service to the mentees.

- *Was there community support (outreach)?*

The University of Alaska, Anchorage, APTE program has collaborated with the Principal Mentor/Mentee Program through the representation of Janet Steinhauser, Mentoring Coordinator for APTE, on the Oversight Committee. The president of the Anchorage Education Association is on the Oversight Committee.

- *Please list any changes you would like to see.*

We believe **everyone** deserves a mentor. We hope to increase participation from the middle and high school levels. We also plan to provide training for principals who have expressed an interest in taking the Mentor Training course.