

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #2 (2007-2008)

August 27, 2007

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD POLICY ADDITION: SECTION 350.2  
SCHEDULING PROCEDURES FOR CULTURAL DATES OF  
SIGNIFICANCE (SECOND READING)

*ASD Goal: Ensure public accountability through effective communication with students, staff, parents, community and government at all levels.*

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the recommendation of the Administration that the Board approve on Second Reading the addition of School Board Policy 350.2, Scheduling Procedures for Cultural Dates of Significance. For this school year only, the superintendent may approve individual events that have already been scheduled in conflict with this policy where rescheduling would cause undue problems.

PERTINENT FACTS:

Over the past several years, the Administration of the Anchorage School District has endeavored to be more responsive to the needs of various cultural communities in our city regarding the scheduling of important events and activities around cultural dates of significance. In response to several community concerns, a widely representative committee began meeting in October of 2003 to review policies and procedures related to the instructional program. The committee's recommendations were incorporated into the revisions to School Board Policies 350 and 350.1 which were adopted on October 11, 2004. The purpose of our changed policies and subsequent guidelines was to foster a greater awareness of the District's diverse population. The use of the guidelines has resulted in increased sensitivity not only to the diverse cultural aspects of the District, but also to actual practices at the school sites.

One issue that has continued to arise, however, is the scheduling of certain activities and events on dates of cultural significance. The procedures and guidelines that have been annually distributed throughout the District have not given the necessary clarity to administrators scheduling and bidding on events that conflict with identified dates. In an effort to clarify the District's intent on this issue, the matter was referred to the Policy Subcommittee.

The Policy Subcommittee discussed the issue at length, and at their June 27<sup>th</sup> meeting voted unanimously to forward the proposed language (Attachment A) to the full Board for consideration. It is the Administration's intent that any policy language adopted by the Board would go into effect with the winter activities season. Activities already contracted to the District by AASA (e.g. the Alaska Association of Student Government Conference conflicting with Eid al Fitr and the State Basketball tournament conflicting with Good Friday) would be permitted to occur.

At its August 13, 2007 meeting, the Board amended the motion to clarify the scope of exceptions the superintendent could make to this policy in its first year of implementation. One change was also made to the language of the proposed policy as reflected in the attachment. The Board then voted unanimously to adopt the policy on First Reading.

CC/RG

Prepared and approved by: Rhonda Gardner, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction

## 350.2 Scheduling Procedures on Cultural Dates of Significance

- a. Various dates throughout the year are significant to cultural, ethnic and religious groups. School District personnel should be sensitive to these dates, in addition to the dates identified in subsection c of this policy, and should consider reasonable accommodations for students and employees who wish to observe those dates, including excused absences for students.
- b. ~~On certain dates, the cultural or religious traditions of some students and staff make participation in school activities incompatible with their observance of those traditions. For some dates, cultural tradition or religious teachings require particular forms of observance that are incompatible with other school activities.~~ In order to maximize student involvement in school activities and to accommodate the needs of students and families, for the dates listed in subsection c below, no after-school activity shall be scheduled or hosted by the District. This includes but is not limited to sports team competition, school open houses, academic competitions, dances, student performances, retreats and student government conferences. This prohibition does not include regular practices or regular club meetings.
- c. The following are days on which activities shall not be scheduled. The Board may add or subtract from this list at a single board meeting as long as the action is on the agenda and properly noticed in advance.

New Years Day  
Orthodox Christmas  
Good Friday  
Easter  
Orthodox Easter  
Passover \*  
Rosh Hashana\*  
Yom Kippur\*  
Eid al Fitr\*  
Eid al Adha\*  
Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Day

\* observed from sundown of the preceding day through entire calendared date

- d. The Superintendent shall develop procedures for implementing this policy.