ASD INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

ASD 2025-02

Building Access Controls

Anchorage School District

October 21, 2025



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October 21, 2025

Anchorage School District Superintendent and Members of the School Board:

I am pleased to present for your review ASD Internal Audit Report 2025-02, Building Access Controls, Anchorage School District. A summary of the report is presented below.

We have completed an audit of the Anchorage School District's Building Access Controls. The objective of this audit was to determine if the District is adequately controlling access to their buildings. Our audit included a review of policies and procedures related to building access to determine if the policies and procedures were being enforced. In addition, we visited school and department buildings to evaluate building access, and reviewed records of keys and fobs issued to employees and contractors.

Our audit found that the Anchorage School District's controls over building access need to be improved. Specifically, our review found work orders for building access, specific to exterior doors, needs review as the work orders were not always resolved timely. In addition, we found building access to schools and departments were not always secure, and found multiple storage units were not secure after operating hours. Moreover, we found some processes within the Key Control Procedures were not always followed. Finally, the list of fob holders we received from the schools did not always match the list of fob holders we received from the support department.

There were five findings in connection with this audit. Management was responsive to the findings and recommendations.

Alden P. Thern

Director, Internal Audit



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Introduction. The Anchorage School District (District) oversees educating nearly 43,000 students and provides employment to over 5,000 staff members. According to the District, student and staff safety is a top priority, with a goal to provide a safe and secure learning and working environment at all schools and buildings within the District. To achieve this goal, various support departments including the Office of Emergency Management, Maintenance and Operations, and Capital Planning and Construction, help manage different aspects of school and department safety. These support departments provide a variety of services to assist with safety throughout the District from implementing secured vestibules at elementary schools and a visitor management system, to maintaining a lock and key system to control access to the District's more than 100 buildings. All buildings have traditional lock and key access with limited keys to the exterior doors, while some buildings have electronic fob devices which allows fob holders entry through doorways where device readers have been installed. The District plans to implement fob devices at all locations as it allows for access to be deactivated quickly in case of loss or theft. However, when keys are lost or stolen, a risk assessment must be performed to decide if building locks need to be rekeyed since rekeying buildings is a time consuming and costly process. In 2023, new safety upgrades were approved by voters which included secured vestibules being installed at elementary schools. The secured vestibules add an extra set of doors at the main entrance with the intent to "prevent people from being able to enter the school without approval." To enter a school with a secured vestibule, the individual would need to select a buzzer and then be allowed in by staff.

<u>Objective and Scope</u>. The objective of this audit was to determine if the District is adequately controlling access to their buildings. Our audit included a review of policies and procedures related



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to building access to determine if the policies and procedures were being enforced. In addition, we

visited school and department buildings to evaluate building access, and reviewed records of keys

and fobs issued to employees and contractors.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing

standards, except for the requirement of an external quality control review. Those standards require

that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable

basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence

obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The audit was requested by the Anchorage School Board Finance Committee.

Overall Evaluation. Controls over building access need to be improved. Specifically, our review

found work orders for building access, specific to exterior doors, needs review as the work orders

were not always resolved timely. In addition, we found building access to schools and departments

were not always secure, and found multiple storage units were not secure after operating hours.

Moreover, we found some processes within the Key Control Procedures were not always followed.

Finally, the list of fob holders we received from the schools did not always match the list of fob

holders we received from the support department.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Work Order Process for Building Access Needs Review.

a. Finding. Work orders for building access, specific to exterior doors, needs review as

the work orders were not always resolved timely. This appeared to be due to several

factors that included multiple work orders for the same request being created, the

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> priority of the work order being set to low, and work orders being closed without resolution. For example, one elementary school had repeated work orders input for a front door that was not closing properly, allowing access directly into the elementary school during operating hours. The elementary school reported the door not closing on work orders dated August 2024, September 2024, October 2024, December 2024 and again in January 2025. One workorder created by this elementary school stated, "front door do not properly latch closed after opening. We understand this is due to the construction. However, the problem keeps happening. Close the ticket if you need, we just want a secure building that stays secure." Although several work orders were input for this issue, the door was not repaired by May 2025, when the exterior door evaluation was completed for the audit. The District's online employee bulletin in August 2022 included, "if there are any issues with doors or locks, please immediately submit a work order to Maintenance as a safety issue and set it as a high priority." However, we found when a secured vestibule is implemented, its warranty period can cause uncertainty on which support department would oversee the repair. The cost for the security improvements at the elementary school we visited, which included installing a secured vestibule, was estimated to be \$2.9M with the benefit to "protect students and staff from existing crime in the area." However, after installing the updated security features, the elementary school was still not secure due to the exterior door not closing properly, putting student and staff safety potentially at risk.

Recommendation. Building access should be reviewed regularly by the support departments and schools to ensure doors are working as intended. In addition, work orders for exterior building doors or any safety issue should have an automatic high priority set with guidance provided on how to complete the work order to ensure it is

resolved timely.

c. Management Comments. Management stated,

- "a. Management concurs with the auditor's findings.
- b. All work orders submitted for exterior doors, windows, locks or access related issues will be flagged as Emergent Priority and will be addressed immediately.
- c. Supervisors and Leads have been instructed to contact field technicians via phone and redirect work to address immediate perimeter security concerns.
- d. A clear delineation is being established to determine whether issues fall under Maintenance or Capital Projects during warranty periods for newly constructed or renovated facilities to reduce delays and ambiguity.
- e. Follow up with the schools is needed via senior directors to instruct school base staff on how to submit security related work orders and the importance of accurate and timely detail when reporting window or door lock failures."
- **d.** Evaluation of Management Comments. Management comments were responsive to the audit finding and recommendation.

2. Building Access to Schools and Departments Were Not Always Secure.

Finding. During our review, we found building access to schools and departments were not always secure. We visited a total of 30 buildings which included 26 schools and 4 departments. Out of the 26 schools we visited, 15 or 58% were not secure due to the exterior doors being either unlocked, ajar, propped open with objects, or broken. For example, when we visited three high schools, we were able to access all three buildings during operating hours due to side doors being either unlocked,

> propped open with objects, or left ajar. Specifically, one high school had manually unlocked an exterior door with a master key to allow students and staff to freely enter the building, although a fob device had already been installed at this entrance to allow staff easier building access. At a different high school we visited after operating hours, all the doors to the teacher entrances were unlocked allowing anyone to walk directly into the building. We also found seven schools that had windows open on the ground level during and after operating hours allowing access into the building. Out of the four departments, one was not secure with a back door found ajar. The Districts Access Control document read, "Lock your doors. We all want students to get inside the school for safety as quickly as possible so lock your doors once your entry time has elapsed." We also found some doors had signs posted that stated, "Do Not Prop Doors Open" and "All Staff Please Close Doors Behind You to Fully Latch", however it appeared these signs went overlooked. For example, a second high school we visited after operating hours had a rock that was propping the gym door open allowing access directly into the building even though a sign had been placed at this entrance stating, "Do Not Prop Doors Open". Although the support departments created documents to assist with building access and safety, it appeared some staff were unaware of the protocols, such as keeping the doors locked. When we spoke with school staff at a middle school, we were informed that a relocatable building we reviewed had been broken into three different times during the school year. While reviewing the relocatable buildings during operating hours at this same middle school, we found some to be unlocked with no staff or students inside but did find a computer and TV easily accessible for theft in addition to other classroom supplies. Furthermore, we found an instance where an afterschool activity took place within a middle school building, however when the after-school activity

was complete the building doors were left unsecured. With unsecured access points, schools and departments are at risk of potential safety issues and theft.

Examples Below Show Building Access Points Not Secured

The below examples show a door being left ajar, a door propped open with a wooden block, and a door propped open with a plant pot.









Photo above showing door with "DO NOT PROP DOORS OPEN"



Photo above showing same door with rock propping door open after operating hours

Recommendation. We recommend regular safety reminders to all District staff, emphasizing the importance of safety by holding leadership such as Principals responsible when building access is not secure.

c. Management Comments. Management stated,

- "a. Management concurs with the auditor's findings.
- b. Senior Leadership will meet with Principals and stress the importance of door security.
- c. Office of Emergency Management (OEM) will share the results of school security audits with senior leaders. School Security Officer (SSO) scope of work will include emphasis on conducting routine security checks of exterior doors and windows daily.
- d. The intrusion systems and access control systems can be set up to send a warning to the office, et al, if a door is propped open for an extended time. 5 minutes lets say. The intrusion system can be used on the operable windows that will not let the system arm if one is open.
- e. Starting with Secured Vestibule Upgrade (SVU) group 5 and newer, we have included a full building air balancing. The problem is not just too much air but not enough return/relief air to balance it. It also means we are using too much electricity and heat.
- f. Maintenance & Capital Planning & Construction are confirming that an additional vent within the vestibule will reduce pressure to the front door. Once confirmed, those corrections will be implemented.

