

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #37 (2003-2004)

October 13, 2003

TO: SCHOOL BOARD
FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD GOALS 2003-2004

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. For comparison purposes, the Goals for 2002-2003 are shown on Attachment B.

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 indicate clearly the major purpose of the District: **"To educate all students for success in life."** This mission statement has provided focus for the students, staff, parents and the community, and has provided guidance in budget preparation. 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. The staff in the schools and departments has positively received this direction. This consistency has allowed teachers to maintain and improve their efforts in focusing on student achievement and increasing participation in District activities.

Each year, the School Board receives recommendations from the Administration for some modification to the goals, and the Administration is given the opportunity to communicate recommendations for change prior to adoption by

the Board. The Assessment Department provided input, as have representatives of the Instructional Division. The recommendations on Attachment A reflect that input.

The proposed goals for the 2003-2004 school year continue the major emphasis from the past four years on reading, language arts, 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. The administration also believes this focus will increase student achievement for all students on the state mandated norm referenced tests in grades 4, 5, 7, and 9.

We are focusing on growth and adequate yearly student progress in all student-designated groups as measures of successful attainment of our goals. The District's curriculum audit and the federal law, No Child Left Behind, both indicate a need to emphasize increasing student improvement for all designated student groups in the District.

Upon adoption, the goals will be shared with all schools and departments in the District as well as with our many external audiences. Adoption will allow the District to incorporate these goals into the budget development process and allow the schools to continue the academic focus developed in the School Report Card process.

All training and staff development is focused on the task of assisting schools to close the achievement gap and increase achievement for all students. Our employees are our most valuable resource in providing a strong educational program to our 49,663 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 all students for success in life.

The Administration has received the HSGQE and Benchmark data from the Department of Education and Early Development for the past four years and has analyzed it carefully on a Districtwide basis as well by the Instructional Division and on a school-by-school basis. Each school staff has reviewed their school results and has 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.

Each school identified as not meeting adequate yearly progress is required to develop a plan of improvement; specific and targeted interventions are then

applied. The staff is required to report on the results at the end of the school year. Achievement results for all schools are incorporated into the annual Profile of Performance.

Schools must continue 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. In our high schools, staff will continue to be more directive in registering 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. School staff will also encourage more high school students to take advanced placement classes and any requisite courses as needed.

The same focus applies 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 Board and the District recognize the critical role of the family 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. We must develop active networks with parents through their cultural and religious groups and through other non-traditional means.

The District is building 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 that are not inflation-proofed or adequate to support our instructional and non-instructional requirements, and an increasing student population that is more diverse and complex in composition. The School Board and the administration will continue to advocate for increased revenues to support our educational mission.

Outreach to the media and to community groups will also continue to be a focus. The Administration is reaching out in various ways 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 continuing their engagement in community events and with community groups to represent the District's and the community's needs and to make decisions which are balanced and responsive.

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. All are committed to closing the achievement gap for all students and to challenge all students to successfully meet their potential.

CC/JC/EM

Attachments

Prepared by: Ed McLain, Director of Assessment
Jan Christensen, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction

Approved by: Carol Comeau, Superintendent

Mission: To educate all students for success in life.

2003-2004 Ongoing Overall Goals

Increase student **academic achievement** using data-driven decision making in the adoption of curriculum, methods, materials, and professional development specifically designed to ensure adequate yearly progress of all students as designated by No Child Left Behind. Additionally, the number of students in the advanced proficient category in math, reading, and writing will increase yearly.

Establish and maintain a **supportive and effective learning environment** by

- providing safe, caring, barrier-free schools,
- promoting health, wellness, and preparedness,
- continuing to retain, recruit and train highly qualified staff,
- offering reinforcing extracurricular activities,
- collaborating with other community agencies to maximize opportunities for lifelong learning

Ensure **public accountability** through

- continued participation in the State and Federal required testing programs,
- continued preparation and publication of the Profile of Performance
- effective consultation with community to ensure wise use of financial resources and responsible construction and maintenance of facilities, and
- effective communication with students, staff, parents, community and government at all levels.

Measurable Achievement Goals

We, the Anchorage School Board, Superintendent and District staff commit that:

1. Students will demonstrate increased academic achievement as indicated by improved performance on State and District measures of academic performance.

Indicators: Each student group will decrease by ten percent the number of students who do not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) as measured by the State assessments in reading, writing, and math. The percentage of students in the advanced proficient group will increase by at least five percent over a two-year period.

Performance will be assessed on:

- a. Alaska Benchmark Exams (Grades 3, 6, 8)
- b. Terra Nova- CAT 6 (Grades 4, 5, 7, and 9)
- c. Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam

These various assessments will provide information on the status of student group performance at grade levels three through ten. Results will also be provided on students in grades eleven and twelve who have not yet passed the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam.

2. A higher percentage of students in each group will master basic skills and strategies to read independently by the end of the third grade.

Indicators:

- a. An increase of at least five percent over a two year period of students demonstrating proficiency or higher on the reading portion of the grade three Alaska Benchmark Reading Exam.
 - b. An increase of at least five percent over a two year period of students demonstrating proficiency or higher as measured by the District assessment of student reading.
3. There will be ten percent decrease in the percentage of students who are not proficient in math and language arts in those designated groups that have not made the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) at the end of each grade level in grades three through ten.

Performance will be assessed by:

The percentage of students in each designated group grades 3 through ten who demonstrate proficiency or higher in mathematics and language arts as indicated on Alaska Benchmark Tests, Terra Nova CAT 6 tests and the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam.

Results will also be provided on students in grades eleven and twelve who have not yet passed the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam in these areas

4. The percentage of students in accelerated math sequence will increase.

Indicators:

The percentage of students in each group who successfully complete each of the following courses in specified grade levels: Algebra I in grade eight Geometry in grade nine, and Algebra II in grade 10 will increase by five percent in a two year period.

Reporting directions:

- a. Grades earned in each class will also be reported.
- b. Student grades and credits earned by students in Algebra classes for each middle and high school will be reported by student grade level.

Process directions for math department and math teachers:

The District will continue to develop and implement training in math content and teaching strategies for elementary and middle school teachers.

5. The District will work with students, parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, and community representatives to increase expectations for elementary, middle and high school math achievement, particularly for those groups for which assessment data identifies average performance significantly below District average performance.
6. There will be at least a five percent decrease in the dropout rate of middle and high school students over a period of two years as compared to the 2002-2003 school year.
7. There will be at least a five percent increase in the number of students taking AP courses for the 2003-2004 school year as compared to the 2002-2003 school year.

Process Goals

We, the Anchorage School Board, Superintendent and District staff will focus time and effort to accomplish the following:

1. Complete and get School Board approval for the six-year instructional plan to address the recommendations in the curriculum audit, particularly reducing the achievement gap that exists throughout the District.
2. Continue the alignment of the K-12 math curriculum to State and District performance standards. This alignment is to be completed within the next two years.
3. Strengthen the effective delivery of instructional services to students using all financial resources available as measured by the Benchmarks, Terra Nova Cat 6, and the High School Qualifying Graduation Examination. (See measurable goals 1, 2, & 3)
4. Attempt to limit the impact of budget constraints on student achievement.

5. Develop a master schedule of programs, methods, and materials, for regular review, utilizing assessment data to be in alignment with the six-year instructional plan.
6. Increase parental and community awareness in understanding the critical role families and the community play in the academic success of students and facilitate their involvement in the active support of higher student achievement.
7. Continue to create and strengthen positive community relations and understanding of issues critical to the Anchorage School District by establishing coalitions and advisory committees with parents, business leaders and political leaders at all levels as measured by an annual survey.
8. Continue to refine our emergency preparedness in order to:
 - a. keep our schools and facilities safe as measured by
 1. a decrease in the percent of students who indicate in the annual survey that they do not feel safe,
 2. a decrease in the number of violent incidences, suspensions related to violence reported by sites and by District;
 - b. ensure barrier free access as measured by
 1. a survey of building barriers by the office of risk management
 2. a record of complaints related to access difficulties by students, staff or public;