

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #8 (1999-2000)

August 9, 1999

TO: SCHOOL BOARD  
FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT  
SUBJECT: SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION/CONTRACT EXTENSION

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the School Board's recommendation that the Anchorage School Board and Robert Christal as Superintendent of the Anchorage School District enter into a new contract for the period of July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2002.

PERTINENT FACTS:

The Superintendent has completed his seventh year as the educational leader of the state's largest school district and the 80th largest school district, out of over 15,000 school districts, in the nation.

This new contract extends through June 30, 2002. The School Board completed the Superintendent's annual evaluation during a Special Meeting on June 24, 1999. The Superintendent was evaluated based on his performance for the 1998-99 School Year. The results of the evaluation are as follows:

The 1998-99 school year closed with School District accomplishments in many areas. The Anchorage School Board appreciates the work of Superintendent Bob Christal and his staff in producing the "1998-99 Goals Accomplishments" summary document. The large number of programs and educational efforts it contains highlight our District's complexity and diversity. Without the talents and commitment of the over 5,000 employees under Mr. Christal's direction, the District would not be as successful as it is in "educating students for success in life".

Mr. Christal provides pragmatic educational leadership while working within the given budget and in accordance with Board adopted policies. The focus on improving student achievement through selectively reducing class size, developing reading instruction in all

grades, and formulating curriculum standards in mathematics and language arts strengthen student achievement. Community approval of the second largest school construction bond in our history and the Assembly's approval of this year's operating budget indicate public confidence in this leadership. The implementation of the revised technology plan will allow our students increasing opportunities to succeed.

The Board believes student achievement is linked to employee morale, an area in which the Board has a continued concern. While the Board acknowledges that the responsibility for improving employee morale is not solely the Superintendent's, the Board encourages Mr. Christal to take a leadership role in developing solutions. This leadership role may range from brainstorming ideas with Public Affairs and other District personnel to increased personal contacts with staff in their schools or departments.

Mr. Christal is diligent in operating the District in accordance with municipal, state, and federal regulations, as well as Board policy. Recently, his efforts have enabled the District to become more successful in influencing legislation that directly affects it.

One of Mr. Christal's strongest assets is his continued ability to maintain a strong working relationship with the Board. He responds professionally to the diverse concerns of a seven-member board. He refrains from any public criticism of the Board, even when his recommendations are not followed. He holds himself accountable to the majority of the Board on each decision.

Public communication of the District's plans, practices, and policies has improved greatly over the last two years. Mr. Christal's implementation of the Public Affairs audit recommendations and hiring of talented staff have increased the quality and quantity of interactions with the community.

Mr. Christal organizes and manages his staff effectively and efficiently. This school year included unique challenges. The Districtwide measles epidemic and subsequent vaccination program and the Russian Jack fire were managed extremely well. The Board anticipates that the hiring of a second Assistant Superintendent will allow Mr. Christal to increase his focus on major Board concerns, such as the Facilities Audit.

The Board struggles to reconcile school-based vs. Districtwide management. Mr. Christal seeks the middle ground between these two opposing philosophies. When successful programs or techniques have been identified, the Board encourages the Superintendent to consider the adoption of these "best practices" at other schools.

The Board expects to see continued improvement in the accuracy of the financial budgeting and reporting with the implementation of the new accounting software program and hiring additional staff in key areas.

The Board appreciates Mr. Christal's stress on improving reading throughout the grade levels. A well-developed plan has been implemented. We look forward to the

development of a similar plan for increasing spelling achievement and a review of related instructional materials.

Under Mr. Christal's leadership, the District is doing an excellent job developing and adopting standards and then aligning the curriculum and instructional material to them. The staff and public participation in all aspects of this process is commendable. Evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum is difficult and expensive in education. However, the Board believes that objective evaluation should be part of the whole curriculum cycle.

Continued professional development is critical to improving curriculum delivery. The innovative and expanded staff training is outstanding. The Administration has developed creative methods of providing training within a limited budget, including the development of mentorship networks. The certified staff evaluation system continues to be refined, responding to staff and parent concerns.

The Board recognizes the progress made in the Human Resources Department restructuring and the renewed focus on staff recruitment. Records management should improve with the additional resources provided to the department, along with the new management information system. The Board would like to see an increased focus on attracting and hiring quality applicants and on providing good service to all employees. Mr. Christal is willing to tackle difficult employee issues and supports his staff to do the same.

Mr. Christal has an excellent understanding of the workings and politics of the Board and community. He understands and models high ethical and moral leadership. He is professional at all times, even when under intense pressure. The Anchorage School District and the Anchorage community are fortunate to have him as their Superintendent, and the Board greatly appreciates his commitment to Anchorage's youth.

PR/mt

Prepared and Approved by: Peggy Robinson, School Board President