

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #112 (2007-2008)

November 12, 2007

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: PRIOR APPROVAL OF DISCRETIONARY GRANT: TEACHING  
AMERICAN HISTORY GRANT PROGRAM

*ASD Goal: Increase student academic achievement using data to guide adoption of curriculum, methods, materials, and professional development specifically designed to ensure that that each group as designated by No Child Left Behind makes adequate yearly progress; and . . . maximizing opportunities for lifelong learning, including the development of 21st century skills; . . . challenging each student academically; . . . and collaborating with other community agencies to maximize opportunities for lifelong learning.*

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the Anchorage School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to apply for a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Teaching American History Grant Program.

PERTINENT FACTS:

The U.S. Department of Education has issued a notice inviting applications for the Teaching American History Grant Program. This competition supports professional development that deepens teachers' understanding and appreciation of American history, with expectations of measurable gains in student achievement.

The three-year initiative will build on the work supported by the Anchorage School District's FY 2002-2003 and FY 2005-2006 Teaching American History (TAH) grant awards. The current competition calls for three-year projects with the potential for fourth and fifth year funding. A federal priority is for schools that have not made AYP. The proposed professional development initiative is centered in Anchorage, but is designed to gather a consortium of Alaskan districts to create a networked TAH community of practice. For Anchorage, the project will serve teachers in grades five, six, eight and ten, where the adopted

curriculum includes American history. Recruiting focuses on two tiers of teachers: teacher leaders developed through previous Teaching American History grants, and teachers who have not yet participated in TAH initiatives or who need highly qualified status for history.

The project is designed for a web-connected network of teachers in both face-to-face and online synchronous and asynchronous credit courses, seminars, and summer study. The model emphasizes historiography and classroom methods that engage students in historiography using primary sources and electronic media. Content is focused through the lens of Constitutional themes important to an understanding of American history.

Our partners to date include Chugach School District, the Alaska Staff Development Network, the National Archives and Records Administration—Pacific Alaska Region, the University of Alaska Anchorage, and the Alaska Geographic Alliance. This consortium will expand to include other Alaska districts in the first two years of the project. Other contributors to the project include Boston-based WGBH, a public broadcasting station and PBS media production company; Colonial Williamsburg for virtual field trips; and the Constitutional Rights Foundation.

The preliminary budget estimate is \$330,000 per year for three years. The budget will support credit courses, development of a professional community of practice for teachers, consultant costs, and grant coordination and evaluation.

CC/RG/ES/PM/LV/MH/SE/JT/BT

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