

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #21 (2000-2001)

March 12, 2001

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: PROPOSED CHARTER CHANGES: FAMILY PARTNERSHIP
CHARTER SCHOOL (REVISED)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the request of the Family Partnership Charter School Principal and Academic Policy Committee to revise their charter as described in Attachments C, D, and E of this memorandum.

PERTINENT FACTS:

The Family Partnership Charter School application was approved by the School Board on January 27, 1997, [(ASD Memorandum #192 (96-97)] by a 7-0 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. The original charter as approved is Attachment A.

The State Board of Education approved the Family Partnership Charter School on April 28, 1997 at a special State Board meeting in Anchorage. The vote was unanimous.

The Family Partnership Charter School Charter was subsequently amended by the School Board on September 13, 1999 [(ASD Memorandum #62 (1999-2000)] by a 7-0 vote and shown as Attachment B.

This charter school has been very successful and is in their fourth year of operation with an approved student enrollment of over 700 students in grades K-12. This charter school is a unique partnership between home schooling

parents, community providers, and contracted teachers in the Anchorage School District. Some students attend FPCS part-time, others full-time. FPCS has also offered services to some private school students; this issue has been the major area of concern to the Administration and the School Board during the past two years. Many of these issues are resolved with these recommendations for changes in the FPCS charter.

The District has been working for over a year to resolve differences of opinion regarding what constitutes appropriate reimbursement for students in this charter school. The Administration and the Academic Policy Committee have struggled with this issue; these proposed charter changes are a step in the right direction as far as clarifying many of the concerns of the ASD Administration. Continuing discussions may result in more recommended changes to their charter. The recommendations before the School Board represent the changes agreed to by the FPCS Academic Policy Committee and the Administration in July and August as well as the recent request shown on Attachments C and D.

The Administration's approval of the most recent requests are shown on Attachment C; the Procurement List (Attachment D) gives more detail for the Administration and Board. Both of these have received the support of the Administration after a careful review.

The Administration has asked the FPCS Charter School's Academic Policy Committee to be prepared to explain how various non-certificated vendors and organizations provide aspects of an educational program for FPCS students. The APC originally requested a work session on this topic since they did not provide the Administration a list of "approved vendors and organizations"; the Administration would like to see if a discussion at this Board meeting will allow the opportunity to fully explore this issue. If that is not possible, then the Administration and Board will schedule a Work Session with the FPCS Academic Policy Committee at a later date.

The Administration would also like to formalize the waiver request for a change in the lottery dates for this charter school in order to better meet their needs since their program runs year round. This recommended change to Section 6.8 is shown on Attachment E.

The State of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development has notified the District and FPCS that this charter school will be funded as a "correspondence program" next year; funding has been adjusted in next year's fiscal plan. The requested changes to their "unit of instruction" do not apply to funding; funding parameters are set by Alaska regulation, 4 AAC 09. 040, and

the Alaska charter school law, AS 14. 03 .260. The DEED regulations require that students must receive instruction from a certificated teacher in either classrooms or for a certain number of hours in order to qualify for part-time or full-time funding.

The Administration commends the charter school's move to a greater emphasis on their academic program rather than enrichment and extra-curricular activities. These changes are reflected in their new language in sections 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 shown on Attachment C.

The Academic Policy Committee would like to make the revisions referenced in Attachments C and D in order to meet the requirements of the Anchorage School District. Chief Financial Officer, Janet Stokesbary; Budget Director, Marie Laule; legal counsel, Andrena Stone; Deputy Commissioner, Bruce Johnson, and Assistant Attorney General, Phil Reeves; and Superintendent, Carol Comeau, reviewed this request. The Administration supports these proposed changes to the Family Partnership Charter School charter with the clear understanding that sections 6.1.1. and 6.1.2 and subsections do not apply to how the school is funded; funding is clearly regulated by the Department of Education and Early Development's regulations cited above and the laws governing school funding as well as the charter school law.

The School Board passed these proposed changes at the February 12, 2001 School Board meeting. All references to the CAT Tests were changed to "State-mandated norm referenced tests" in order to allow for any changes in the testing program by the State of Alaska. Two Board members gave notice of reconsideration in order to be able to review the proposed Procurement List prior to final approval of these charter changes. This list is attached to this memorandum as Attachment D.

Representatives of the Family Partnership Charter School and the Administration will be available at the meeting to respond to School Board questions.

CC

Attachments

Prepared/approved by: Carol Comeau, Superintendent