



Anchorage School District Style Guide

A guide to communications style in the ASD



Revised July 2010

Why have style?



Style: A customary manner of presenting printed material, including usage, punctuation, spelling, typography and arrangement.

The importance of consistency

Parents learn early on that consistency is important. Kids have to know parents mean what they say, and that although there is room for negotiation, limits and boundaries are important. The same is true in the use of language. If people make up rules as they go along, their ability to communicate loses credibility.

Style guidelines are like road signs. Drivers understand the red hexagon says “STOP” before they actually read the word. The use of capital letters accentuates the command for them to put on the brakes.

Drivers also know that street signs provide clues for what lies ahead. Style helps people in a big, diverse group like the Anchorage School District navigate through the myriad messages of school newsletters, principal letters, administration memos and news releases by using our own set of “signs.”

Having the periods in the right place and quotation marks where they belong, capitalizing when appropriate, using abbreviations correctly and recording time, date and location in the same way makes documents easier for readers.

Style is not about censorship; far from it. It’s about making information more clear, giving some articulation to communication materials, letting personal messages sing through without grammatical, typographical and other writing errors to break the rhythm.

Using the recommendations in this guide will allow parents, students, coworkers and administrators, the primary readers of ASD publications, to see that we respect what we do – that we have style.

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Purpose of the ASD Style Guide



This desktop reference is designed to increase the effectiveness of district communication through the consistent use of the ASD name and logos in all media. This reference pertains to all printed and written materials, including, but not limited to:

- Board memos
- Booklets
- Brochures
- Exhibits/displays
- Business cards
- Fliers
- Letterhead
- Media materials
- Newsletters
- Posters
- Presentations

These guidelines follow AP Style, which sometimes differs from English Style. AP Style was chosen primarily because it can most easily make the transition from the printed page to e-mail newsletters to a Web page. AP Style is continually updated as language and usage evolve; this guide will be periodically updated to reflect these changes. The latest version of the guide will be posted in the Communications folder on The District Connection.

No doubt there will be situations for which clear-cut answers may not be found in this book. Please use the contact list in the back to get in touch with personnel in the Communications Department with questions concerning printed and written media guidelines.

ASD's identity



An organization's brand is its identity. A brand is more than just a logo and a mission statement; it includes the organizational beliefs, practices and experiences that determine how that organization is perceived by the public.

In 2004, an ASD committee of principals, teachers, department supervisors and support staff from all levels came together to develop five pillars, or vision statements that form the foundation of our daily activities.

ASD communication materials should deliver our message with these attributes:

- 1) *Vision*: ASD has set goals to achieve and creates strategies to accomplish those goals.
- 2) *Accessible*: As a public school district our doors are always open. What we do is transparent to the public. The community is welcome to contact us in person, by phone, fax, e-mail or regular mail.
- 3) *Committed and accountable*: We are dedicated to our students' academic success. We welcome accountability measures and encourage public oversight of our actions.
- 4) *Quality education*: ASD is committed to providing the best educational program available to our students, providing them with the instruction and support each of them needs to achieve his or her full potential.
- 5) *Engaged*: Our employees are not only dedicated to our students, but to our community. We care. We are involved. We have a personal stake in making our neighborhoods and our community better.

ASD's personality:

The diversity of our staff and students brings flavor to our personality. We are nurturing, accountable and credible. We have a mission: *Educating all students for success in life.*

Logo guidelines



Anchorage School District
Educating All Students for Success in Life

The ASD logo is an important part of our brand. Wherever it is used, the perception is the district has sanctioned that document, article of clothing or vehicle. It's also a way of marking our documents as official, professional and accountable.

The ASD logo features an adult and child reading together with mountains as their backdrop and the North Star shining above. Below them are the words “Anchorage School District” and the tagline “Educating All Students for Success in Life.”

This logo should appear on any printed materials meant for external distribution, unless those materials are exclusive to a particular school. ASD employees can download the logo from the Communications page on the District Connection.

Please follow these guidelines for using the logo:

Guideline

- The logo should not be smaller than .75 inches.
- The logo is printed in Pantone Reflex Blue or black only. Do not use any color other than blue or black. See page 7 for more information on the ASD color palette.
- To avoid pixelation and blurriness, use the file format appropriate for your publication. If it is not available please contact Communications.
- Do not “stretch” the logo outside of its proper proportions. Hold down the SHIFT key while resizing to make sure the logo does not get too wide or narrow.
- Allow at least 1/6 of the length of the logo around the entire logo to set it apart from other information.

Incorrect logo usage



Anchorage School District
Educating All Students for Success in Life



Anchorage School District
Educating All Students for Success in Life



Anchorage School District
Educating All Students for Success in Life



Anchorage School District
Educating All Students for Success in Life

Color guidelines



The main color for ASD is Pantone Reflex Blue. ASD also has a secondary palette that includes bright and earthy colors that can be used to enrich our brand.

Remember, a little bit of color goes a long way and the use of color adds to the expense of any document.

Usually, adding one color will do the trick for a document. Never underestimate the power of black. Black has declarative power and is most familiar to readers.

Here is the ASD palette:



Pantone Reflex Blue

C 100 M 73 Y0 K2
R 57 G71 B146



Pantone 543

C41 M11 Y0 K0
R175 G197 B230



Pantone 152

C0 Y51 M100 K1
R215 G151 B34



Pantone 605

C0 M2 Y100 K7
R232 G227 B18



Pantone 180

C0 M79 Y100 K11
R184 G83 B36



Pantone 618

C0 M3 Y87 K30
R186 G180 B55



Pantone 577

C24 M0 Y46 K10
R192 G207 B153



Pantone Cool Gray 9

C0 M1 Y0 K51
R145 G144 B144

Font and typography guidelines



Some logos are simply the name of the company in a font that becomes incredibly recognizable like the Carrs logo. Font choice is important and how fonts are used is just as important. Please consider the following guidelines for typefaces and font styles:

- Two primary font families are suggested: Adobe Garamond (used in this stylebook) and Arial Narrow. If these fonts are not available, consider Times New Roman and Helvetica Narrow.

Adobe Garamond Regular

Adobe Garamond Italic

Adobe Garamond Bold

Adobe Garamond Bold Italic

Arial Narrow

Arial Narrow Italic

Arial Narrow Bold

Arial Narrow Bold Italic

Alternatives:

Times New Roman

Times New Roman Italic

Times New Roman Bold

Times New Roman Bold Italic

Helvetica Narrow

Helvetica Narrow Oblique

Helvetica Bold Narrow

Helvetica Bold Narrow Oblique

- Board memos exclusively use Palatino font and justified margins.
- Consider using serif type for body copy. Serifs are the flags on the ends of letters like in **Adobe Garamond**. Sans-serif type like **Arial** is great for headlines, but is harder for most people to read. The Anchorage Daily News uses serif type for news stories and sans serif type for headlines.
- **WHEN PEOPLE WRITE IN ALL CAPS IT'S LIKE THEY ARE SCREAMING!** Use capital letters sparingly. On the Internet, some people get banned from comment forums or bulletin boards for using all caps.
- Use italics sparingly. Large blocks of italicized text are hard to read. Also, using italics is like whispering, like an aside to a friend. (*“Please continue reading the stylebook, I just wanted to say I already have plenty of style.”*)
- **TRY not to mix typefaces in the same DOCUMENT.** Using the same typeface gives uniformity to the document. Therefore, readers can concentrate on the information given. Using **bold**, larger point sizes and *italics* can give emphases to different elements of the document.
- Most people are used to reading 12-point sized type. Type that is smaller than 10 point or larger than **14 point** is hard to read.

In case you would like to know more about fonts and typefaces, seek out these reference materials: “The Mac is not a Typewriter,” by Robin Williams or “Thinking with Type” by Ellen Lupton.

Composition & layout guidelines



There's the banner, the photographs, the thank you letters, the news and other essentials that must go into a weekly or monthly document, like newsletters. How to put all the pieces together is not an exact science. Most word processing and publication applications have templates that many of you use now. But don't feel trapped by an application.

Consider the following when composing any document:

- **Headings** – Use downstyle headings, in which only the first letter of the first word is capitalized. Do not use title case for headings and subheads. Use punchy headlines and subheads to break up big blocks of copy.
- **When using columns** in a newsletter or a hand-out, use a horizontal headline that spans the columns below. A horizontal layout is easier to read than headlines smashed into a column.
- **Write at an appropriate reading level for your audience.** For maximum comprehension when writing for adults, write at a ninth-grade reading level. Microsoft Word has a tool for gauging your document's readability. In Word 2007, select the Review tab, then click Spelling & Grammar to see the document statistics.
If your document's reading level is too high, try using shorter words, shorter sentences and shorter paragraphs.
- **White space** – Readers need a break and white space is like a breath for the eyes. Make sure there is a good border of white space around the copy, but not so big that the readers' eyes fall asleep.
- **Follow the Z** – When people look at a page, they almost always peruse it in a “Z” pattern, starting at the upper left, moving diagonally through the page, picking up bits of information along the way, and ending in the right bottom corner. Newspapers tease readers with inside stories at the very top of the page then draw the eye to the main copy with a prominent photograph and add a weather window or a box to direct them to other stories near the bottom. Try that technique on your next document and see how much better it looks.
- **A picture is worth a thousand words** – A good photo can tell a story all by itself. Use photos that reinforce the information provided. Try to avoid, when possible, “grip and grin” shots of people holding awards with captions of people's names.
- **Go easy on the clip art** – A well-chosen image can help reinforce your message, but remember to use clip art sparingly. Too many images



can make your document look unprofessional. The same is true for using mismatched clipart. If the drawing style doesn't match, don't use it.

- **Don't use WordArt** – Microsoft Word and other word processing programs come with tools that can turn your heading into a 3-D, arcing rainbow of text. Don't do it. It looks very unprofessional.
- **Keep charts and graphs one-dimensional** – Three-dimensional graphs and charts might look cool, but they can visually skew the data, making the values look larger or smaller than they really are.

When to use a letter or memo

When writing directly to parents, vendors and others in the community, prepare a letter on approved letterhead. When corresponding within the district, a memo format is appropriate.

Letterhead:

- An approved online template is available on the District Connection, the district's intranet site. Go to the forms and publications library and search for "district letterhead."
- Customize the template by inserting the name, address and phone number of your school or department. Make sure the Anchorage School Board list on the left-hand side is current. School board elections generally occur in April with the Anchorage Municipal election. School board members are sworn in at a regular board meeting soon thereafter.
- If the Education Center address is on the letterhead, ensure the address is listed as 5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd. Any letterhead that lists the P.O. Box is outdated and should be recycled.

Memos:

Generic memo templates are available on the word processing software installed on employee desktop computers.

- The subject should be in bold-face type.
- Include the To, From, Subject and Date lines on the memo.
- The writer's initials should be in the chain of command and include the typist's initials in lower case (CC/ME/TW:jl).
- Attachments should be listed under the initials.
- Skip a line, and then list to those copied using "cc:."



Sample layout for a memo

Memo

To: First and Last Name

From: First and Last Name

Date: Date

Subject: **In bold font**

Body of memo

(writers initials in chain of command: typists initials) (CC/HS/PB:pl)

Attachments: List individually

CC: List those who receive copies of the memo

Required elements in printed materials

Printed materials such as, brochures, fliers, guides, handbooks, newsletters and posters **MUST** contain the following required elements:

- Correct spelling and grammar – do not rely on spell check.
- An approved version of the ASD logo.
- Nondiscrimination clause – see below.
- The ASD website address, www.asdk12.org.
- Name of the school or department responsible for the document.
- Contact information for the school or department creating the document.

Other elements to include:

- The district’s mission statement: Educating all students for success in life. This should be written in sentence case. The only place the mission statement should appear in title case is in the ASD logo.
- Mailing address
- Staff names

As a conciliation with the Office of Civil Rights, the following statement must be included in all ASD publications, including student handbooks, administrative manuals, parent documents and other district publications. 8/2005; 7/2009; Revised 06/2010

ASD Statement of Nondiscrimination for Publications

The Board is committed to an environment of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, economic status, union affiliation, disability, and other human differences. No person shall be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, any academic or extracurricular program or educational opportunity or service offered by the District. The District will comply with the applicable statutes, regulations, and executive orders adopted by Federal, State and Municipal agencies.

Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the District’s Equal Employment Opportunity Director, who also serves as the Title IX Coordinator, ASD Education Center, 5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd, Anchorage, AK 99504-3135 (907) 742-4132 or to any of the following external agencies: Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, Anchorage Equal Rights Commission, Director of the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services.

Slide show guidelines



PowerPoint presentations and other slide shows can engage audiences and illustrate complex issues. Using graphics and charts that are easy to read can enhance the information being presented.

Consider using the following guidelines when preparing a slide show:

- Cover one topic per slide and use no more than six lines down and six words across for each slide.
- Do not use blinking text. Keep animations to a minimum. Spinning or dissolving slides and flying text distract the audience and use valuable presentation time.
- Consider making copies of the presentation for the audience, so they can read along.
- Arrive early and test the equipment. Know the the name and phone number of the facility's technical contact before you arrive.
- Slides should be cues. Try hard not to read the slide, but elaborate on the information. People usually read faster than someone speaks, so the audience will always be ahead of the presenter.
- Above all, make sure the information provided is accurate. They must be continually updated to maintain accuracy and resonate with the audience.

Writing style & usage



Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations can be used after the first reference. For example, the *Anchorage School District* becomes *ASD* on second reference. Do not put the abbreviation in parentheses next to the first reference: Anchorage School District (*ASD*). Please note that, in general, no periods are used with abbreviations.

College and professional degrees – In general, spell out bachelor’s, master’s or doctorate when referring to someone possessing or earning such degrees. Offset abbreviations with commas when following a person’s name such as *Joe Jones, Ph.D.* Never use a courtesy title and degree designation in the same sentence like *Dr. Joe Jones, Ph.D.*

Companies and corporations – Always abbreviate company and corporation when it is part of the proper name: *Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., Arctic Slope Regional Corp.*

Departments – Do not abbreviate “*department*” in any usage. The “*of*” can be dropped, but capitalizations must be used when writing the full name: *Transportation Department* instead of *Department of Transportation*. *DOT* can be used on second reference. Department is lowercase when referring to a department as “the department,” whether specific or generic. *Employees in the district’s Student Nutrition Department were recognized. Their commitment to the department resulted in numerous accolades.*

e.g./i.e./etc.: Avoid use of Latin phrases. The English expressions are clearer to all readers; e.g. stands for the Latin “*exempli gratia*,” meaning “for example;” i.e. is an abbreviation for the Latin phrase “*id est*,” meaning “that is.” Et cetera means “and others.”

Inc. – Do not use a comma and the abbreviation “*inc.*” when referring to a business. It’s “*Coca-Cola*” not “*Coca-Cola, Inc.*”

States, cities, countries – Do not use the postal abbreviations for states. Spell them out. For most states and cities, the word “*state*” or “*city*” is written in lowercase: *state of California, city of Largo*. The *State of Alaska* AP style book dictates that the “*S*” is capitalized in *State of Alaska*.

Unions – Spell out on first reference and abbreviate on second reference: *Anchorage Education Association* becomes *AEA* on second reference.

U.S./USA – The U.S. can be abbreviated before the official name of a federal entity like the U.S. Coast Guard, or U.S. Immigration



Department. USA can be abbreviated without the periods.

Addresses

Use the abbreviations *Ave.*, *Blvd.*, and *St.* only with a numbered address such as *5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd.* Spell them out when used without the number, like “*the house is on Gambell Street.*”

All similar words for street locations like, *alley*, *place*, *drive*, *road*, *terrace* are spelled out. Only capitalize them when used with a house or building number. Always use numerals for street numbers such as *9 Benson Blvd.*

Spell out *First* through *Ninth* when used as street names; use ordinal numbers, with either the “*th*” or “*st*,” for *10th* or above, such as *7 Fifth Ave.* or *100 W. 36th St.*

Abbreviate the compass points to indicate the directional ends of a street, like *222 E. 42nd St.* Do not abbreviate if the number is not used, like “*the parade starts on East Fifth Avenue.*”

Ages

Always use numerals. Ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun should be hyphenated.

Examples:

A 5-year-old boy came to school. The boy is 5 years old.

The boy, 7, has a sister, 10. The woman, 26, has a daughter, 2 months old.

Capitalization

Avoid unnecessary capitalizations. Just because something is capitalized doesn't make it more important.

Proper nouns: Capitalize nouns that constitute the unique identification for a specific person, place or thing. Following are some examples:

Examples:

Anchorage Assembly – *assembly* on second reference; drop “Anchorage.”

Anchorage School Board – *board* on second reference; drop “Anchorage.”

Common mistakes

All right, alright: All right is the correct usage.

Complement, compliment: Complement means to complete something or bring it to perfection *The new book complements the class.* Compliment means to praise something. *I want to compliment the author on a job well done.*

Effect, affect: In most cases, effect is a noun and affect is a verb. An effect is a

Writing style & usage *continued*



result or consequence. *The damage caused a crackling effect to be heard through the speakers.* Affect means “to influence.” *The sound system was affected by the rain.*

Insure, ensure, assure: Insure means “to limit financial liability.” *He visited a local broker to insure his car.*

Ensure means “to make certain.” *Student Nutrition employees wear gloves to ensure the food does not get contaminated.*

Assure means “to reduce or eliminate one’s doubt or anxiety.” Think “reassure.” *The teacher assured the nervous mom that her kindergartner would be fine.*

Its, it’s: Its is the possessive form of the word “it.” *The pencil was unusable because its lead was broken.*

It’s is the contraction of the words “it is.” *It’s always a pleasure to see you.*

Subject/clause agreement: Make sure each student brings his or her homework, not “their” homework to class.

Their, they’re, there: Their is the possessive form of “they.” *They arrived at their school.*

They’re is the contraction of the words “they are.” *They’re arriving at school.* There refers to a location. *The school is over there. They’re arriving at their school, which is located over there.*

Very is an overused adverb. Use it sparingly, or try to use a stronger, unmodified word. Instead of “the task was very easy,” say “the task was simple or effortless.”

Which, that: Contrary to popular belief, these words are not interchangeable. Each word can change the meaning of the sentence. “Which” is used to provide additional information about the item being discussed. *The lawn mower, which is red, is in the garage.* This means that there is only one lawn mower. It is red and it is located in the garage.

“That” is used to create a distinction between the item being discussed and other similar items. *The lawn mower that is red is in the garage.* This means that there is more than one lawn mower, but the one that is red is in the garage.

You’re, your: Your is the possessive form of “you.” *This is your pencil.* You’re is the contraction of the words “you are.” *You’re welcome. You’re going to need your umbrella today.*



Contractions

Contractions reflect informal speech and writing. Avoid excessive use of contractions. Those listed in the dictionary are acceptable.

Possessive contractions: Remember “its” is a possessive contraction and does not have an apostrophe, like the contraction “it’s” for “it is.” An “s” is required for plural words that don’t end in “s.”

Examples: children’s hospital, people’s republic.

To form the possessive of words ending in -s, simply add an apostrophe.

Examples: dress’ hemline, the Joneses’ house

Dimensions/Measurements

Use numerals and spell out pounds, ounces, tons, inches, feet and yards. Hyphenate when dimensions are used as adjectives.

Examples:

He is 6 feet, 2 inches tall, dark and handsome.

The 6-foot man walked into the principal’s office.

The basketball team signed a 7-footer.

The 9-by-12-foot bedroom is to the right.

The rug is 9 feet by 12 feet.

The tile is sold in 1-square-foot segments.

The baby weighed 9 pounds, 7 ounces.

She had a 9-pound, 7-ounce baby boy.

Grade level

Hyphenate both noun forms and adjective forms. Spell out *first-ninth* and use numerals for *10th* and above.

Examples:

He was a first-grader this year.

She entered 10th grade last semester.

He enrolled for 12th grade this year.

He was a ninth-grader when he was in band.

When providing information about multiple grades, the preferred usage is “grades” then the number range.

Examples:

Proficiency for students in grades 3-6 on state reading assessments will increase by 3 percent.

Students from grades 1-3 are planning to sing and dance at the concert tonight.



Spell out preschool where possible. If you must abbreviate for space constraints, use pre-K.

Reporting of letter grades

For grades given for course work, always use capital letters *A, B, C, D, F*. Spell out modifiers and use hyphens such as *A-minus* and *B-plus*.

Use an apostrophe with plurals of grades and other single letters.

Example:

He got three A's and two B's last semester.

Jargon use

Avoid jargon whenever possible. Jargon in the district is special vocabulary or idioms unique to teachers or education professionals. If terms like *whole language* or *benchmark tests* must be used, please explain what the concept is whenever possible.

Examples:

Instead of *meeting proficiency in standards-based curriculum*, use *the student is proficient for his grade level*.

Instead of *We undertook facilitation on the task of utilizing the text-based instructional tool*, say *We used the book*.

Internet addresses

When writing a Web address:

- Do not include “http://.”
- Do not leave a space between the end of a Web address and the period.
- Do not underline the address.

Wrong:

She directed her to <http://www.asdk12.org>.

She directed her to www.asdk12.org.

She directed her to www.asdk12.org.

Right: *She directed her to www.asdk12.org*

If possible, write the entire address on a single line. If the address is very long or is being entered into a narrow column, break the address at a slash, dot, number sign, or other such symbol. Do not break at a period or a hyphen, as these may be confused for sentence punctuation.

Numerals/numbers

The numerals *1, 2, 10, 101*, and the corresponding words, *one, two, ten and one hundred one*, are called cardinal numbers.

Writing style & usage *continued*



The term ordinal number applies to *1st, 2nd, 10th, 101st, first, second, tenth, one hundred first*.

Always spell out numbers when they start a sentence, unless it is a calendar year.

Examples:

Wrong: *993 people attended the meeting.*

Right: *Last year, 993 people attended.*

Right: *1999 was an interesting year.*

Spell out the ordinal numbers *first* through *ninth* when they indicate sequence in time or location such as *first base, First Amendment, first in line*.

Use *1st, 2nd, 3rd* when the sequence has been assigned in forming names like the *7th Fleet, 101st Brigade*.

Spell out whole numbers *one* through *nine*, and use numerals for *10* and above.

Examples:

They had two sons and one daughter.

There were 10 members of the family present.

Always use numerals for money amounts: *5 cents, \$650,000 or \$1 million*.

Use decimals for fractions: *.75 for three-quarters, or 1.5 for one and one half*.

Use numerals when discussing percentages. Always spell out “percent.” *7 percent, 10 percentage points*

Punctuation

Incorrect punctuation can change the meaning of a sentence and if not changed, can cause the reader to lose track of what is being said.

Ampersands: Do not use “&.” Instead, spell out “and.”

The “at” symbol: Spell out “at.” Do not use “@,” except when writing an e-mail address or Twitter user name.

Apostrophe: This piece of punctuation denotes possession. When used with singular or plural nouns not ending in “s,” the apostrophe is before an “s” as in the *girl’s toys* or *women’s rights*.

For plural nouns ending in “s,” add only an apostrophe and no “s” as in the *horses’ food* or *states’ rights*.

Use the apostrophe and an “s” when the word ends in a “z” or “x.” Examples would be *Marx’s comedies* or *Hertz’s policies*.

Writing style & usage *continued*

For possessive pronouns, no apostrophes are necessary: *mine, ours, your, yours, his, hers, its, theirs, whose*.

For joint possessives, use the apostrophe in the last word of ownership: *John and Jane's apartment*.

Apostrophes are used in contractions like *it's*, which means *it is*, or *there's*, as in *there is*, or *who's*, *who is*.

