


ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM

September 8, 2006

TO: Carol Comeau, Superintendent
Rhonda Gardner, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
Mike Henry, Executive Director, High School Education
Patricia McRae, Executive Director, Elementary Education
Leslie Vandergaw, Executive Director, Middle School Education
Dana Dugdale, Director, E.C.E. Special Education
Cindy Anderson, Director Secondary Special Education
School Principals

FROM: Jerry Sjolander, Executive Director, Special Education


SUBJECT: Administrative Determination of Location

Placement and Location are Two Different Concepts.

A placement described on Page 9 of the IEP (i.e. regular classroom, resource support, self-contained classroom support, etc.) does not include an identification of a location. In other words, an IEP for a student may indicate that the student will need a majority of his or her instruction to be provided in a self-contained classroom.

The Rationale for this Guidance

Under federal and state law, special education teams are responsible for developing IEPs that will provide a free appropriate public education to students eligible for special education services. There are a few specific concepts that all special education teams should understand:

1. To provide FAPE, the IEP must address all of the child's identified special education and related services needs.
2. The needed services and placement must be based on the child's unique needs and not on the child's disability.

3. IDEA 04 states that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are to be educated with children who are not disabled. This concept is known as the least restrictive environment (LRE).
4. The IEP must contain an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate in the general education classroom and curriculum, and extracurricular, or other nonacademic activities. This information is generally found on Page 9 of the IEP and is thought of as the "continuum of placement options" available to students within our district.

It is important for special education teams to understand that, many but not all of the special education continuum can be provided at neighborhood school settings. However, some placements, such as self-contained classrooms, are not available in every school setting.

Special Education Administrators Determine Location

Administrators for the ECE or Secondary Division will determine the location for the student's placement when a student's IEP requires placement in self-contained settings, such as Life Skills classrooms, Extended Resources Settings or IN classrooms. Determination of a student's location will depend on the:

- 1) number of students already assigned to self-contained settings;
- 2) transportation distance and time (i.e. will the student need to go through the bus shuttle system or be on a bus for a prolonged period of time; and
- 3) diversity of all student needs in self-contained settings (the majority of these settings are multi-age classrooms, so special education division administrators will review the age/grade of students already assigned to various close settings to determine if the student will have commonality of instructional needs with other children already assigned to the location.