

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #108 (2007-2008)

November 12, 2007

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: ACCEPTANCE OF CONTINUATION GRANT AWARD:
READING FIRST

ASD Goal: Establish and maintain a supportive and effective learning environment by continuing to retain, recruit and train highly qualified staff.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a continuation grant award from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development for \$1,113,187; the fifth year of a five-year project.

PERTINENT FACTS:

The Anchorage School District's Elementary Education Department has received a continuation grant award from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development for the fifth year of a five-year project that was initiated in the 2003-2004 school year. The Department of Education has allowed participating school districts to expend fifth year monies over two years, to extend the life of the grant. Total funding for five years is \$4,805,477. This initiative provides core reading curricula and extensive professional development for K-3 staff and administrators at Mountain View, William Tyson, Airport Heights, Creekside Park, Spring Hill, and Ursa Minor elementary schools. Its purpose is to ensure that every child can read at or above grade level by the end of third grade. The initiative directly supports the Elementary Education Six-Year Plan.

Reading First funds have been expended for scientifically based curricula at each participating school site. Programs present a comprehensive approach encompassing the five basic elements of literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Reading First funds support extension and ongoing support of core reading programs already in place at William Tyson (Success for All) and Mountain View (Reading Mastery). Both of these schools now use the Houghton-Mifflin program in the intermediate grades. Funds also support a literacy coach position at each school and the purchase of

supplemental materials for schools' libraries as well as for classroom library materials.

The state Reading First initiative has required attendance by project schools' primary grade staff and administrators at yearly reading institutes for the five-year duration of the grant. Reading First also requires a distinct battery of reading assessments for all K-3 students in the project schools. The schools have coordinated these assessments with the methodologies already integrated into the district's reading initiative.

The budget provides added duty for paraprofessionals to attend reading institutes and to take part in site-based professional development. The program does not require a cash match or in-kind commitments; however, substantial in-kind contributions have included site leadership by the schools' principals and project management by Executive Director Patricia McRae.

Results from this project have been substantial and student achievement has significantly increased because of the extraordinary commitment and efforts of the school principals and staff members at Airport Heights, Spring Hill, William Tyson, Mountain View, Ursa Minor, and Creekside Park elementary schools. They have implemented the Reading First grant with fidelity to the program and their efforts have shaped the literacy implementation plan for the elementary division.

Budget Summary, Year Five:

Certificated Salaries	\$ 724,924
Non-certificated Salaries	24,860
Employee Benefits	126,173
Professional & Technical	32,400
Travel	25,000
Teaching Supplies	140,186
Other Expenses	2,000
Indirect costs	<u>37,644</u>
Total	\$1,113,187

CC/RG/PM/BT

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