In descriptive phrases, do not add an apostrophe to a word ending in "s" when it is used for description. For instance in the example below, "Cincinnati Reds" refers to the team and is being used to describe the position Joe Jones plays. "Cincinnati Reds" is not possessive in this sentence - it is a modifier describing which team Joe Jones represents.

Examples:

Cincinnati Reds infielder Joe Jones was great.

The Teamsters request was for more hours.

Do not use an apostrophe to define the plural of numbers.

Examples:

The 1920s were the heyday of the Charleston.

Disco was king in the 1980s.

She was in her mid-30s when she decided to become a teacher.

Colon – The most frequent use of a colon is at the end of a sentence to introduce lists, tabulations and texts. Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence:

Example:

He promised this: The company will hire more women.

Use colons for designations of time as in 7:30 p.m. or "he ran the track in 1:31:7."

Colons are also used for theological and legal citations as in *AS 45:23-25*, and for dialogue as in a theatrical play: *Joe Palooka: "Geez, let's get a hot dog."*

Commas – Commas are by far the most abused punctuation. They are primarily used to separate elements in a series.

Do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series like *red, white and blue*, or *Tom, Dick or Harry*.

An exception to that rule is if there are two conjunctions in the series; put the comma before the concluding conjunction: *She had hash browns, toast,*

Writing style & usage *continued*



and ham and eggs for breakfast.

If the omission of the comma would create confusion, consider rewriting the sentence. Instead of: *While in California, he saw his parents, Oprah Winfrey and Arnold Schwarzenegger.* Try: *While in California, he saw Oprah Winfrey, Arnold Schwarzenegger and his parents.* This eliminates the appearance that Oprah and Arnold are his parents.

Use commas to separate a series of adjectives equal in rank. If the commas could be replaced by the word “and” without changing the meaning, the adjectives are equal: *a thoughtful, precise manner; a dark, dangerous street.*

With conjunctions, such as *and*, *but* or *for* that link two clauses that could be stand-alone sentences, use a comma before the conjunction: *She was glad she had looked, for the man was approaching.*

Do not use a comma when the subject of two clauses is the same: *We are visiting Seward and plan to see the SeaLife Center.*

Dashes – Do not use a hyphen in place of a dash. Instead, use an en-dash or an em-dash, as appropriate. In most circumstances, the em-dash is the proper choice.

An em-dash is the width of a capital letter “m.” It is used to interrupt thought in a sentence or to introduce a new clause. It’s similar to a colon, but more forceful and abrupt and can be used to replace parentheses.

The majority of Anchorage households—as many as 87 percent—report having Internet access in their household.

If you are unable to insert an em-dash, you may use a double-hyphen in its place. Many word processors will autocorrect a double-hyphen to an em-dash.

An en-dash is the width of a capital letter “n.” In lists or in informal uses, use an en-dash in place of the words “to” or “through”.

Office hours are 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
They are open Monday–Thursday.

Do not use spaces before or after either of these dashes.

Direct quotes – Use a comma to introduce a complete one-sentence quotation as in *Mr. Smith said, “I spent a summer sailing the Prince William Sound.”* Use a comma before attribution as in *“The budget shortfall was larger than expected,” said Ms. Johnson.*

Use commas for an individual’s age: *Joe Shmo, 43, was running for office.*



Exclamation point – In general, do not use exclamation points. They exaggerate declarative writing and dilute credibility. Few people believe “New! Improved!” and they tire the reader.

Hyphenation – In general, hyphenate two words when they are used as modifiers.

Examples:

Charlie’s problems were health related.

Health-related careers are a top choice among graduates.

Parentheses – Parentheses are considered somewhat informal. Use them with discretion. If a sentence must include incidental material, consider using commas or dashes to set it off.

Periods – Use a single space between a period and the beginning of the next sentence. The double space was previously used because typewriters created monospaced text, making it difficult to distinguish between one sentence and the next. Computer-generated fonts have more natural letter and word spacing, eliminating the need for the extra space.

Use periods for a person’s initials like *John F. Kennedy* or *T.S. Eliot*.

Abbreviations using only the initials of a name do not require periods: *JFK, LBJ, FDR*.

Follow the common use of periods when using them after Web addresses. There is no need to leave a space between the end of the address and the period.

Right: *She directed her to www.asdk12.org.*

Wrong: *Online information is available at www.asdk12.org/summer .*

Quotation marks – Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks, which are used for direct quotations to surround the exact words of a speaker or writer. The dash, the semicolon, the question mark and the exclamation point also go inside quotation marks.

Example:

She said, “We should have more style,” and she meant it.

Quotation marks are not required in a Q&A format where the questions are printed and directly precede the answers.

Semicolons – Use the semicolon to indicate a greater separation of thought and information than a comma can convey, and less than what a period implies. Semicolons can be used to clarify a series, or link independent clauses.



Use semicolons to clarify a series when the individual segments contain more material than a simple list.

Example:

He leaves a son, John Smith of Chicago; three daughters, Jane Smith of Egegik, Alaska; Mary Smith of Anchorage; and a sister, Martha, wife of John Warren of Fairbanks.

Use a semicolon to link clauses when a coordinating conjunction like “and” or “but” is not present. Typically, both clauses must be able to stand as complete sentences.

Example:

The package was due last week; it arrived today.

Seasons

The names of seasons should remain lower case unless they are part of a title.

He took the SAT in spring 2010.

They both attended Spring Fling.

Time/Dates

Always use numerals to denote time of day. Do not use “:00” for the top of the hour. An event starts at 7 p.m. or 9:30 a.m., for example. Always abbreviate a.m. and p.m. and use in the lower case with periods. Do not substitute a.m. or p.m. for the words morning or afternoon. Include a space between the number and the abbreviation. **When reporting the time of an event, always put the start time first, the date second and location third.**

Examples:

Right: *About 350 people are expected to attend the board meeting that begins at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 11 in the boardroom.*

Wrong: *About 350 people will arrive Dec. 11 at 6:30 p.m. for the board meeting to discuss several issues in the board room.*

Other guidelines:

- *A.D.* and *B.C.* are always abbreviated, used with periods and capitalized.
- Use *noon* for 12 p.m. and *midnight* for 12 a.m.
- Use a dash without spaces between numerals for range of time: *2-4 p.m.*
- Avoid redundancies like *last Tuesday*, or *next Tuesday*. The past, present or future tense used for the verb should indicate which Tuesday is meant: *He*



said he finished the job Tuesday. She will return on Tuesday.

- Documents such as letters or newsletters may not be read the day on which they are written. Only use *yesterday* or *tomorrow* if the date cannot be confused. If the date might be confused, use the day of the week, and if necessary, the date.
- Never use “*th*” or “*st*” with dates. The extra letters take up space and are not needed: *School starts Aug. 22.*
- Abbreviate *January, February, August, September, October, November* and *December* when used with the day.

Examples:

School policies will be enforced beginning in January 2008.

School policies are to be enacted on Jan. 21.

Titles for people and compositions

Courtesy titles – Courtesy titles such as Mr., Mrs. or Miss are not required in news articles. On first reference, state the person’s full name. On future references, you may use only the last name.

Professional titles – Titles should be capitalized only when used directly in front of the person’s name.

Examples:

Superintendent Carol Comeau thanked the teachers for their efforts.

Social Studies Teacher Sonia Smith led a successful field trip to the museum.

Han Solo, assistant superintendent of Support Services, said the space cadets were fine.

Abbreviate junior or senior after an individual’s name. No comma is necessary.

John F. Kennedy Jr. was the editor of “George.”

Abbreviate the following titles when used before the name of a person: *Dr., Gov., Lt. Gov., Mr., Mrs., Rep., the Rev., Sen.*, and military titles: *Major Gen.*

John Anderson took command. Gov. Hammond said education was a top priority.

Compositions:

Apply the guidelines listed here to titles for books, movies, operas, plays, poems, songs, television productions, speeches, works of art and lectures:

- Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters.
- Capitalize an article—*a, the, an*—or words of fewer than four letters if it is



the first or last word in a title.

- Many English courses teach the use of underlining to denote creative works. In modern usage, underlines appear as web links and interfere with readability. ASD employees can choose to use either style; quotation marks or italics.
- When using quotation marks, don't forget to put periods inside the quotation marks if used at the end of a sentence.
- Translate a foreign title into English unless the work is known to the American public by its foreign name, like "*Les Miserables*."

Examples:

"The Star Spangled Banner," "The Whale Fat Follies," "Desperate Housewives," "American Idol," "Romeo and Juliet," "Grapes of Wrath."

- **Exception:** The AP Stylebook uses one uniform way of denoting compositions—quotation marks, which are used for all such works except, *the Bible* and books that are primarily reference materials like *Encyclopedia Britannica* or *Webster's Dictionary*. This is the preferred method of the ASD Communications Department.



Words and acronyms commonly used at ASD

When using acronyms, always spell out the first reference in the document and use the acronym thereafter.

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

ADHD: Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

African American: Do not hyphenate when used as a noun: “He is African American.” Hyphenate as a modifier: “African-American literature.” “Black” is also an acceptable term.

AFS: Anchorage Football Stadium

After-school: Hyphenate for use as an adjective as in “*an after-school program*.”

Alaska Native: On second reference, can shorten to *Native*. Always capitalize.

Anchorage Assembly: *assembly* on second reference; drop *Anchorage*.

Anchorage School Board: *board* on second reference; drop *Anchorage*.

AP: Advanced Placement or Assistant Principal

ASAA: Alaska School Activities Association

ASD: Anchorage School District; not the ASD.

Auditeria: Not *cafetorium*; defined as a room used as an auditorium or cafeteria.

AYP: Adequate Yearly Progress

Boardroom: One word, capitalize only at the beginning of a sentence.

BPO: Building Plant Operator

Buses: Use one “s” like in *bused* and *busing*. *Bussing* means kissing.

Bush: Typically remote areas off the road system; can be used as a modifier or a noun. Always capitalize.

CAD: Computer Assisted Drafting

Canceled: One “l” is preferred use; not *cancelled*. Cancellation does have two l’s.

Certificated: Category for ASD’s certified employees like teachers.

Child care: Two words.



CIT: Child in Transition

Classified: Category of ASD employees, other than teachers and administrators.

Course work: Two words.

Database: One word, no hyphen.

Daylight-saving time: Note the hyphen and singular of “saving.” Lowercase daylight-saving time in all uses. If linking the term with the name of a time zone, use only the word daylight: Eastern Daylight Time, Pacific Daylight Time.

DECA: Distributive Education Clubs of America

DEED: Alaska Department of Education and Early Development

District: Only capitalize as ASD or in Anchorage School District. Otherwise, lower case.

Districtwide: one word; ignore Microsoft Word.

DOE: U.S. Department of Education

DRA: Developmental Reading Assessment

Dropout: one word.

E-mail: One hyphenated word; lowercase except at beginning of a sentence.

EEO: Equal Employment Opportunity

EIP: Education Improvement Plan

ELL: English Language Learners

ESL: English as a Second Language

ETS: Educational Technology Services

Extracurricular: One word, no hyphen.

Fax: One word, lowercase when not at the beginning of a sentence.

Federal: Lowercase unless at the beginning of a sentence.

Flu-like: Flu-like symptoms. Hyphenate

Free and reduced-price: Lowercase, except when at the beginning of a sentence.



FTE: Full-Time Equivalent

Fundraiser; Fundraising: one word

GED: General Educational Development. Always write as “GED certificate.”

GPA: Grade Point Average

Health care: Two words, hyphenate if used as a modifier.

Hispanic: Always capitalize.

Home-school: Hyphenate when used as a modifier. “A home-school student.”

Honor student: Lowercase except when at the beginning of a sentence.

HSGQE: High School Graduation Qualifying Exam

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEP: Individualized Education Plan

In-service: Hyphenate, lowercase—it’s an adjective not a noun.

Internet: Always capitalize. The Internet encompasses many forms of electronic communication, including e-mail, FTP, and the World Wide Web. It is not to be confused with Web. Net is acceptable on second reference. The Web and e-mail are subsets of the Internet. Internet information is subject to copyright protection as well as libel guidelines.

Kindergartner: Not kindergartener.

Legislature: Capitalize on every use. Do not capitalize *legislative* or *legislator*.

LEP: Limited English Proficient

Mount and mountain: Always spell out for general information materials; can be abbreviated as Mt. and Mtn., respectively, for school listings.

Multicultural: One word, no hyphen.

Multimedia: One word, no hyphen.

Multipurpose room: Two words, no hyphen; abbreviated as MPR.

Nationwide: One word, no hyphen.

NCLB: No Child Left Behind

Nondiscrimination: one word.

Nonprofit: One word, no hyphen.



Online: One word, no hyphen.

Percent: One word, always spelled out. Only use % on charts and graphs. The number should also be stated as a numeral, not spelled out.

Portable classroom: Not *relocateable*; “portable” acceptable on second reference.

Preschool: One word, no hyphen.

PTA: Parent Teacher Association

PTSO: Parent Teacher Student Organization

RTI: Response to Instruction

SBA: Standards Based Assessment

School-year notations: Use 2008-09 school year. Do not use 2008-'09, 2008-2009 or '08-'09.

Schoolwide: One word, no hyphen; ignore Microsoft Word.

SED: Severely Emotionally Disabled

SGA: Student Government Association

Special Education: The *only* correct abbreviation is Special Ed., not SPED, or Sped.

SRO: School Resource Officer

Statewide: One word, no hyphen.

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math

STEP: Students, Educators and Parents, an ASD program

Village: A rural community off the road system that generally does not have a municipal form of government. Akiak, Egegik and Shageluk are villages; Bethel, Nome and Pelican are not.

Web: Capitalize, short for World Wide Web.

Writing style & usage *continued*



Webcast: Lowercase.

Webmaster: One word, lowercase.

Web page: Two words, capitalize Web.

Website: One word; lower case.

Work session: Two words, no hyphen as a noun. Hyphenate when used as an adjective.

Workday: one word.

Workforce: one word.

Workload: one word.

Workplace: one word.

World languages: Not *foreign* language, always use plural of *languages*; lowercase.

Yup'ik: Include the apostrophe.



Use of ASD school names for external communication

Schools are identified by their official titles. Schools named after honorees, such as Bowman Elementary or Tyson Elementary, will be identified by the last name of the honoree.

Exception: Gladys Wood Elementary School is always referred to as: “Gladys Wood.”

- A school is an inanimate object., When using a pronoun to refer to a school, use “it” or “its”: *Taku Elementary is holding its open house on Friday*, not “their” open house.
- Always use the complete name of the school for the first reference, and drop “school,” thereafter.
- All official documents should include the full name of the school.
- When referring to plural schools, always lowercase “elementary schools.”

Example: *Sand Lake and Scenic Park elementary schools.*

- When referring to high schools, it is not necessary to use “Anchorage” in the title: East High School not East Anchorage High School. For the purpose of distinguishing Service High and South High from each other when abbreviated, please use the following:

Service High School: **SHS** South High School: **SAHS**

- “ABC” should be included in the titles of Birchwood ABC, Northern Lights ABC and Northwood ABC schools.
- AVAIL and SAVE are always capitalized and abbreviated in all uses.
- Chugach Optional is the elementary school. Chugiak High School is the high school.
- Creekside Park: Not *Creekside*.
- Denali Montessori School, not Denali Elementary School.
- Dimond High School was named after A.J. Dimond. It is spelled differently from the gemstone.
- Polaris K–12 School is the proper title, not just “Polaris.”
- Steller: Not *Stellar*.

- Use “Charter” in the title of all charter schools

Example: *Aquarian Charter School, Winterberry Charter School.*

- Wonder Park: Not *Wonderpark*



ASD facility names for use in external communications

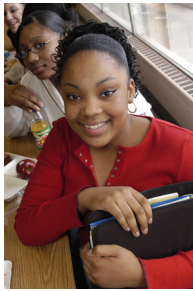
ASD Education Center: please do not refer to the center as the Boniface Education Center.

ASD Transportation Center: It's not the bus barn.

The official titles of ASD schools and programs are listed here:

21st Century Community Learning Centers	Eagle Academy Charter School	School
Abbott Loop Elementary School	Eagle River Elementary School	Ocean View Elementary School
Airport Heights Elementary School	Eagle River High School	O'Malley Elementary School
Alaska Native Cultural Charter School	East High School	Orion Elementary School
Alaska State School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Fairview Elementary School	Polaris K-12 School
Alpenglow Elementary School	Family Partnership Charter School	Ptarmigan Elementary School
Aquarian Charter School	Fire Lake Elementary School	Rabbit Creek Elementary School
Aurora Elementary School	Frontier Charter School	Ravenwood Elementary School
AVAIL	Girdwood School	Rilke Schule German School of Arts and Sciences, K-8
Bartlett High School	Gladys Wood Elementary School	Rogers Park Elementary School
Baxter Elementary School	Goldenview Middle School	Romig Middle School
Bayshore Elementary School	Government Hill Elementary School	Russian Jack Elementary School
Bear Valley Elementary School	Gruening Middle School	SAVE High School
Begich Middle School	Hanshew Middle School	Sand Lake Elementary School
Benson Secondary School/SEARCH	Highland Tech Charter School	Scenic Park Elementary School
Birchwood ABC Elementary School	Homestead Elementary School	Service High School
Bowman Elementary School	Huffman Elementary School	South High School
Campbell Elementary School	Inlet View Elementary School	Spring Hill Elementary School
Central Middle School of Science	Kasuun Elementary School	Steller Secondary School
Chester Valley Elementary School	Kincaid Elementary School	Susitna Elementary School
Chinook Elementary School	King Career Center	Taku Elementary School
Chugach Optional Elementary School	Klatt Elementary School	Trailside Elementary School
Chugiak Elementary School	Lake Hood Elementary School	Tudor Elementary School
Chugiak High School	Lake Otis Elementary School	Tyson Elementary School
Clark Middle School	McLaughlin School	Turnagain Elementary School
College Gate Elementary School	Mears Middle School	Ursa Major Elementary School
Continuation School	Mirror Lake Middle School	Ursa Minor Elementary School
Creekside Park Elementary School	Mountain View Elementary School	Wendler Middle School
Crossroads School	Mount Spurr Elementary School	West High School
Denali Montessori School	Mount Iliamna	Whaley Center
Dimond High School	Muldoon Elementary School	Williwaw Elementary School
	MyHigh	Willow Crest Elementary School
	North Star Elementary School	Winterberry Charter School
	Northern Lights ABC School	Wonder Park Elementary School
	Northwood ABC Elementary School	
	Nunaka Valley Elementary	

Photography guidelines



ASD has the best photographic subjects in the world—our students—and they are featured prominently in our materials. With such wonderful subjects, it's hard to go wrong, but here are some guidelines for using photography in school documents and publications:

- **Look your subject in the eye** – direct eye contact is engaging in a picture. Hold the camera at the subject's eye level. For children that means stooping to their level.
- **Use a plain background** – it will show off your subject. When looking through the viewfinder, make sure no poles or plants are “growing” from the subject's head.
- **Use the flash outdoors** – bright sun can create unattractive deep facial shadows. Eliminate the shadows by using the flash to lighten the face.
- **Move in close** – Fill the frame. If you're shooting a single subject, zoom in so that only their head and upper torso are in the shot. This may require you to turn the camera 90 degrees, to the “portrait” orientation. If your photo includes multiple subjects, concentrate on getting everyone's face, not full body, into the picture. Remember, artistic “white space” may make an interesting gallery photograph, but may not work well in a newsletter where the photo will be very small.
- **Move it from the middle** – center stage may be great for actors, but the middle is not necessarily the best place for a photographic subject. Follow the rule of thirds: imagine a tic-tac-toe grid in the viewfinder, and place the important subject at one of the intersections of the lines.
- **Lock the focus** – most of us use digital cameras these days, so this is easy. First aim the camera so the subject is in the middle. Next, press the shutter button halfway down and continuing holding it down while repositioning the camera for the shot you want. Then take the picture.
- **Be a picture director** – take control and say “action.” Don't be a passive picture-taker. Add props, change the venue—you control the visual interest.
- **Don't be afraid of photo editing programs.** Cropping can make a picture into a real winner by reducing headroom and clutter.
- **Photo credits** – Where possible, identify people in photographs and

Photography guidelines *continued*



provide a photo credit for the photographer. (See media releases section for students.)

- **Take multiple pictures** to ensure you've gotten a good shot. Don't wait until you're back at your computer
- **Keep your photos organized** – Consider a naming convention for your digital images and use categorized folders to organize your images.

ASD maintains a collection of photos for use in newsletters, fliers, presentations, and other materials. Contact Publication Services for information on how to use ASD photos for a project.

Student media release forms



REMEMBER:

Parent-Signed Media Releases are *not* needed when:

- Photographing or videotaping anonymous students engaged in normal classroom/school activities
- Photographing, videotaping or interviewing students at events that are open to the public, such as music, theater or athletic events

Parent-Signed Media Releases are *always* needed when:

- Students are interviewed or will be identified by name in a photograph/news article
- An individual student(s) is the focus of the story
- Photographing, videotaping or interviewing students who are in special education classes/services or certain specialized programs (drug/alcohol, detention/work detail, etc.)
- You feel the photograph, videotape or interview may be used in a negative way

Media Release forms can be downloaded from the Forms and Publications Library on the District Connection.

Printing & Publication Services



Print-ready copy jobs are completed by the print shop at the ASD Education Center. Large print jobs are completed at King Career Center.

Business cards can be ordered using the link found on the District Connection, <http://home.asdk12.org>. Once approval from the employee's supervisor is received, the request goes to the print shop. The cards will be delivered through interoffice mail.

ASD cannot violate copyrights. If something on the document is copyrighted by another party, it cannot be reproduced without written permission from the copyright owner. If you have questions regarding copyright issues, contact Library Services.

How to make a request of Publication Services

- Fill out a Printing Request form available in the Forms and Publications Library in the District Connection. Search for "printing request" and click on the document.
- Attach a hard copy to the print-ready document, or send an electronic copy of it with your electronic print-ready document.
- Send the request to Publication Services at the King Career Center or the Communications Department at the ASD Education Center. If you are unsure as to where to e-mail your electronic document(s), call 742-8923.

A print-ready document is:

- At its final size with no staple or fold marks
- Clean and smudge-free
- PDF is the preferred format for submission of electronic documents. It allows for cross-platform portability and will retain all of the fonts and graphics as originally set. Ask the school's technology coordinator for help creating PDFs, or contact Publication Services for questions about your files.

Layout and graphics services

Publication Services offers graphic design and layout services for approved print projects. Call 742-8923 to arrange a consultation.

Currently there is no charge for printing services. To inform clients of possible charges in the future, a printing cost estimate may be enclosed with finished jobs. Department directors receive monthly reports on publications produced for their departments.

For more information, call the Publication Services Supervisor, 742-8923.

ASD Communications staff



This may be the final page of the ASD Stylebook, but please stay in touch with us:

Executive Director	742-4150
Executive Secretary	742-4153
Senior Communications Specialist	742-4158
<i>Media and external communications</i>	
Communications Specialist	742-4151
<i>Internal communications</i>	
Web Communications Specialist	742-4193
<i>ASD Webmaster</i>	
Web Content Technician	742-4138
Customer Service Representatives	742-4001
<i>Education Center Reception Desks</i>	

Publication Services:

King Career Center

Publications Supervisor	742-8923
Publications Technician	742-8965
<i>Graphic Artist/Publications Design</i>	
Lead Offset Equipment Operator	742-8923
Offset Equipment Operators	742-8941
<i>ASD Education Center Print Shop</i>	
Publications Specialist	742- 4155

Cable Channel 14:

Production	742-2286
Programming	742-2285

*To comment or offer feedback on the ASD Stylebook, send an e-mail to:
news@asdk12.org*

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