

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM # 62 (2011-2012)

September 12, 2011

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: GRETCHEN GUESS, PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF SCHOOL BOARD'S CORE BELIEFS,
COMMITMENTS AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES FOR
INSTRUCTION

RECOMMENDATION:

The School Board approves the attached core beliefs, commitments, and operating principles for instruction to set the vision to create a high performing district.

PERTINENT FACTS:

Based on past board work, in the spring of 2011, the school board embarked on creating a vision to create a high performing district. This work started with specific district board training by the Center for Reform of School Systems, continued through board work sessions of rich and robust discussion, and is now finalized in a document reflecting the board's core beliefs, commitments, and operating principles for instruction. It is the board's hope that this document stands the test of time through board membership and superintendents, resulting in a unified path forward to create a high performing district.

This document is part of whole picture including strategic initiatives, annual board projects, and performance measures.

Attachment

Prepared and Approved by: Gretchen Guess, School Board President

Creating a High Performing District The Anchorage School Board's Vision

Preamble

The Anchorage School Board is a municipal-wide elected body with governance responsibility for the Anchorage School District. As a governance board, it is our responsibility to do the following: (1) set a clear direction for the district; (2) empower and hold accountable the superintendent for implementing our direction and managing district operations; (3) develop and adopt policies and budgets that support and implement the board's direction; and (4) model the professionalism and degree of effort they expect from students, families and staff.

The board expects a high-performing district that achieves exceptional results. We believe a process of continuous improvement and reform for results can be consistent over time, transcending board membership and superintendents.

Mission

To educate all students for success in life

Vision

All students will graduate prepared for post-secondary educational and employment opportunities.

Core Values & Beliefs

POTENTIAL: Every student deserves the opportunity to achieve his or her potential

To best serve all students, the board believes schools, families and the community should provide every student the opportunity to reach his or her potential. We believe students learn differently, and as such, each classroom and/or school must teach the curriculum in a way that meets the needs of each child. Our district must provide opportunities including a highly effective educator in each classroom, differentiated instruction and high-performing neighborhood and alternative schools. We believe we must close the achievement gap while moving all students forward.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS: The district will foster a culture of high expectations

To achieve high performance, the board believes the district must foster a culture of high expectations for everyone: students, parents, educators, staff and the board. High expectations require adopting an attitude that does not make excuses for a child's academic performance. High expectations also require high performance standards for each employee, including an expectation of collaboration.

ACCOUNTABILITY: The district will be open, transparent and accountable to the public

The board believes the district should be open, transparent, and accountable to the public, ensuring a high-quality education while remaining fiscally responsible. Our budget, policies, guidelines, curriculum and district performance data will be easily accessible (unless protected by law) and understandable. Parents will always have access to what their child is learning and how they are progressing. The district will promote strong community partnerships and public involvement.

SAFETY: All schools and departments will be safe and supportive

The board believes all schools and departments will have safe and supportive environments by providing safe facilities, being intolerant of bullying and discrimination, and ensuring respect for all. This belief also includes promoting skills necessary to create positive relationships, and to handle confrontational and challenging situations constructively and ethically.

RESPONSIVENESS: Public education should be responsive to an ever-changing world

The board believes the district must be responsive to the changing educational requirements of students for meeting the challenges of an ever-changing world.

Every graduate should be ready for his or her next step in life and be a productive member of a democratic republic.

Board Commitments

Based on our core beliefs and values, the board is committed to the following:

- A collaborative and respectful governance relationship with the superintendent;
- A rigorous core curriculum of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies;
- A well-rounded educational program that integrates career and technical education, arts and athletics;
- Instruction and early interventions that meet the needs of each student and moves them forward at least one year's academic growth annually;
- Effective public school choice options;
- Parents and the community as informed partners; and
- Cost-effective and efficient operations.

Operating Principles for Instruction

To implement our vision, the board sets forth the following operating principles, or the active actions, the district will take to move us towards high performance.

Managed instruction – The district will use a Managed Instruction System approach, which includes consistent content, grade-level expectations, and performance standards and curriculum across grade levels and schools. The main driver for this principle is the mobility of our district: almost one-third of students do not end the year in the school in which they start.

School innovation – The district will encourage creativity, innovation and reform including allowing schools to request flexibility (e.g., waiver, pilot programs) so the school can best meet the needs of its students.

Principal priorities – Principals will implement board policies and vision, focusing on three priorities: (1) a safe and secure environment, (2) serving as the instructional leader and ensuring quality education, and (3) serving as the liaison with the neighborhood and school community.

Instructional differentiation – As a best practice, the district will ensure instruction and early interventions to meet the needs of each student, moving every child forward at least one year's academic growth annually.

Educator accountability – Teachers, principals and all educators will be held accountable for complying with district policy and direction to meet the district's mission, vision, core beliefs, commitments and performance measures.

Effective communication – The district will establish effective communications (including feedback loops) with parents, students, educators and the community.

Research-based curriculum and best practice instruction – The district's curricula will be research-based with the expectation of and accountability for best practice with instruction.

Technology integration – The district will integrate technology into all classrooms and curricula to provide each child the opportunity to fully engage in a twenty-first century learning environment.

Implementation

To implement our vision, the board will work with management each year to determine strategic initiatives, annual board projects, and performance measures.