

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM

November 26, 2003

TO: SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS
FROM: JERRY SJOLANDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SPECIAL EDUCATION
SUBJECT: STUDENT ABSENCES

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidelines for determining the impact of student absences on decisions about the screening for, referral for and eligibility determination for special education services.

The basic message of this memorandum is to indicate that students should not be referred for an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services, specifically learning disability services, if they have missed 25% or more of the available instructional days.

The secondary message of this memorandum is to provide guidelines to Student Assistance Teams regarding options for intervening with students who have missed more than 25% of the available instructional days during a school marking period.

- > For students whose absences are related to a medical condition, the SAT needs to determine whether the student may be eligible for a 504 plan
- > For students whose absences are unexcused, the team needs to review the School Board policy on truancy, located in full at: <http://www.asdk12.org/School Board/policy/400policy.asp#443>. In short, teams should ensure that they have complied with the following:
 - Truancy is defined as a violation of the Compulsory Education Law of the State of Alaska ([AS 14.30.010-020](#)) by the unexcused absence of a student for a class or classes (middle level/secondary level), or at least a half day (elementary level). Truancies shall be cumulative throughout the semester.
 - Staff needs to follow the school plan for improving school attendance for the student experiencing difficulties with attendance. If the student and/or parent/guardian is not willing to cooperate, or attendance does not improve to a satisfactory level, then the District will consider referring the student and/or parent/guardian to the Anchorage Police Department/Alaska State Troopers as a habitually truant student in violation of the Anchorage Municipal Code ([AMC 8.05.445](#)).