

DAVE DONLEY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER COMMUNITY COUNCIL REPORT TOP FIVE ISSUES OCTOBER 2024

Member Donley is communicating for himself and not on behalf of the ASD or School Board.

1. RIGHTSIZING / CLOSING SCHOOLS

The ASD Administration has asked the Board to adopt a “rubric” to use in determining a recommendation for closing up to ten schools. Unlike the proposal to close six schools several years ago, this new list will be developed after public input and not by an outside contractor. Just because a school was on the previous list and not closed does not mean it may not be on this new list. It is doubtful that any middle schools will be chosen as the adding of six grade to middle schools has significantly increased middle school occupancy.

Currently, the about 90 schools in the district are only 70 percent occupied.

Closing ten schools would increase occupancy rate to about 90 percent.

Students have decreased from over 50,000 eight years ago to less than 43,000 this year.

Projections are for further decreases. Reasons include: people leaving Anchorage, people having fewer children, parents moving children to home or private school.

2. NEW PROFICIENCY GOALS

The Board adopted new lower proficiency goals, from 80 percent to 46 percent by 2028 for language skills (reading) and from 80 percent to 42 percent by 2028 in math.

Member Donley voted against this change.

3. NEW PROFICIENCY RESULTS

New State of Alaska proficiency testing – AK STAR – were announced in early October and overall grade proficiency in the ASD fell 1 percent in language arts to 35 percent and 2 percent in math to 35 percent. Some increase in proficiency occurred in lower grade reading.

4. 2025 SCHOOL BOND

Expect a school bond in April 2025. Mostly roofs and safety upgrades.

5. 2025 – 26 SCHOOL YEAR BUDGET

Projected deficiency to maintain current class sizes for the 2025–26 school year is between \$65 and \$85 million and growing. Main causes are health care increases and upcoming collective bargaining.