

Anchorage School District Budget 2010-11



Questions and Answers

Proposed Fiscal Year 2010-11 Financial Plan

Q How many people will be laid off?

A The budget calls for the elimination of 46 full time positions and the addition of 6.5 positions within the General Fund. Teachers will not be laid off; the majority of positions will be eliminated through attrition.

The following positions will be eliminated through attrition:

- 29 teachers
- 1 elementary assistant principal
- 1 Curriculum and Instructional Services executive secretary

Staff in the positions below are encouraged to apply for other available positions within ASD. The following positions will be eliminated through layoffs:

- 1 high school/alternative assistant principal
- 1 science coordinator
- 1 math coordinator
- 1.5 Gifted program teaching positions
- 0.5 Gifted program teacher assistant
- 2 graduation support coordinators
- 1 alternative programs secretary
- 1 Support Services executive secretary

The following positions will be eliminated from the General Fund but will continue through grant funding:

- 4 elementary reading specialists

- 2 Creating Successful Futures teachers

The following positions will be added for the 2010-11 school year:

- 1 Science Technology Engineering and Math coordinator
- 1 Curriculum and Instructional Services administrative assistant
- 1 IT Project manager
- 2 IT Subject matter experts
- 0.5 maintenance technician
- 1 purchasing agent

Q How much will class sizes increase?

A Kindergarten and grade one will remain the same at 20.5 and 21 students per teacher, respectively.

Grades 2-3 will increase approximately 0.25 to 24.25 students per teacher.

Grades 4-6 will increase approximately 0.25 to 27.25 students per teacher.

Grades 7-8 will increase approximately 0.71 to 26.25 students per teacher.

Grades 9-12 will increase approximately 0.83 to 26.25 and 27.91 respectively.

Class sizes are similar to the 2005-06 school year.

It is important to note that these are average class sizes. Some classes may have fewer students, some may have more.

Q How many ASD positions are funded by the General Fund vs. grant positions?

A The district has approximately 6,570 employees. About 5,820 of those positions are in the district's General Fund. Salary and benefits for these employees make up 89 percent of the General Fund budget.

For 2010-11, there will be approximately 509 employee positions funded by local, state and federal grants, including the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. These are grant application projections and subject to change based on final grant awards and programmatic adjustments.

ASD also has approximately 210 employee positions funded through the Food Service Fund and 36 in the Capital Projects Fund.

Q In the 2010-11 budget, the district will eliminate the Math and Science Curriculum Coordinator positions and replace them with a new position called the STEM

(Science Technology Engineering Math) Coordinator. How will this help our students improve in math and science?

A Currently, too many ASD students are not succeeding in math and science. At the elementary and middle school levels, data shows that only about 70 percent of math students make a C grade or higher. Less than 60 percent of students make a C grade or higher in science. We would expect a minimum of 80 percent of students to be proficient in both subjects if the current system was working. At the high school level, too many students drop out, fail to graduate or need to take remedial classes. Some even consider college beyond their ability.

By making math and science relevant and meaningful to students, we expect to improve all students' understanding of and engagement with these subjects.

An integrated approach will help students make stronger connections between what they are learning in school and their futures in higher education or the workplace. The STEM approach makes connections between math and science that matter—much like in the “real world.”

We expect the change will improve learning for students who are currently “not getting it.” We know successful students also deserve, and will benefit from, a 21st century approach to learning these subjects.

Two years ago, the district held eight forums to invite public input as to how to improve our high schools. Three suggestions were consistently heard: Prepare students for the 21st century with the appropriate use of technological tools; make connections between success in school and future success in the workplace; and deliver classroom content through project-based, applied teaching methods. We are putting these suggestions into practice with the STEM approach.

Q August 2010 is fast approaching. How will the STEM approach transition be managed?

A The STEM Coordinator will have the leadership skills to bring people together from different math and science backgrounds. The plan will develop over several years of shared effort. This means there will be a transition period between the current teaching methods and the integrated approach. An important part of this plan will be finding the parts of our current math and science programs that are working well and keep those in place. We can then target areas of need and make a plan of action to address those areas. The superintendent will present the board with a plan for how to pay for this transition and development of the FY2011-12 budget by June 30.

The STEM approach provides great opportunity to access federal money, as well as state and local business partnerships. The STEM Coordinator will work to match these resources to our most important needs. The STEM approach will allow the district's curriculum departments to work more closely with the Grants and Career and Technology Education departments.