

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #78 (2000 - 2001)

September 25, 2000

TO: SCHOOL BOARD
FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
SUBJECT: COMMUNITY SCHOOL UPDATE

PERTINENT FACTS:

In response to the Anchorage Community Education Advisory Board (ACEAB) as a result of the closure of eight community schools in 1999-2000, the Administration stated that they were interested in "looking at some creative ways of doing business" with community schools in the future. One option offered was technical support, through the Community Education Department, to communities who lost staff in this reduction and who were interested in exploring this opportunity through the year. The idea was appealing and several community school boards felt that they had a sufficient volunteer force to continue service to their communities into the future. They have spent a great deal of time organizing over the summer to take advantage of the opportunity.

A group of five formerly staffed community schools have come forward with an interest in working to maintain a reduced level of service at their particular sites. Named "affiliate community schools," their aspiration is to develop a modified and yet viable community school program which keeps the doors of the school open to serve their community throughout this year and into the future. Those affiliates who have come forward are: Bear Valley, Campbell, Rogers Park, Service, and Turnagain.

Each of these affiliate community schools have developed a small number of youth and/or adult classes and activities for the fall. Several of the affiliates are employing community school assistants at their schools. These assistants will be responsible for helping with monitoring the buildings in the evenings and for providing assistance to key volunteers in the areas of programming and class registration.

Each of the boards of directors at these affiliate sites has been in contact with their building principals to begin working with this option. All five are in contact with the department director, and are attending training that is held for community school staff and volunteers. All five have chosen a working relationship with veteran community school coordinators. They will receive assistance with District procedures and support in the development of skills on how to run a successful program.

Three creative but consistent models are emerging as the needs of communities become more clear. Campbell is working with their former coordinator to transition into independence. Turnagain and Service are exploring the idea of operating in conjunction with two community school programs at middle schools. Rogers Park and Bear Valley are connecting with two community school programs at elementary schools.

Currently, principals at four of these five sites have participated in the support of affiliate community schools by making it possible for affiliates to share office space in their buildings during the school day. In addition, they have reserved the community school office in their building after school and in the evenings for volunteers, assistants or building monitors to use during the time when classes and activities are scheduled. At the fifth site, the board of directors has chosen to work from an alternate community school location.

This opportunity to encourage community participation in the development of a modified community school program operated by volunteers has helped to create a strong sense of hope and vision among these affiliate community schools. The fact that this opportunity has occurred at a time when veteran community school coordinators are available to assist and support the development of these sites has been fortuitous as well.

CC/EM/mks

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