

Revise parental permission requirements for questionnaires and surveys administered in public schools and allow for parent/student "opt-out"

The Anchorage School Board supports changing the requirement that parents must "opt-in" for students to participate in surveys and questionnaires administered in public schools, to a parent/student "opt-out" option, with appropriate protections for notification, review and easy non-punitive way to decline to participate.

Rationale: Valid data is needed to be eligible and competitive for state and federal grants, effectively target programs to increase student achievement and to accurately assess the need for and success of current efforts to help students.

As a result of the passage in 1999 of HB 70 and its "opt-in" requirement schools have frequently

been unable to obtain adequate survey response authorization forms back from parents, preventing the schools from collecting data from a required and statistically valid sample size.

During the 2009 legislative session bills were introduced in both the House and Senate, supported by educators and health professionals, that would modify current restrictions and allow greater general information gathering using "Opt-Out" procedures. Protections in these bills include prior notification to parents about the surveys and non-punitive allowances for both parents and/or students to easily "opt-out" of these anonymous student surveys.

Maintain and/or Expand Municipal Revenue Sharing and Assistance

The Anchorage School Board supports maintenance and/or expansion of Municipal Revenue Sharing.

Rationale: The Anchorage School Board recognizes that municipal support is a critical component in the direct funding mix for K-12 education. What must not be overlooked are the indirect community services that are so necessary to stu-

dent health, safety and wellbeing and without which learning is next to impossible. When state support for municipalities drops K-12 education is also at risk in both direct and indirect ways.

It is requested that the Legislature and Administration maintain this critical funding stream for the economic health of local governments and K-12 education

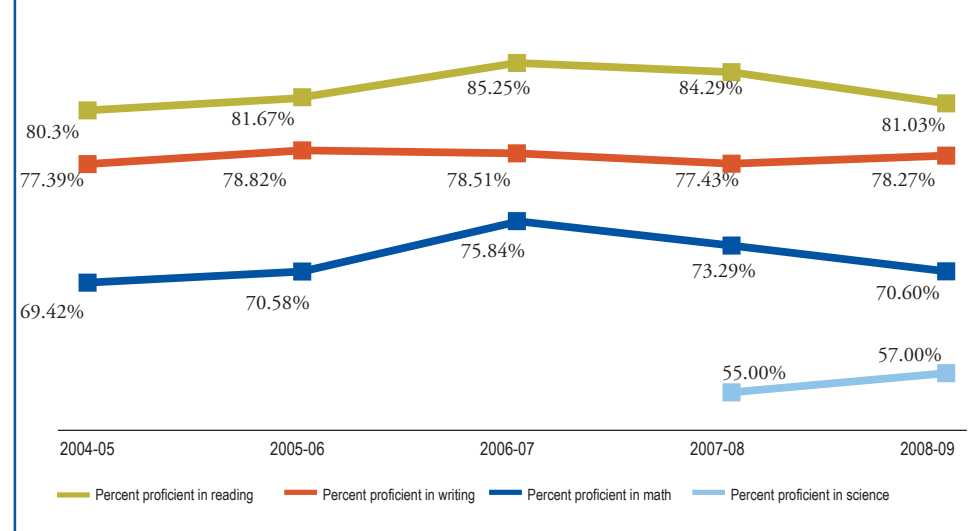
ASD snapshot

Average attendance rate: 92.8%

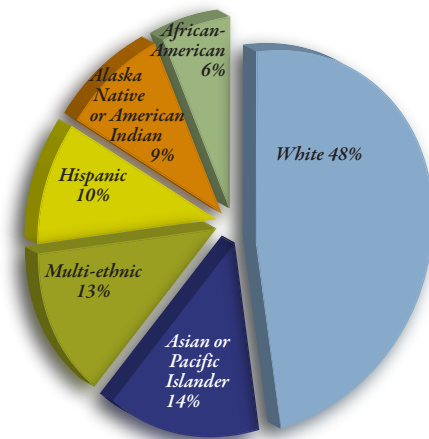
Percent of students from low-income families: 33

Percent of students receiving special education services: 14

Standards Based Assessments



Race/ethnicity



2010



Anchorage School District
Legislative Program

Anchorage School Board

John Steiner, President: 907-696-2629
steiner_john@asdk12.org

Tim Steele, Chair,
Legislative Subcommittee:
907-277-7663
steele_tim@asdk12.org

Jeff Friedman: 907-742-4699
friedman_jeff@asdk12.org

Pat Higgins: 907-742-5338
higgins_pat@asdk12.org

Crystal Kennedy: 907-696-2624
kennedy_crystal@asdk12.org

Jeannie Mackie: 907-350-6491
mackie_jeannie@asdk12.org

Kathleen Plunkett: 907-337-7377
plunkett_kathleen@asdk12.org

District contacts

Carol Comeau, Superintendent
907-742-4312 Fax: 907-742-4318
comeau_carol@asdk12.org

Heather Sawyer,
Executive Director, Communications
907-742-4150 Fax: 907-742-4175
sawyer_heather@asdk12.org



Anchorage School District
Educating All Students for Success in Life

The Anchorage School District depends on the legislature to help us achieve our mission to educate all students for success in life, including increasing student achievement and graduation rates and decreasing dropout rates. Legislators in the second session of the 26th Alaska Legislature have the opportunity to continue the historic steps taken for education by the 25th and the first session of the 26th Legislature. Those steps included directly funding a portion of the PERS/TRS shortfall and reducing the employer share of employee retirement contributions, putting into statute increased contributions to the base student allocation, providing the opportunity for true forward funding of education, and establishing standing committees for education in both the senate and the house. Subsequently, the Department of Education and Early Development began the process of collaborative planning for the future of education in our state through its work groups and action plans. The Anchorage School District is excited to move forward in collaboration with DEED, the standing committees and the entire legislature as we work to realize our goals for our students and communities.

We are very appreciative of the support from our elected officials at all levels.

Stay current with ASD Direct – Receive the latest news by subscribing to any of our direct e-mail notification lists. **Register at www.asdk12.org/newsletters** for:

- General announcements and news releases
- School Board announcements
- Schedules, issues relating to student success

Find us on Facebook: facebook.com/AnchorageSchoolDistrict
Follow us on Twitter: twitter.com/ASD_Info and twitter.com/ASD_closures
ASD Education Center, 5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd., Anchorage, AK 99504
(907) 742-4000 / www.asdk12.org

Forward Funding of K-12 Education

Last year with the Legislative Task Force agreement in place and funds set aside for K-12 education the Legislature had a unique opportunity to institute “real” forward funding. It is imperative that the Legislature and Administration find a way to consistently fund K-12 education a full year in advance.

Rationale: The Anchorage School District must submit a balanced budget to our Assembly by the end of March and our fiscal year begins the first of July. Not establishing State educational funding levels until the end of the legislative session and approval by the Governor, sometimes as late as June, makes valid budgeting by ASD extremely difficult.

On average, ASD needs to recruit and hire about 300 teachers each year and because Alaska teacher training programs don't produce enough new teachers to fill our annual needs, ASD must recruit outside. Forward funding allows us to

make early offers, attract quality candidates, and sign employees into hard-to-fill positions before the start of the school year. It also allows new teachers to obtain State certifications and make the move to Alaska in a timely manner. The ability to early select and hire, also allows us to attract more diverse candidates who are in high demand nationally.

We now have forward funding experience and know that advance funding makes it possible to reduce invalid revenue assumptions and provide more accurate initial budgets. Forward funding is also vital to enable all districts to make the multi-year changes required to improve student achievement, increase the graduation rate, and meet the changing needs of today's students. At a time of instability in our local, national, and global economies predictability in education funding is even more critical to making thoughtful and timely investments for the future of Alaska's students.

Increase Successful Career and Technical Education

The Anchorage School Board supports a comprehensive approach to increasing successful career and technical education. There is a need for a statewide focus on delivering enhanced, collaborative, and comprehensive Career and Technical Education (C&TE) in our schools. A comprehensive approach should include:

- **Funding for C&TE.** K-12 C&TE is currently funded in the funding formula as one of the components of the 20% block grant. This grant is expected to pay for vocational training, special education, bilingual and bicultural education, and gifted and talented programs. Most districts consume their entire block grant to fund special education and bilingual education. As long as it remains funded through this block grant, C&TE will always be shortchanged as it is competing with federally mandated programs that must be funded first. To be effective C&TE needs to be adequately, directly and comprehensively funded outside the 20% block grant.
- **Funding for development and implementation of student career planning.** Educators, employers and government are in agreement that schools must prepare students to transition to the next step along a career pathway after graduation whether through further education, on-the-job training, or other formal steps. All Alaskan middle-school aged students should enter high school with a flexible career pathway plan and have the opportunity in high school to complete the next steps of that plan.

The Anchorage School Board requests that the Legislature adequately fund and the Governor authorize the Department of Education and Early Development to immediately implement comprehensive, yet flexible, Career and Technical education for each student, beginning in 8th grade.

- **Alternative certification for C&TE teachers.** Highly Qualified certification for C&TE course teachers must be addressed. C&TE courses can provide extensive content in math, science and language arts, but currently it is difficult for students to receive credit for that content because it is difficult for C&TE teachers to obtain “Highly Qualified” status. The Legislature should encourage and support efforts by the Department of Education and Early Development to develop pathways for these teachers to become certified and considered “Highly Qualified”.
- **Scholarships for post-secondary education.** The Anchorage School Board generally supports the Governor's proposal to create a scholarship fund for Alaska students to attend Alaska colleges and other approved post-secondary training programs. ASD looks forward to participating in the discussion as the details of that program are developed.

Extend School Construction Debt Reimbursement Program

The Anchorage School Board calls upon the Legislature and the Administration to (1) fully fund all past commitments for bonded indebtedness reimbursement and (2) to meet current and future school construction needs in communities with bonding ability by extending AS 14.11.100 to, at least, the end of November 2012.

Rationale: The Alaska State Constitution clearly identifies State responsibility to establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children. The State Construction Debt Reimbursement Program allows communities that are able to bond to assist the State in this obligation, with the State doing its part by sharing in bonded debt repayment.

Reinstate the Retire-Rehire Program

The Anchorage School Board urges the Legislature and Administration to reinstate this very useful program that allows districts, in very limited situations, to fill critical positions that cannot be filled otherwise despite efforts to recruit new employees.

Rationale: This program has allowed districts to re-hire retired experts, in very limited numbers, for one year, and has allowed ASD to use local help in fields that we have tried to recruit for, but for which we have been unable to find qualified candidates. Without this program, our option

is to use consultants, if available, and pay much higher fees than required with rehired local experts. The only other choice is to hire less-than-fully-qualified employees and use our qualified experts as supervisors. Neither of these measures serve students as well as having qualified staff.

Anchorage has used the retire-rehire program sparingly, in the manner in which it was intended and only as a last resort. It is a good program that has served the district and our students well. Please reinstate this valuable tool.

Continued Support for Early Learning Programs

The Anchorage School Board recommends that the Legislature and Administration continue to support voluntary early learning and family support programs for pre-school age children as an important long-range investment in Alaska's future workforce and citizenry.

Rationale: All children should have opportunities to learn during their formative early childhood

years. National research shows the need and value of these programs. The Anchorage School Board believes State support for this pilot program is important and needs to be continued. It is important that we give these programs enough time to collect and evaluate statistically significant local data to validate the national conclusions already available.

Change Attendance Age Requirements

The Anchorage School Board supports changing the mandatory age for school attendance to run from age 6 to the earlier of 18 years old or high school graduation.

Rationale: Federal law and State and local performance standards set high expectations in mathematics, reading and writing. Brain development research and local experience indicates that early learning is crucial for later school success. With strong emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics skills children starting school late are at a significant disadvantage. With the enactment of No Child Left Behind legislation and state designators, districts are being held accountable for the costs of greater remediation to overcome the disadvantages of starting school late.

Most sixteen-year-olds do not understand the potential negative ramifications of the decision to

give up a high school education. While State law currently permits dropping out at 16, districts are being held to account for students who exercise that choice.

Increasing the mandatory attendance age to 18 or graduation is not only consistent with No Child Left Behind, the demands of global competition, increasing employer entry-level requirements and higher education expectations, but also supports parents who sometimes need extra assistance to convince their children that they need to stay in school.