

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #309 (2005-2006)

June 12, 2006

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REVIEW/END OF YEAR REPORT FOR FY 2005-2006:
EAGLE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

ASD Goal: *Ensure public accountability through effective communication with students, staff, parents, community and government at all levels.*

PERTINENT FACTS:

School Board Policy 333.10 on Charter Schools requires an Annual Review of each Charter School. To be specific, the Policy states:

“The charter school will be subject to review of its operations and finances by the School Board. Annually, the Academic Policy Committee will submit a concise written report and make a presentation to the School Board and the public no later than June 30 of each school year. This report will include, but is not limited to, information of the attainment of student performance expectations, including copies of the Terra Nova and Benchmark reports; recommendations for remediation of poor student performance; school goal attainment; trends in student/staff enrollment and mobility; an end of year preliminary financial statement showing revenues and expenditures; minutes of the meetings of the governing body of the charter school; descriptions of charter school activities; copies of any leases signed by the charter school; current bylaws of the Academic Policy Committee; notification of establishment of non-profit 501 (c) (3) status; list of officers in any PTA/PTO or other parent organization; any changes in facility location; any major changes planned for the following school year; a list of the Academic policy Committee for the past and coming school year, including officers, and staff members by position; a list of employees and job titles; and other information requested by the School Board.

If there is evidence of a breach of contract, then the School Board, through the Superintendent or designee, shall have a right to investigate this breach of

contract and meet with the charter school to discuss possible remedies and/or possible termination of the contract.”

Representatives from Eagle Academy Charter School will be available to present their Annual Report to the School Board. Their report is presented to the School Board as Attachment A. The Administration will also present remarks at the appropriate time.

After two years of preparing to open Eagle Academy Charter School, it started its first day of operations on August 1, 2005. The first year of Eagle Academy has been an exciting one with many exciting moments and shared memories. The school is located in Eagle River/Chugiak in a renovated facility that has charm and warmth with all the necessities of an elementary school readily available. The building owner designed the new school with the help of the Eagle Academy Academic Policy Committee and advice from the Anchorage School District Facilities Department. The school community is very proud of this facility and hopes to expand into adjacent space at some future point. Connie Bensler, the District’s Liaison to Eagle Academy Charter School, has attended the monthly meetings of their Academic Policy Committee, made up of parents and staff. There is a good working relationship between Ms. Bensler and the APC.

The school’s philosophy is closely aligned with the Spalding method of teaching and learning. All current teachers have been trained in this method and there is continued training planned in August of 2006. The school schedule is set up for all students to have language arts and math instruction at the same time in the morning so that students may move between levels of attainment as needed. The afternoons are taken up with science, social studies and rotational electives. Students not working at grade level expectations are given tutoring after school for remediation. Parents are expected to become familiar with the Spalding method of instruction and learning and to help their students be successful in this model. Students are expected to wear a uniform with considerable choices available to the basic requirement. There is an atmosphere of respect and patriotism at the school. There have been a number of schoolwide projects involving activities focused on our involvement in Iraq including pen pals, gathering books and school supplies for Iraqi children and sending holiday cards to soldiers in Iraq. The principal, Kelly Nichols, who is also a member of the National Guard, has been deployed to Afghanistan. Retired principal, Jim Cox is serving as acting principal at the school for the remainder of the year. In spite of this upheaval, the school continues to prosper and thrive.

There have been a number of efforts made to remediate those students who do not do well in the SBA’s or the Terra Nova. Teachers have continually monitored student performance and made adjustments for changes. Students not working

at grade level have been identified and offered tutoring as well as extra help in the classroom. It is the goal of the school to do even more in this area next year, identifying those students needing remediation early in the fall with plans in place to help them shortly thereafter. It is a goal of the school to increase the number of students being proficient or above in both math and language arts next year.

The Academic Policy Committee is committed to keeping the mission of the school in tact while understanding that families come into the school for a variety of reasons. Parent information nights are held throughout the year with the goal of educating the parents on the school's charter and philosophy. The teaching staff is excellent. There will be some turnover next year, but a solid core of teachers committed to the school will remain. There is currently a search being done for a new principal. The school's enrollment will likely remain stable, with a small amount of growth being anticipated. A group of parents working with the principal will begin to explore the possibility of expanding to seventh and eighth grade at some future date, but not in the next school year. There have been some growing pains while all members of the school community learn their roles in this new and unique school. As in all charter schools, parents play a very important and active role in the school governance with the principal being the liaison between them and the staff. This has been, for the most part, successfully done at Eagle. As the school continues to exist and experience success, this relationship will become smoother and even more productive than it already is.

It is a pleasure for the Anchorage School District administration to work with the Eagle Academy Charter School community. All members of this community have done well this important first year. Many have given a tremendous amount of time and energy to getting the school started and keeping on track with its mission and goals. There is every reason to believe that Eagle Academy will be a choice for students in the Anchorage School District for many years to come.

CC/RG/CB/mlh

Attachment

Prepared by: Connie Bensler, Charter School Liaison

Approved by: Rhonda Gardner, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction