



Anchorage Mayor Dan Sullivan has launched an initiative to improve education performance standards for all students in Anchorage public schools.

The goal is to raise the achievement bar so that Anchorage high school graduates are competitive in the international workplace. Anchorage, because of its unique location, is more directly involved with international trading partners than most other American cities. It is important that Anchorage students be held to a higher standard, such as the other of Pacific Rim countries. It is not enough for educational success to be defined by mediocre standards of other American cities.

The initiative will span seven months during which Anchorage citizens and education policy makers will come together to develop and advocate ways in which we can achieve this goal.

Phase #1: Education Summit (November 15-16, 2011)

The two-day summit November 15-16 in which 100 civic and community leaders, drawn from education, policy makers, business, labor, neighborhoods, service organizations, faith-based communities, and others, explored significant innovations, challenging ideas, and reforms from other jurisdictions. They then developed a set of scenarios on possible directions for education reform in Anchorage that can be further discussed with citizens.

Panel presentations were on:

- Creating a World-Class Education System (major systemic reform, international benchmarking, big-picture view of curriculum);
- Ensuring All Children Learn to the Best of their Ability (teacher preparation and evaluation); and
- Alternatives to Traditional Education (curriculum, technology and school choice/alternatives).

Phase #2: Community Conversations (February 2012)

A series of discussions with Anchorage citizens was held in February 2012 to discuss the reform ideas that come out of the November Summit. During the discussions, citizens explored the potential reforms and learned about what reforms they would be prepared to support.

Phase #3: Capstone Summit (June 6-7, 2012)

Participants from the November 2011 Summit and representatives from the Community Conversations will convene to review citizen comments from the Community Conversations and finalize recommendations for several high-leverage reforms and action plans to move them forward.

While Anchorage fares above average in comparison to many other American schools, regrettably that achievement bar is not very high. Because of Anchorage's unique location, we are more directly involved with international trading partners than many other American cities. The goal is to raise the achievement bar for Anchorage schools to a higher standard, such as those of Pacific Rim countries, so our graduates can be internationally competitive.

Community Conversations

In February 2012, Phase II of the Mayor's Education Summit, took place, with 6 Community Conversations around Anchorage. In these conversations citizens reviewed the preliminary scenarios to improve student performance that were identified by the participants in the November Summit.

The scenarios are:

1. World-class leadership: teachers and principals;
2. Community engagement and commitment;
3. Set great expectations for student success; and
4. Expand choice and opportunity for all.

Participants discussed the approach and steps they think Anchorage should take, including the choices and trade-offs that will be required, in order for Anchorage's schools to become among the nation's best.

Citizen comments from the Community Conversations will help inform the discussion that will take place at the Capstone Summit in June 2012. As a result of the Community Conversations, summit participants will better understand the community's proprieties and the trade-offs it is willing to make as choices are faced in how to best achieve improved student performance.