

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #20 (2000-2001)

August 14, 2000

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: PROPOSED CHARTER CHANGES: AQUARIAN CHARTER SCHOOL

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the request of the Aquarian Charter School Principal and Academic Policy Committee to revise the calendar for the 2000-2001 school year, the Attendance Policy, and the composition of the Academic Policy Committee in the approved charter as shown on Attachments A (1 and 2), B, and C.

PERTINENT FACTS:

The Aquarian Charter School application was approved by the School Board on January 27, 1997, [(ASD Memorandum #193 (96-97)] by a 6-0 vote. Subsequent to that approval, the Administration forwarded the approved application to the Commissioner of Education for final review by the Department of Education and then for final approval by the State Board of Education on April 28, 1997. Aquarian Charter School's Contract was approved by the School Board for a five-year period on June 23, 1997 (#372 [96-97]).

This charter school has been very successful and is entering their fourth year of operation with an approved student enrollment of 220 students in grades K-6. This charter school has met the many housing challenges with enthusiasm, creativity, and a problem-solving attitude. They will be co-located with the Village Charter School at the former Northern Lights ABC facility on 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue during the 2000-2001 school year.

Cindy Stiegele, Principal, and the Aquarian Academic Policy Committee requested two charter changes in a letter to the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction in March (Attachment D). Subsequent to that request, the Academic Policy Committee made changes to their By-Laws which

necessitated the change in composition to the APC on Attachment C. The Academic Policy Committee would like to make the revisions referenced in Attachments A, B, and C in order incorporate these changes into their Parent/Student Handbook. Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Carol Comeau, reviewed this request and has provided an Administrative Response below.

**School Calendar (Attachments A-1 and A-2)**

The school calendar will have 170 student days and 10 in service training/parent teacher conference days. This is allowable under Alaska Department of Education and Early Development regulations. The original charter followed the ASD school calendar. The Administration supports this requested change to allow Aquarian Charter School to have a different calendar from the Anchorage School District as long as there are the required 170 student instruction days. School will begin for students on Monday, August 28, 2000 and close on June 6, 2000.

**Attendance Policies (Attachment B)**

The Assistant Superintendent for Instruction does have concerns about the attendance policy in that other district schools are not allowed to remove students who have sporadic attendance; on the other hand, the school has the right to expect that parents who choose this school will follow the attendance policies in place. The Administration supports this change to the charter school charter if the Academic Policy Committee commits to strong counseling attempts to have parents improve their students arrival at the school regularly and on time.

One of the biggest concerns expressed to the Administration about all of the charter schools is that students who are not successful at a charter school or those who violate the charter school's rules, leave the charter school and enter the neighborhood or other schools after staffing and schedules have been set during the year. The school is not able to get more staff and the charter school is allowed to keep their staffing and funding.

**Composition of the Academic Policy Committee (Attachment C)**

The original charter allowed for 8-12 members on the Academic Policy Committee. The Academic Policy Committee has requested a change to 9-12 members. The Administration has no objection to this requested change.

BC/CC

Attachments

Prepared by: Carol Comeau, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction

Approved by: Carol Comeau, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction

