

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM

JANUARY 16, 2009

TO: CAROL COMEAU, SUPERINTENDENT  
RHONDA GARDNER, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, INSTRUCTION  
MIKE HENRY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION  
ED GRAFF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ELEMENTARY EDUCATION  
LESLIE VANDERGAW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MIDDLE SCHOOL ED  
REGINA ROLLINS, DIRECTOR, E.C.E. SPECIAL EDUCATION  
CINDY ANDERSON, DIRECTOR SECONDARY SPECIAL EDUCATION  
DIANE POAGE, DIRECTOR, RELATED SERVICES  
OPTIONAL SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

FROM: JERRY SJOLANDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SPECIAL EDUCATION

SUBJECT: Special Education Services Provided During Intensives at ASD Optional Programs

This memo is written to clarify the district's obligation to provide special education services during "intensive" instructional periods at Optional programs.

It is well known that the Anchorage School District includes "optional" programs of instruction. Special education students who attend "optional" programs are placed there by parental choice. Prior to enrollment, parents are provided with substantial descriptive information describing the optional program's program of instruction as well as the role of unique program components such as community outreach programs and intensive programs. Intensives are an opportunity for students to select from areas of interest and participate in educational activities about the selected topic. During designated times of the school year, regular classes are suspended, and students attend selected intensives during their school day. Access to the intensive programs is equivalent to accessing the general curriculum, a fundamental goal in the provision of special education services to eligible students.

Page 9 of a special education eligible student's IEP identifies the amount of special education and related services to be provided to the student on a weekly basis. During any school week, the student's special education services are planned and provided to comply with Page 9. Day-to-day circumstances affect the student's availability for the provision and receipt of special education services. Such circumstances may include a student's absence from school, student participation in unique activities such as community outreach programs and intensive programs.

During these activities, special education staff and related services providers will endeavor to provide scheduled special education services, however, student participation in specialized activities is paramount as well. For example, a student scheduled to receive speech services should not be required to forego participation in a class field trip to insure receipt of speech services. Attempts to reschedule the student's speech services should be made so that the student might receive the services at an alternative time within the same week.

Week long activities such as intensives are, given their length of the program, more problematic for special education and related services staff. With these activities, the very nature of the length of the program interferes with the provision of weekly special education and related services. Thus services cannot be rescheduled to occur within the same week and there is insufficient time in the week prior and the week following to provide "make-up" services. During "intensive" periods, special education staff and related services staff will provide special education services as to the greatest extent practicable. The following are examples of practical options:

1. Inclusion of special education staff, especially 1:1 staff, during intensive activities
2. Consultation with related services personnel regarding modifications and/or accommodations needed during the intensives
3. Consultation with special educators regarding modifications and/or accommodations required during the intensives
4. Preparatory inquiry into the content of intensives for purposes of preteaching or preparation of accommodations and modifications

Teams who are planning for a special education student to attend an intensive can consult with division teacher consultants with specific questions and should discuss the inclusion in intensives as part of the drafting of the student's IEP.