

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM #32 (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 RILKE SCHULE GERMAN SCHOOL OF ARTS AND
SCIENCES 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 Rilke Schule 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.

Rilke Schule German Immersion Charter School has grades Kindergarten through grade 8 and is moving toward a K-8 immersion model for all grades. Currently, only the primary grades have a half day of instruction in English and a half day of instruction in German. The other grades have slightly less instruction in German, but will be increasing that time in future years.

The school has had an amazingly successful first year. There have been a number of difficulties to overcome, including not being able to use their permanent space until fourth quarter of the school year. Prior to that, the school was housed at ChangePoint Church. The district and the school both appreciate the opportunity to use that facility for a school while awaiting the retrofit of their permanent location. After reaching the number needed to maintain the school with appropriate budgeting, all things seemed to fall into place. To staff the school has proved to be a challenge because of the need for highly qualified elementary and secondary teachers who teach in a certain subject area or grade and also are fluent in German. Some very gifted teachers have been part of the staff since the inception. These folks have made a big difference in the success of the school.

The principal, Crystal Wrabetz, has done a great job of operating in a situation that has included no office space, lack of support staff, lack of technology, and a teaching staff that was constantly in flux. Added to these conditions is the fact that Ms. Wrabetz is a first-year principal. Making this school successful under these circumstances would challenge even a veteran principal. In spite of all the challenges, the school is flourishing and growing.

Rilke Schule made AYP this year, yet the staff and parents would like to see improvements in a number of areas. The school plans to be an outstanding example of academic excellence as a matter of course. Some of the plans for improving test scores and academic achievement include school-wide writing

efforts, hands-on training in math pedagogy, boot camp tutorials, and teacher teams to assess areas of concern for students.

The school isn't just about hard work and academic excellence. It is also about having fun, learning new things and learning all things German. The school sponsored a successful summer camp for students wishing to improve their German while studying legends, tales, dragons, space and the environment. There are many after school clubs and activities as well as band, orchestra and choir. German holidays and celebrations are part of the school. Evening classes for parents are also available through the school.

The new playground equipment was purchased and installed by the non-profit parent organization, the Verein. It is a wonderful thing to see. The students love it. This tireless group of people has been helping in a voluntary capacity since before the school opened and they continue to be an asset to the school and to the Academic Policy Committee. The APC is made up of the founders of the school who have given countless hours and endless energy to make their dream a reality. It is something to be very proud of; the school is a success in every way. The founders continue to be a part of the school and help to make it a very special place for children. It will be a pleasure to see it grow and flourish in the future.

CC/RG/CB

Attachment

Prepared by: Connie Bensler, Supervisor, Charter Schools

Approved by: Rhonda Gardner, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction