

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM #31 (2008-2009)

September 8, 2008

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REVIEW/END-OF-THE-YEAR REPORT FOR  
FY 2007-2008 HIGHLAND TECH HIGH 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. 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 © (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 Highland Tech High (HTH) 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.

Highland Tech High has shown growth and stability during the 2007-2008 school years. The school's student population has remained at about 250 students, grades 7-12. The school's principal, Mark Standley, has made recruitment of new students his focus for the year. He has presented information about the school to a number of middle and elementary schools in the Anchorage School District.

The school uses a standards based approach to assessing academic success and works closely with the Reinventing Schools Coalition (RISC) to be a showcase for other schools around the country using this method of assessment. The school has sent groups of students to Colorado and Washington State to present HTH to schools in these states that are interested in becoming part of RISC. One of the points of pride for the school is its participation in the FIRST LEGO Robotics competition. The school's team won the competition and went on to the national competition in Georgia. The students and staff are very proud of their accomplishments. It certainly shows when visiting the school. There is a sense of pride and ownership in the school among the school community including many of the parents of students at the school. The HTH staff is a dedicated group of teachers and support personnel who have remained at the school for several years and embrace the school's philosophy. These folks, like so many teachers and support staff, never work just their required hours but spend enormous amounts of time and energy beyond the contract to make the school so successful.

HTH did not make AYP this past year because of the graduation rate. Due to the state and federal rules and guidelines for calculating graduation rates, there can be some confusion on a school's part as to who does and doesn't count toward the graduation rate. One of the ways a school can work to improve its graduation rate is to diligently monitor all students who enroll in the school at grade 9 and track them to graduation four years later. Highland will be monitoring these students closely to make sure the school knows the status and location of the students who leave HTH before graduation. Allowing fifth and sixth year seniors will also affect the school's graduation rate, but it is a decision the school administration has made to accommodate those students.

The Academic Policy Committee is made up of a very dedicated group of parents, teachers and community members who are supportive of the school in many ways. They understand what it takes to make a charter school successful and work toward

that goal. The parent stakeholders group is a very active support group for the school. They are responsible for many of the after school and evening functions and fundraisers. They support the student government financially and are a sounding block for the APC and Administration in policy direction. All in all, the school is doing very well and continues to be an excellent secondary school of choice for students in the Anchorage School District.

CC/RG/CB

Attachment

Prepared by: Connie Bensler, Supervisor, Charter Schools

Approved by: Rhonda Gardner, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction