

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #321 (2005-2006)

June 26, 2006

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON INDIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM AND NATIVE
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PERTINENT FACTS:

During the 2005-2006 school year, the Indian Education Program provided academic support to 1,500 students in 33 elementary schools and three middle schools. An additional 1,600 students in four high schools had contact with and support from four community counselors.

The program focused on two major areas this school year, enhancing communication and increasing accountability. The image of Indian Education, as a responsive, student focused, highly motivated and accountable program, was enhanced through newsletters, the ASD Website, Public Service Announcements, radio talk shows, bulletin boards, ASD's Channel 14, and presentations to a variety of community organizations.

The active participation and collaboration of the Native Advisory Committee (NAC) members brought much success to the Title VII Indian Education Program this year. The members participated in a strategic planning session with the Foraker Group, an agency that works with non-profit groups in Alaska. The NAC dedicated time to analyzing student data and student needs.

The Indian Education staff took much pride in continued involvement in community outreach. The staff made a commitment to attend the Indian Education Public Forum, Native Advisory Committee meetings, and Anchorage School Board meetings. Some staff took extra initiative and took Native parents with them to these events. In addition, staff participated in parent/teacher conferences and IEP meetings, and hosted Indian Education Open Houses at individual schools.

Communication with the Anchorage School District staff also increased. The Indian Education staff made personal contact with the administrative assistant at each of the schools that do not have Indian Education staff. During each one-on-one meeting, a program overview, the 506 form, and how parents and students can access services were discussed. Presentations were also delivered to the Administrative Assistants Advance, Administrative Advance, Totem Conference, General Leadership and at the ASD Conference on Personalizing Education: High Expectations = Student Success. The presentations included an overview of the Culturally Responsive Six-Year Instructional Plan and in more recent presentations, the Culturally Responsive Continuum. The Continuum is a tool to assist schools in assessing their approach in empowering students intellectually, socially, and emotionally by using students' identities and backgrounds as meaningful sources to enhance the schools' attitudes, environment, curriculum, teaching strategies and family/community involvement.

The enhanced communication strengthened partnerships within the District and with the community that directly benefited Native families. The division worked closely with Cook Inlet's Partner's For Success Program and the other services Cook Inlet offers to all Alaska Native families. In addition, they have worked with Anchorage Faith and Action, Congregations Together (AFACT) and developed Native pilot schools at Romig and Willow Crest. The pilot schools are assisting and participating with training modules for cross-cultural and relationship building between home and school. Ten more schools will be added during the 2006-2007 school year.

Accountability is imperative to the success of Native students. A mid-year report was developed based on classroom grades and PLATO/Lightspan test results of the students who received Indian Education academic services. After reviewing the data with the Native Advisory Committee, recognition for the need of an adjustment in instructional strategies and delivery of services was made. The year-end data will be presented to the Anchorage School Board, the Native Advisory Committee, staff, and the public in August.

Although Indian Education has had many accomplishments this school year, there is much more that needs to be addressed. Major concerns include the dropout rate, attendance and the graduation rate of Native students. The program is dedicated to take action and engage in the collaborative efforts that will occur to change the current situation.

CC/RG/ES/DB

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