

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #121 (2008-2009)

November 10, 2008

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: ACCEPTANCE OF CONTINUATION GRANT AWARD:
READING FIRST

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 continuation grant award from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development for \$828,326 for the sixth year of the Reading First project.

PERTINENT FACTS:

The Anchorage School District's Elementary Education Department has received a continuation grant award from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development for a sixth year of a five-year project that was initiated in the 2003-2004 school year. The Department of Education has allowed participating school districts to expend carryover monies from the fifth year and has provided additional funds to extend the life of the grant. Total funding for six years is \$5,143,310. This initiative provides core reading curricula and extensive professional development for K-3 staff and administrators at Mountain View, William Tyson, Airport Heights, Creekside Park, Spring Hill, and Ursa Minor elementary schools. Its purpose is to ensure that every child can read at or above grade level by the end of third grade. The initiative directly supports the Elementary Education Six-Year Instructional Plan.

Reading First funds have been expended for scientifically-based curricula at each participating school site. Programs present a comprehensive approach encompassing the five basic elements of literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Reading First funds support extension

and ongoing support of core reading programs already in place at William Tyson (Success for All) and Mountain View (Reading Mastery). Both of these schools now use the Houghton-Mifflin program in the intermediate grades. Funds also support a literacy coach position at each school and the purchase of supplemental materials for schools' libraries, as well as for classroom library materials.

The state Reading First initiative has required attendance by project schools' primary grade staff and administrators at yearly reading institutes for the five-year duration of the grant. Reading First also requires a distinct battery of reading assessments for all K-3 students in the project schools. The schools have coordinated these assessments with the methodologies already integrated into the District's reading initiative.

The budget provides added duty for paraprofessionals to attend reading institutes and to take part in site-based professional development. The program does not require a cash match or in-kind commitments; however, substantial in-kind contributions have included site leadership by the schools' principals and project management by Executive Director Ed Graff.

Results from this project have been substantial and student achievement has significantly increased because of the extraordinary commitment and efforts of the school principals and staff members at Airport Heights, Spring Hill, William Tyson, Mountain View and Ursa Minor elementary schools. They have implemented the Reading First grant with fidelity to the program, and their efforts have shaped the literacy implementation plan for the elementary division.

Budget Summary, Year Five:

Certificated Salaries	\$265,405
Non-certificated Salaries	75,610
Employee Benefits	295,000
Professional & Technical	19,800
Travel	6,000
Teaching Supplies	108,966
Other Expenses	29,534
Indirect costs	<u>28,011</u>
Total	\$828,326

CC/RG/EG/BT

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