

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #251 (2000-2001)

April 9, 2001

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: PROPOSED CHARTER CHANGES: FAMILY PARTNERSHIP
CHARTER SCHOOL

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 and D of this memorandum. It is further recommended that the Board deny reimbursement for Family Partnership Charter School students for membership dues, initiation fees, and clothing and equipment required by the Local Service Vendors listed on Attachment F for physical education, music, art, drama, and driving instruction.

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. The Board approved a further

amendment to the charter relating to lottery dates on March 12, 2001 [ASD Memorandum #21 (2000-2001) Revised] which is shown as Attachment E.

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 Administration is requesting clarification from the School Board on what the Board feels is allowable for instruction and activities for private school and home school students (ie, does the student qualify for reimbursement for horse-back riding lessons as a private school student who receives Physical Education at their private school? Should a home-school student use public funds to pay for horse-back riding lessons? Should the ASD allow public funds to be used for club memberships for a student to work out at the Alaska Club as part of a physical fitness class?) The major issues in question revolve around which services provided by Local Vendors are an allowable use of public funds?

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 has asked the FPCS Charter School's Academic Policy Committee to be prepared to explain how various non-certificated local 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 originally provide the Administration a list of "approved vendors and organizations"; the Academic Policy Committee subsequently provided a Procurement List at the request of the School Board on March 12. This list is Attachment F to this Memorandum.

The Administration's approval of the most recent requests are shown on Attachment C; the previously-approved requests are shown on Attachment D and have received the support of the Administration after a careful review. **The Administration has some concern about the list of vendors in Attachment F, especially for physical education/extra-curricular activities and recommends that the School Board and the APC of the FPCS have a full discussion prior to the Board taking definitive action.**

The Administration commends the FPCS Academic Policy Committee for bringing forth their revised lists and the emphasis on academic opportunities; the only items still in dispute appear to be this issue of what constitutes appropriate use of public funds for this charter school.

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 School Board asked for further clarification of the quarter time student allocation in proposed section 6.1.2.1.1, and the APC and Principal will be prepared to discuss this issue.

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.

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