

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM #28 (2008-2009)

August 25, 2008

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REVIEW/END-OF-THE-YEAR REPORT FOR
FY 2007-2008 EAGLE ACADEMY 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 September 15 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 (c)(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 Eagle Academy 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 school supervisor for the Anchorage School District, has worked closely with the administration and Academic Policy Committee of this school. Ms. Bensler attends APC meetings and provides assistance to these groups on working within the confines of the Anchorage School District and Charter School Law, policies and regulations.

Eagle Academy Charter School has had an outstanding year in 2007-2008. The school was chosen by the Department of Education for the State of Alaska as one of the recipients of the Performance Incentive Program that rewards schools that have made significant gains or maintained high achievement in test scores from one year to the next. Eagle Academy test scores are an example of a dedicated school community whose mission is clear and philosophy is embraced by the teachers, parents and students. The scores are outstanding in all grades and all subjects tested. The students are being taught in a way that makes their learning at or above proficiency almost across the board.

The school isn't just about test scores and high achievement. Many times the school's multipurpose room is full of happy, delighted students being treated to wonderful assemblies and contests. Math Counts, the Spelling Bee, the Geography Bee and many more contests are taken seriously and enjoyed by all. The music program has been a source of pride for the school. Parents are regularly treated to wonderful concerts and plays put on by the students and teachers.

The principal, Mary Meade, has become a leader among charter school principals and a mentor to two of our new charter school principals. She has the energy and intelligence that is necessary to be a principal and a natural instinct for working well with a diverse group of people. Her leadership has been a major contributor to the successful year Eagle Academy enjoyed last year.

The teaching staff continues to be trained in the Spalding Method of Instruction and Saxon Math. The school is set up to have all students work according to their ability level in the morning in math and language arts. The afternoons are taken up with specialty classes, science and social studies. The core curricula in all areas emphasize traditional educational values and knowledge. Students have health in single sex classrooms and enjoy art, music and P.E. several times a week. They wear uniforms that are specific, yet offer several styles and colors of clothing. The parents are very supportive and volunteer in high numbers. The non-profit parent group raises money and then uses it to support programs and activities at the school for students. It is a very close knit and dedicated

community at Eagle - one which has become a popular school of choice in Eagle River. There is a substantial waiting list for placement at the school.

The Academic Policy Committee continues to be involved in issues of the day and making sure that the school is true to its charter. They are a committed group of people who support the school and staff in many ways. They should be commended for making sure that the school has been a successful choice for students. They are fiscally prudent which is reflected in a healthy school budget. The plans to expand the school to seventh grade remain on hold as they consider all the ramifications of such a move and the interest among their older students and parents.

Eagle Academy Charter School is an example of how to do things well when operating a charter school. The strong leadership, teaching and support staff and adherence to the charter have all added to a successful and robust school. It has been a pleasure to work with them this year, and everyone looks forward to working together next year. It will no doubt continue to grow and succeed if it remains on its present course of operation.

CC/RG/CB

Attachment

Prepared by: Connie Bensler, Supervisor, Charter Schools

Approved by: Rhonda Gardner, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction