

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM #34 (2008-2009)

September 8, 2008

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON STATUS OF THE ALASKA NATIVE CULTURAL
CHARTER SCHOOL

ASD Goal: Ensure public accountability through effective communication with students, staff, parents, community and government at all levels.

PERTINENT FACTS:

Alaska Native Charter School began operation in August of 2008. Currently, it has 145 students enrolled with active recruitment going on at all times. The school is budgeted for 200 students and expects to gain a significant number of additional students after the fall subsistence activities end for many Native families.

The school is currently located at the Muldoon Community Assembly Church at 7041 DeBarr Road. It will remain at this location until the contractor has completed the retrofit for housing the school at its permanent site. That location is the former Ashley Furniture Store at 110 Muldoon Road. The temporary location will also be the drop-off and pick-up location for students once the permanent building is occupied. The Municipality of Anchorage Department of Transportation and the State of Alaska Department of Transportation would not allow drop-off and pick-up at the Muldoon location because of concerns with traffic congestion and flow.

Based on the percentage of students initially signed up for the school who qualified for free or reduced lunch, the school is identified as a Title I school and thus receives Title I funding. The school has nine regular elementary classroom teachers, a special education teacher, a Title I teacher and a principal. There is an administrative assistant and one special education teaching assistant. There are eight classrooms of students, two for kindergarten and one for each grade through grade 6, except for a grades 3-4 combination. There are two teachers teaching only math. Classroom teachers provide art, physical education and music.

The school is offering lunches for all students, free and reduced for those who qualify, and purchased for the rest of the students. These lunches are provided by the ASD Student Nutrition Department. This department has been very helpful in setting the lunch program up under unusual conditions. The school community is very grateful for all their help.

Challenges are many, but none are insurmountable. Enrollment needs to meet at least the 150 mark during the count period or the school won't be able to stay open. Since their budget is based on 200, even having 150 students will be a financial struggle. The traffic situation once they move to their permanent site will also be challenging. The move isn't anticipated until January of 2009. Transportation to the school for many of the students is a burden. The school is exploring the idea of contracting with ASD to provide a bus for six hours per day to bring students from south and west Anchorage and to be used as a way to access neighborhood parks close to the school during the school day.

The staff is dedicated and excited. The principal, Tim Godfrey, has spent enormous energy and time getting the school set up. The Academic Policy Committee is dedicated to making their dream come true. The effort is there, if the challenges can be met.

CC/RG/CB

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