

MECAC Questions, Ideas and Concerns from February 28, 2013

Budget:

- How is the School District increasing teacher/student time when we are not decreasing our student/teacher ratio, yet part of the budget is to reduce staff? Explain how there is more student/teacher time.

Student/teacher time has increased this year through reductions in professional development sessions held during class hours, keeping teachers in their classrooms with their students and maintaining the momentum in the classroom. Working smarter to maximize student time with their teachers was also discussed in context of the IGNITE program changes scheduled for the 2013-14 school year. Students will no longer be traveling away from their neighborhood schools to their IGNITE program; the teachers will travel to the students' neighborhood schools, saving student travel time and increasing teacher contact time. In addition, the program will revise how testing is conducted, which is also expected to increase teacher contact time with students.

- What is the District's legislative plan for adequate/full funding from the state? Among its legislative priorities, ASD has asked the state and legislature to provide stable, predictable funding that at least keeps up with inflation so schools can keep the focus on the classrooms and make sustainable change. Information on the district's legislative priorities is available at www.asdk12.org/govtrelations.

Student achievement

- At the principal level, provide assessment data by subgroup for each teacher. Assessment data that is available to the public is on the ASD website. Go to www.asdk12.org/ae/reports/schoolreportcard to review the performance data for each ASD school.

Community relations and parent involvement

- Discuss discipline regulations, rules and why they are in place. Concern over strict and confusing penalties. The use of Out-of-School Suspension vs. in-school suspensions, a recommendation to have students stay at school. The Instructional Division continually reviews its policies and procedures with building principals to ensure that all students are treated as individuals with fairness and consistency. For additional questions, please contact Secondary Supervisor Jerry Koetje, Koetje.Jerry@asdk12.org.

Curriculum adoption and implementation

- Why is there Algebra A and Algebra B?
To provide more time for those that need it to master algebraic concepts.

Cultural competence

- Is there a cultural component to RTI? Common Core State Standards?

Response to Instruction (RTI)

The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems, presents RTI as “a culturally responsive framework for ensuring evidence-based, high-quality opportunities to learn in inclusive settings for all students, including those who are culturally and linguistically diverse.” Additionally, RTI frameworks are often implemented to prevent or correct issues of disproportionality in special education.

Within a RTI framework, tiered instruction should be provided to all students using research-based practices, including culturally responsive methods. While RTI includes standard district-wide components such as universal screening, Common Core State Standards, and tiered instructional materials, each school must look at the cultural and linguistic needs of the student body and adjust the delivery of tiered instruction to meet the needs of their students. That means that school staff must become familiar with and consider the cultural norms that students and families bring with them to school.

If data show that a student or group of students are not making adequate academic or social progress, then educators should first consider whether instruction is adequately matched to the needs of students before assuming that students are not responding due to within student deficits. This shift from primarily looking at learning difficulties as a child problem to stronger consideration of ecological factors is a strength of RTI.

Resources:

www.nccrest.org/professional/culturally_responsive_response_to_intervention.html
www.rtinetwork.org/learn/diversity/cultural-adaptations-when-implementing-rti-inurban-settings

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

The CCSS are designed to enable all students to prepare for college and career. Cultural/global understanding is clearly a goal of the standards. The standards explicitly call for students to learn about global histories and cultures through literature and informational texts from across genres, eras, and world regions.

This quote comes from the Introduction to the ELA standards, on the page titled "Students Who are College and Career Ready in Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language."

(The Introduction lays the foundation for the standards.)

The descriptions that follow are not standards themselves but instead offer a portrait of students who meet the standards set out in this document. As students advance through the grades and master the standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language, they are able to exhibit with increasing fullness and regularity these capacities of the literate individual:

They come to understand other perspectives and cultures.

Students appreciate that the twenty - first - century classroom and workplace are settings in which people from often widely divergent cultures and who represent diverse experiences and perspectives must

learn and work together. Students actively seek to understand other's perspectives and cultures through reading and listening, and they are able to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. They evaluate other points of view critically and constructively. Through reading great classic and contemporary works of literature representative of a variety of periods, cultures, and worldviews, students can vicariously inhabit worlds and have experiences much different than their own.

This section comes from the Reading Anchor Standards:

Note on range and content of student reading

To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high - quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts. Through extensive reading of stories, dramas, poems, and myths from diverse cultures and different time periods, students gain literary and cultural knowledge as well as familiarity with various text structures and elements.

The shifts of the standards toward more close, careful, analytical reading, more collaborative discussions, and increased attention to evidence and examination of multiple viewpoints will be best accomplished through culturally responsive instruction. Additionally, the standards call for careful selection of complex, varied, and challenging student texts, and this is where our curriculum teams will be responsible for ensuring that we teach literature and informational texts from across genres, eras, cultures, and world regions.

Other concerns, issues or initiatives

- Stronger math skills needed in Middle School

The new math adoption will help students improve their math skills. The new math materials will be implemented next school year.

- Create stronger guidelines in the by-laws of how English as a Second Language accommodations are decided, specifically how a team is defined. (policy)
ESL guidelines and processes are set by the State of Alaska and by federal legislation. For more information of ESL processes, please contact Phil Farson at farson_phil@asdk12.org.

- What is the graduation rate for Special Education Students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan in the past five years? How many have dropped out (percentage)?

The following graduation data is taken from the Anchorage School District's 2012-13 Profile of Performance. The entire document can be accessed @ the following https://www.asdk12.org/media/anchorage/globalmedia/documents/assessmentandevaluation/POP_1213_District.pdf

Table 1: Four-year cohort graduation rate

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Percentage point change from 2012 to 2013
All Students	71.04%	72.14%	72.79%	76.22%	3.43
AF AM	56.25%	66.79%	62.50%	63.64%	1.14
AKNA/AI	44.01%	50.88%	42.37%	53.77%	11.40
Asian	74.88%	78.29%	79.91%	82.19%	2.28
NH/OPI	62.90%	56.74%	61.48%	63.46%	1.98
Caucasian	78.11%	78.76%	79.16%	83.59%	4.43
Hispanic	63.72%	61.32%	71.01%	73.41%	2.40
2 or More	66.75%	65.33%	68.70%	68.03%	-0.67
EDS	58.37%	61.60%	57.43%	62.10%	4.67
Special Education Students	45.22%	39.47%	42.36%	43.96%	1.60
LEP	41.14%	48.92%	51.43%	45.27%	-6.16
Migrant	68.04%	65.60%	61.54%	56.47%	-5.07
Female	76.80%	78.26%	77.60%	79.56%	1.96
Male	65.54%	66.58%	68.39%	73.18%	4.79

Green shading indicates improvement.
Source: Graduate Cohort File

Table 2: Five-year cohort graduation rate

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Percentage point change from 2012 to 2013
All Students	75.50%	77.48%	79.59%	2.11
AF AM	59.85%	73.26%	69.71%	-3.55
AKNA/AI	50.17%	60.99%	55.09%	-5.09
Asian	81.26%	82.26%	85.09%	2.83
NH/OPI	66.93%	65.00%	68.18%	3.18
Caucasian	81.64%	82.77%	85.56%	2.79
Hispanic	70.12%	68.08%	76.45%	8.37
2 or More	72.68%	72.48%	75.75%	3.27
EDS	78.08%	66.30%	67.97%	1.67
Special Education Students	52.38%	48.84%	50.40%	1.56
LEP	51.31%	56.88%	57.38%	0.50
Migrant	75.51%	78.15%	70.83%	-7.32
Female	79.61%	82.52%	83.54%	1.02
Male	71.57%	72.86%	75.97%	3.11

Green shading indicates improvement

Table 3: Annual dropout rate

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Percentage point change from 2012 to 2013
All Students	3.40%	3.59%	4.27%	4.62%	3.74%	-0.88
AF AM	4.81%	3.83%	5.17%	5.37%	4.73%	-0.64
AKNA/AI	5.53%	7.23%	8.47%	9.76%	6.91%	-2.85
Asian	2.98%	2.71%	2.84%	3.53%	2.83%	-0.70
NH/OPI	4.83%	5.94%	6.12%	7.62%	5.69%	-1.93
Caucasian	2.40%	2.45%	3.12%	3.16%	2.74%	-0.42
Hispanic	3.92%	4.07%	4.90%	4.65%	4.15%	-0.50
2 or More	5.11%	5.57%	6.00%	6.45%	4.60%	-1.85
EDS	4.50%	5.60%	6.51%	6.40%	4.86%	-1.54
Special Education Students	4.47%	5.12%	5.66%	6.73%	5.00%	-1.73
LEP	6.42%	6.40%	7.06%	8.15%	6.08%	-2.07
Migrant	4.49%	5.97%	5.08%	6.37%	3.53%	-2.84
Female	2.91%	2.94%	3.29%	3.71%	2.91%	-0.80
Male	3.85%	4.21%	5.22%	5.48%	4.54%	-0.94
Grade 7	0.80%	0.57%	0.55%	0.58%	0.76%	0.18
Grade 8	0.84%	0.44%	0.67%	0.55%	0.74%	0.19
Grade 9	2.40%	2.46%	3.33%	3.02%	1.95%	-1.07
Grade 10	3.45%	4.19%	4.68%	5.75%	3.53%	-2.22
Grade 11	4.69%	5.06%	6.19%	7.05%	4.96%	-2.09
Grade 12	7.84%	8.42%	9.78%	10.67%	10.30%	-0.37

Other

- Explain to the group why Special Education/ Title VII Indian Education/ Gifted and English Language Learner programs are on MECAC (example: equal access to gifted education).

The parent representation areas are groups inside of our community that need a voice in our education system.

- Does King Career Center have anything like the (culinary arts) program that Mr. Agnato described in his public testimony?

Yes, there is a Culinary Arts program at KCC. Please visit the KCC website for more information, www.asdk12.org/schools/kcc/pages/Courses/CA.html.

- Right now Standards Based Assessments are based on Alaska Core Standards. When will that change so they are tested on Common Core State Standards?

The State of Alaska’s new assessments based on Alaska’s newly adopted standards (that closely align to the CCSS) were slated to be implemented in the 2014-15 school year.

UPDATE: The state has selected a new assessment contractor, Achievement & Assessment Institute (AAI) of Kansas. This first assessment will be ready to administer in the spring of 2015.

- The Universal Screening that is part of the Response to Instruction program is being tested on Common Core State Standards. Is there a disconnect?

The reading universal screener used for grades 4-12 (CoreK12) is aligned to the Alaska GLEs (grade level expectations). The company has not completed an alignment to the Common Core State Standards. The RTI team is developing a plan for ASD's universal screener in both reading and math for next year because of this. We will likely be moving to AimsWeb, as this screener is nationally normed and more appropriate to our needs.

UPDATE: ASD is currently using the nationally normed AIMSweb universal screener for both reading and math.