



# 2003 Legislative Priorities

## SUMMARY

## Anchorage School District

## First Session 23rd Alaska State Legislature

## GOVERNANCE

### **Liability for Destruction of Property by Minors**

The Anchorage School Board supports increased liability for destruction of property by minors. The Anchorage School Board urges the Alaska Legislature to allow a school district to recover the full amount of damages to school property from either parent, both parents, or the legal guardian of an unemancipated minor who, as a result of a knowing or intentional act, destroys real or personal property belonging to the school district. Current law, AS 34.50.020, limits such recovery to \$10,000.

### **Revise Parental Permission Requirements for Questionnaires and Surveys Administered in Public Schools**

The Anchorage School Board urges the Alaska Legislature to modify the requirements for parental or legal guardian permission for a student to participate in a questionnaire or survey administered in a public school by enabling local school districts in the State of Alaska to administer anonymous questionnaires and surveys to students with passive parental consent.

### **Compulsory Attendance Law**

Current state law requires compulsory school attendance from age seven to 16. The Anchorage School Board urges the Alaska Legislature to change the mandatory age for school attendance to age six to 17.

### **Early Entry Students**

The Anchorage School Board urges the Alaska Legislature to amend Alaska Statute 14.03.080 to afford the governing body of a school district the discretion to delegate to the superintendent or his/her designee the authority to approve early entry of a student on an individual basis. Approval for early entry will be based on minimum standards prescribed by the Board for identifying whether the child has the mental, physical, and emotional capacity to perform satisfactorily in the educational program being offered.

## FUNDING

### **Stable, Reliable and Sufficient Funding**

The Anchorage School Board supports sustainable, reliable and adequate funding for public education. To achieve this goal, the Board supports:

1. Development of a Long Range Fiscal Plan
2. Implementing the Recommendations of the Education A+ Study
3. Inflation-proofing the Education Funding Formula
4. Placing the Learning Opportunity Grants (LOGs) within the Education Funding Formula
5. Full Funding of Debt Reimbursement
6. Increasing Funding for Special Needs Students
7. Implementing the Cost Factor Study

## PERSONNEL

### **Assault of School Employees**

The Anchorage School Board urges the Alaska Legislature to revise Alaska criminal code or sentencing guidelines so that an individual convicted as an adult of assault on a school employee during or because of the performance of official duties will receive a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment similar to that imposed upon an individual who assaults a uniformed or otherwise clearly identified peace officer, fire fighter, correctional employee, emergency medical technician, paramedic, ambulance attendance or other emergency responder engaged in the performance of official duties at the time of the offense.

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**Anchorage School District**

*Educating Students for Success in Life*

## PERSONNEL

### Staff Recruitment and Retention

The Anchorage School District urges the Alaska Legislature to develop strategies to attract and retain education professionals.

## CURRICULUM

### Alaska Studies

The Anchorage School Board urges the Alaska Legislature to make an Alaska Studies course a high school graduation requirement statewide. The Board further urges the Legislature to fund the development of the course and the instructional support needed to put an Alaska Studies curriculum in place and to prepare teachers to maximize the effect of the curriculum.

## FEDERAL ISSUES OF NOTE

### No Child Left Behind

Signed into law by President Bush on January 8, 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is the most significant change in federal regulation of public education over the past 30 years. It affects public schools in four basic areas: testing and accountability, employment and hiring practices, choices for parents, and miscellaneous policy requirements. As a result, NCLB has significant fiscal implications for Alaskan schools and for Alaska's Department of Education and Early Development.

At the same time, however, Congress proposes funding far below the levels promised in the NCLB legislation. The Anchorage School Board requests the Alaska Legislature to urge Congress to meet its fiscal obligations to this federal mandate and to work with DEED and our schools during the Legislative session to ensure that education funding for FY 2003 – FY 2004 adequately addresses the requirements mandated in NCLB.

### IDEA Legislation

The Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is scheduled for reauthorization within the next year. There are two issues within the Act that impact all school districts in Alaska and which the Alaska Legislature may wish to support through resolution:

#### Full Funding of IDEA

When IDEA became law in 1975, the federal government promised to fund 40 percent of the cost of educating children with disabilities. Yet, Congress has never paid more than 15 percent of the cost, or about one-third of its obligation. School districts and local taxpayers make up the difference.

The Anchorage School Board believes this is an under-funded mandate and that Congress needs to live up to its original commitment to fund special education.

#### Revise Current IDEA Student Discipline Policy

While recognizing the need to protect the rights of students with disabilities, the Anchorage School Board supports revising IDEA to eliminate mandatory discipline rules for students with disabilities that are different from those for non-disabled students.

Currently, all students with disabilities who are suspended or expelled, even for violent acts unrelated to their disability, retain the right to a free and appropriate education in an alternative setting. Non-disabled students do not have this right. The Anchorage School Board objects to this federal mandate as to local discipline policy.