- g. All maintenance staff have been instructed to remain vigilant and watch for doors that are propped open and to remove any objects keeping doors unsecured, reinforcing building safety during their routine work activities.
- h. Building Plant Operators (BPOs) have been instructed to put additional effort into ensuring exterior doors and windows are locked during the academic day and to report any issues immediately to the principal and via a work order with Maintenance."
- **d.** Evaluation of Management Comments. Management comments were responsive to the audit finding and recommendation.

3. Storage Units Were Not Always Secure.

Finding. We found multiple storage units were not secure after operating hours. Two of the unsecured storage units included propane tanks and expensive John Deere tractors that could be accessed and stolen after operating hours due to the units being unlocked. Although some storage units had additional security such as fencing to protect the stored supplies, the fencing was also left unlocked. During our review, we found locks on the ground, a lock that had been locked to itself, and locks that were missing from storage units leaving them unsecured. Some of these storage units were used by afterschool activities and sports clubs. However, if storage units were not secured immediately after use, there is a potential for leaving the units unsecured. When we spoke with staff to understand the responsibility of locking the storage units, we were told the storage units were always secure. However, we found gas cans, propane tanks, tractors, wood, boxes of brand-new flooring, and field supplies that could easily be taken due to the storage units being

unsecured. We also found unlocked storage areas that provided access to the school's generators.

Examples of Storage Units Not Secured







Recommendation. The District should ensure staff lock storage units immediately after use and implement an evening check to ensure all storage units are secure at the end of the day.

b. <u>Management Comments</u>. Management stated,

- "a. Management concurs with the auditor's findings.
- b. OEM will add sheds and storage unit lock checks to building assessment form. SSOs at secondary schools will receive additional instruction on conducting routine security checks of outbuildings and storage areas.
- c. Senior Leadership will meet with Principals and stress the importance of

securing sheds and other storage. Principals will make sure BPO's and Coaches know that these areas are closed and locked when they are not in use."

d. Evaluation of Management Comments. Management comments were responsive to the audit finding and recommendation.

4. Key Control Procedures Not Always Followed.

a. <u>Finding.</u> The Key Control Procedures was created to assist schools and departments with detailing the duties and responsibilities of Principals, managers, and employees at the District as they relate to the distribution and control of keys. The below processes within the Key Control Procedures were not always followed:

Key Inventory Not Always Accurate - The Key Control Procedures states "conduct a joint inventory for all keys in May and August". However, it appeared the key inventories completed were not always accurate. For example, when we visited an alternative school to review the key inventory in comparison to the list provided by the support department, there were numerous keys at the school location that were not included on the list provided by the support department. Specifically, we found rows of keys in a lock box that were not included on any inventory list. In addition, school staff was using a key list from 2015 to complete the key inventory as they were uncertain where to obtain an updated key inventory list. Furthermore, the key markers did

not always match when comparing key inventory lists and did not always include the names assigned to the keys making it difficult to ensure the inventory was correct. For example, the support department provided a list of keys for a middle school that included 11 master keys. However, when we reviewed the list provided by the middle school, it showed more than 30 master keys. Finally, a key inventory list we received from an elementary school did not include all of the keys and instead only included classroom keys but did not include any master keys assigned including those to the Principal.

The Key Control Procedures references several documents that are intended to assist users with key inventory and reporting. However, the documents were not always uniform and the instructions on how to complete the key inventory varied depending on the document. For example, the Access Control document states to upload key inventories to a Google Drive, while the Key Control Procedures references an appendix that requests the key inventory to be completed on a paper form with no reference to a Google Drive. Due to the inconsistent key inventory practices, keys that had allegedly been returned to the school went unaccounted. For example, there was a lost key form for a master key that had been reported as missing, although the comments on the form stated the employee had in fact returned the key to the school. The description of the incident stated, "AA was out, and employee says she turned the key back in, but it is not here." Without accurate key inventory, it is difficult to determine if the key had been returned to the school. We also found there was no review of the key inventory to ensure the inventory had been completed.

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Lost Key Process Was Not Always Followed – Keys that were marked as lost

on the school's key inventory list were not always reported on the lost key

form. In addition, a master key that was lost in 2020 was not reported on the

lost key form until 2024. The Key Control Procedures states, "Report lost

key(s) on the same day (or next business day) when loss is known", and to

"Complete the Lost Key/Fob Report online." Furthermore, when we reached

out for lost key data from the support department listed on the Key Control

Procedures, we were asked to contact a different department for the data.

However, when we contacted that department, they referred us back to the

original department for the request. Lastly, we were forwarded outdated

procedures for the lost key form that included instructions to contact a

department that was no longer involved in the lost key process and was only

involved in the stolen key process.

Keys Loaned to Employees - The Key Control Procedures states, "Key Holder

cannot, under any circumstances, loan key(s) to an employee". However, a set

of keys were lost due to the staff allowing others to borrow the keys. The lost

key form stated, "Keys were borrowed by a teacher or para (possibly a sub),

they were not brought back. Many people borrowed them that day, so I don't

remember who had them last." The key set lost included a master key, the

employees fob, front door key, and key box key.

b. Recommendation. We recommend reviewing the current practices for

inventorying keys and reporting lost or stolen keys to ensure the instructions

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are easily understood. We also recommend consolidating the documentation to make it easier for users, with guidance provided on how to conduct the key inventory. Finally, the support department should review completed key inventories to ensure they are accurate and reconciles to the department records.

c. Management Comments. Management stated,

- "a. Management concurs with the auditor's findings.
- b. The District will develop and implement a District-wide key control operation at the end of the school year. This was done five years ago but it is time to do again. Principals will sign in sheet (all keys returned to the school) in May, and upload their key sign out list in August of each year.
- c. There may be unused keys at schools that will be removed at the end of the school year. All key requests are vetted by the key shop, accurate counts by school are consulted prior to issuing a school additional keys. Key reports can easily be supplied to a school if requested.
- d. Lost/Stolen keys will not be reissued by the lock shop without the completion of a lost key report and the approval of OEM."
- **d.** Evaluation of Management Comments. Management comments were responsive to the audit finding and recommendation.

5. Fob Records Not Always Accurate.

a. <u>Finding.</u> The list of fob holders we received from the schools did not always match the list of fob holders we received from the support department. While the Fob

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Control Procedures does not require inventory for fobs, an accurate list of all active fob holders should be readily available. The Fob Control Procedures gives a general outline of the duties and responsibilities but doesn't include any detail on how to track and account for assigned fobs holders. For example, fobs assigned to individuals under Special Activity Agreements and custodians were not always being tracked by the schools, although we were informed both the schools and the support department should be tracking the fob data for these positions. In addition, secondary schools are given a handful of fobs to assign to coaches, however if the record of who is assigned the fob is not maintained there is a potential for the fob to be lost or stolen with no record of who was assigned the fob. Out of 104 fob holders assigned to a high school, 38 or 37% did not match the support departments records. In addition, when we requested a list of active fob holders to compare to a list of terminated employees, we were informed the list was not readily available. When we did receive a partial list of fob holders to compare, one individual who had terminated with the District in March 2025 was still showing as an active fob holder. If the fob is not returned when the employee leaves the District, and the termination is not processed timely, it could potentially allow for individuals who are no longer with the District to access the building. Furthermore, the process for deactivating lost/stolen fobs falls on one District employee who is assigned to manage the process.

Recommendation. The Fob Control Procedures should be updated to include tracking fob holders. In addition, the support department should be cross trained on the fob process to ensure more than one District employee can complete all tasks necessary to ensure proper controls over fobs.

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c. <u>Management Comments</u>. Management stated,

"a. Management concurs with the auditor's findings.

b. Previously school staff collected fobs and redistributed fobs as needed. Fobs now

stay with the employee until termination so they will have the correct fob

c. The OEM department will develop a better system in which school leadership

and school staff can confirm that they have the correct FOB. They have already

developed a new report for Principals, so they'll always be able to get an accurate

list of FOB numbers for each employee."

d. Evaluation of Management Comments. Management comments were responsive

to the audit finding and recommendation.

Discussion With Responsible Officials. The results of this audit were discussed with appropriate

Anchorage School District officials on August 26, 2025.

Audit Staff:

Meredith Basdaras