

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #309 (2006-2007)

May 14, 2007

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REVIEW/END OF YEAR REPORT FOR FY2006-2007
AQUARIAN 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 SBA reports; recommendations for remediation for 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 501 © (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 years, 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 Aquarian 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.

Connie Bensler, the Charter Schools Supervisor for the Anchorage School District has worked closely with the Administration and Academic Policy Committee of this school. Ms. Bensler attends monthly APC meetings and provides assistance to these groups when working within the confines of the Anchorage School District and Charter School Law, policies and regulations.

Aquarian Charter School has now enjoyed the stable leadership of Sue Forbes for four years. It is easily seen how that leadership has translated into a highly successful, well-run school from an administrative point of view. The Academic Policy Committee (APC) has also been extremely stable and effective as the governing body for the school. Again, this stability and effectiveness have translated into a well run school from a policy point of view. All in all, the leaders of Aquarian have worked well together to create and maintain one of Anchorage’s most effective and popular schools of choice.

One of the changes put into place this year was a full time Spanish teacher. In the past, the Spanish program was delivered in a variety of ways, but none proved to be very satisfactory to the students or parents. This year, all students received classroom instruction in Spanish from the Spanish teacher. By doing this, there had to be some adjustments to the budget and a reduction in the number of full-time teacher assistants. In the past, teaching assistants worked with students in Spanish for part of the day. The teaching staff requested part time non-Spanish teaching assistants in all classes and a full time Spanish teacher. They felt this was the most effective use of limited funds while meeting the spirit of the charter. It has proven to be an effective and popular arrangement.

In terms of the physical plant, this fall a new playground was installed. It has become a center piece for the neighborhood as well as the school. The students not only get to enjoy this wonderful facility during the school day, but are also able to enjoy it after hours. There isn’t another such playground anywhere in the neighborhood. Consequently, there is considerable pride taken by school folks as well as neighborhood folks in the facility. The age and condition of the building continues to concern the school but the alternative of not having a building to be housed in is also concerning. The principal works closely with

facilities and maintenance to keep on top of any and all repairs or improvements that are possible.

As in the past few years, there is again a large waiting list to get into Aquarian. There is also little if any movement among staff. The principal receives requests to transfer to the school regularly from teachers. People are happy to work here and parents are happy to bring their children here. Student participation in testing is high as are scores. It is expected that Aquarian will make AYP again this year. It has been a pleasure working with Ms. Forbes and the APC of Aquarian Charter School. They have created and maintained a school that is an example of how successful charter schools can be. We look forward to another positive and productive year next year.

CC/RG/CB

Attachment

Prepared by: Connie Bensler, Supervisor, Charter Schools

Approved by: Rhonda Gardner, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction