

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #105 (2008-2009)

October 13, 2008

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: ACCEPTANCE OF CONTINUATION GRANT AWARD:
FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE GRANT, PROJECT MIRA

ASD Goal: Increase student academic achievement using data to guide adoption of curriculum, methods, materials, and professional development specifically designed to ensure that each group as designated by No Child Left Behind makes adequate yearly progress.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept a grant from the U. S. Department of Education's Foreign Language Assistance Program, in the amount of \$222,315. The project will expand the Russian language partial immersion program at Turnagain Elementary into the fifth grade, and will continue weekly Russian language instruction using the Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) model for K-6 classrooms that are not in the immersion program.

PERTINENT FACTS:

The ASD World Languages Program has been awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP). This competition supports foreign language study for less commonly taught languages of major economic and political importance to the United States.

Project Starship MIRA (Mission is Russian Advances!) produces a sustainable, articulated Russian language program model in the elementary school that can be replicated for other less-commonly taught languages. The program continues second language study in a seamless, articulated pipeline that will greatly increase the numbers of fluent Russian speakers. The model is implemented and delivered according to the models successfully used in the district's Spanish and Japanese immersion programs. Students receive content instruction in English for half of each day, and in Russian for half of each day. Russian instruction is delivered by teachers who are native or near-native Russian speakers.

The first year of this three-year project, 2006-2007, expanded the existing school-within-a-school 50/50 Russian partial immersion K-2 program at Turnagain Elementary School to include grade three. In the second year of the project, 2007-2008, the program advanced to fourth grade. In the third year, the program will include fifth grade. The MIRA project also articulates a FLES strand in every non-immersion classroom in the school grades K-6. All students at Turnagain Elementary School will learn Russian and will benefit from an early start.

The project is designed so that, in all three years, teachers collaborate and learn from experts in the second language study field. Russian immersion teachers gain the expertise to produce high quality language and content integrated instructional materials for their classrooms, and to increase daily opportunities for students to develop Russian oral language and literacy skills. The total school population is involved in culturally authentic enrichment activities all three years. The program extends classroom learning to artists-in-residence, after-school events, and summer camps.

The budget supports a certificated project coordinator/resource teacher in the school, professional development for teachers over the three years, materials and supplies, curriculum development, whole-school enrichment, and program recruitment. The third-year budget includes \$9,270 in release time for Russian teacher assessment training, peer observations, and grade-level team content collaboration for Russian language curriculum development. The grant program does not require a cash match. In-kind contributions consist primarily of regularly allocated FTEs for classroom teachers, regular school budget items, and administrators' staff time.

Budget Summary FY 2008-2009:

Personnel	\$134,054
Employee Benefits	36,351
Supplies	18,150
Contractual	12,100
Travel	3,350
Training Stipends	10,882
Indirect Costs	<u>7,428</u>
Total	\$222,315

CC/RG/ES/EG/JG/BT

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