



YEAR END REPORT

2005-2006

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Eagle Academy Charter School Introduction

We had an exciting first year at Eagle Academy! Our work began in the spring, when we finalized our building plan and work got underway. Shawn Stephan, the building owner, did an excellent job bringing the building up to standards. In May we found our principal, Mrs. Nichols; staff interviews were conducted throughout late spring and early summer and our staff was essentially in place by August 1.

Thanks to our Planning and Implementation Grants, we were able to begin ordering equipment and supplies, and schedule staff training, in June, which gave us a slight head start on these enormous and important tasks. Spalding Integrated Language Arts training was critical to our success, and our staff completed this rigorous 9-day class in August. The learning didn't stop there, however, and two follow-up visits were conducted by Spalding Foundation to provide ongoing instructional guidance.

Startup was a bit of a challenge, as much of our equipment arrived during our first two weeks of school. That didn't stop the teachers from moving ahead with evaluations and student placements, though, and by the third week we had a handle on the appropriate learning level for each child. Our teachers are to be highly commended in this area, as very few adjustments were needed after startup.

Eagle Academy's students fell right into the daily schedule of classes. Each learning level in the school had an uninterrupted 3.5 hours of Language Arts and Math every morning. By holding these two classes at the same time throughout the school, students could move to their appropriate learning level at the scheduled time. Afternoons included time for Art, Music, P.E. and Technology instruction on a rotating basis, as well as daily time for Social Studies and Science each day. Mrs. Gorham, our full time Special Education teacher, created a schedule to "rove" between classrooms and ensure that appropriate accommodations were being made for students with IEPs and 504 plans. She worked very closely with each teacher all year, and she saw very good results for those Special Ed students in our inclusion-based program.

As per Mrs. Gorham, our Special Ed teacher:

"While Eagle Academy attracts many highly proficient students, the overall program philosophy and sequential delivery of curriculum through explicit, multi-sensory, direct instruction is exactly what research supports for our struggling learners. Among these students at Eagle Academy, we have measured consistent and often remarkable progress, particularly in reading.

It is the philosophy of Eagle Academy to support struggling learners using a Response to Intervention (RTI) model. When a student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a 504 Accommodation Plan, or any identified need that impedes learning, appropriate interventions are determined by a Student Assistance Team (SAT) and put into place as part of the general instruction program. Possible interventions may include: 1) moving to an appropriate level to master foundational skills, 2) additional support from TA, SERT, and classroom

teachers, 3) tutoring services, 4) specific accommodations and modifications in the classroom to support learning style and strengths, and 5) progress monitoring with modifications to intervention plan as needed.

Regardless of the cause of non-proficiency, Spalding methodology applied directly and across the curriculum coupled with a philosophy of inclusion, intervention, and leveled instruction has resulted in some exciting examples of student progress:

1) Student reading five years below proficiency in the fall raises instructional level from grade one to grade three, increasing reading rate from 28cwpm with 100% comprehension to 74cwpm with 100% comprehension.

2) Student enters in the fall with IEP goals in reading and ends the school year with an instructional reading level more than one year beyond grade level, an oral reading rate of 86cwpm and 90% comprehension, a silent reading rate of 105wpm and 80% comprehension.

3) Student with a history of special education services and struggles in math and reading comprehension is reading instructionally at grade level, 151 wpm with 80% comprehension.

4) Student reading third grade passages at 43cwpm in the fall now reads third grade level passages at 89cwpm with 90% comprehension.

5) Student reading three years below proficiency in the fall raises instructional level from grade two at 68cwpm with 100% comprehension to grade four at 66cwpm with 100% comprehension.

These are just a few of the exciting accomplishments of Eagle Academy students who often receive little notoriety. These are not results that will appear publicly, but they are results that are moving specific children from high risk of failure to highly likely to succeed in life. “

Eagle Academy's uniforms made for a clear-cut dress code. The clothing provided enough choices to allow individualism while still retaining a uniform look. As a bonus, those kindergarten and first grade students were just incredibly cute in their plaid jumpers!

With all of the structure described here, one might think we were “staid,” but Eagle Academy students know how to have fun. We had special dress-up days, family movie nights, and some pretty cool classroom projects. Our Christmas program included vocals from each grade level, as well as violin and piano solos. Our halls are well-decorated with two- and three-dimensional art, and our students all agree that Mr. Hagensieker is “awesome.” First Graders watched “stick bugs” age, Second Graders started their own salmon run, and Third Grade hatched baby chicks. Third through sixth grade students participated in the Battle of the Books and learned a lot that will help

them in future competitions. The fifth grade donated Toys for Pets, and the sixth grade went to the NOAA weather station. A school-wide fund drive sponsored by the 6th grade class resulted in a donation of almost \$1,500 to the Red Cross. These are only a few of the events that made Eagle Academy's first year special.

Academically, we are very pleased with our program. Our first year with Spalding went very well, and our teachers extended great effort to make sure the delivery was as prescribed by the Spalding Foundation. We will use and refine our ILA 1 delivery next school year and plan to proceed to ILA 2 the following year. Saxon Math proved to be straightforward to instruct and very parent-friendly, and our students responded well to this curriculum. Likewise, Core Knowledge Social Studies and Scott Foresman Science found approval among teachers and parents alike. Eagle Academy had 100% participation in the SBA testing and we look forward to seeing how our students perform in their first year. Our Terra Nova results were respectable and with this benchmark in place we will enjoy seeing our students' progress as continue to strengthen our overall program.

We had a small set back when our principal, Mrs. Nichols, was called to active duty with deployment scheduled in June for Afghanistan. We are very fortunate to have Mr. Jim Cox willing to step in and help us out for the remainder of this school year.

We appreciate the assistance we have received from all in the Anchorage School District Administration as we went through the tremendous learning curve of a first-year charter school. In particular we thank Connie Bensler for her guidance, both Purchasing and Accounting for their patience, and Mrs. Comeau and the School Board for giving us this opportunity. As Eagle Academy grows stronger with time, we believe we will help many students excel academically and reach their potential as lifelong learners.