

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #62 (2001-2002)

October 8, 2001

TO: SCHOOL BOARD
FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
SUBJECT: CHARTER SCHOOL UPDATE FOR 2001-2002

PERTINENT FACTS:

The Administration would like to update the School Board on 1) the applications submitted for charter schools to begin in the 2002 - 2003 school year, and 2) an update of the three charter schools currently in operation during this school year.

Arge Jeffery, former Executive Director for Elementary Education, and long-time Elementary Principal, continues to assist the Superintendent with the charter schools. He has established excellent working relationships with most of the charter schools and has been an effective liaison with the Department of Education and Early Development, the Administration, and the various charter schools.

APPLICATION UPDATE FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2002 - 2003

School Board Policy 333 on Charter Schools requires all applications to be submitted no later than October 1 of the school year prior to the school year during which the charter school is proposed to begin operation. Proposals for charter schools to begin operations during the 2002-2003 school year were to be submitted no later than October 1, 2001.

No applications have been received for consideration by the Administration and the School Board for the 2002-2003 school year.

The Administration received two letters stating that applications would be forthcoming. Neither tentative proposer had a facility in which to provide a program.

One tentative proposer, representing the **Pioneer Charter School**, met twice with the Administration and consulted with the Department of Education and Early Development Charter School Liaison, Louie Yanotti. The proposers wanted to develop a K-6 school with a guaranteed class size of 16:1. In order to ensure adequate funding to provide this guaranteed class size, the proposers wanted to charge parents \$250.00 per month per student. The Superintendent, Chief Financial Officer, Budget Director, and Attorney met with the proposers and told them that this was not legal and could not be supported. This was verified by the EED Finance Director and Charter School Liaison. The proposers did not submit a proposal.

The other tentative proposers were Cindy Stiegele and Kimball McIlvain, formerly of the Aquarian Charter School. This idea was for a **7-12 secondary school** modeled after the philosophy of the Aquarian Charter School which they helped design. They did not submit a proposal.

STATUS REPORT OF CURRENT CHARTER SCHOOLS FOR 2001-2002

Aquarian Charter School

Aquarian Charter School had a successful start to the school year at its location at the former Northern Lights ABC facility, now informally known at the Charter School Center. There are 231 students enrolled in grades K-6; this is within the limits established by the School Board. There is a principal at the school, Marguerite Cherry-Hao, who is beginning her first full year in that capacity; she has a Type B certificate and does all staff evaluations. She was appointed Acting Principal in January of 2001. The classroom teachers are supported by classroom teacher assistants and an Administrative Assistant and Secretary. The instructional program has a interdisciplinary thematic base strengthened with technology.

Aquarian occupies most of the Charter School Center space, including two relocatables on the site; a four classroom pod and one relocatable are used by the Village Charter School. The staff and APC of these two charter schools have been reminded that the ASD is reviewing the viability of maintaining this facility on an annual basis.

Family Partnership Charter School

The Family Partnership Charter School's enrollment is approximately 600 students in grades K-12. They are projecting approximately 650 students for the next school year. The enrollment is lower this year due to some restrictions

placed on the allocations of District funds. This charter school's Academic Policy Committee authorized the addition of an Academic Facilitator to assist the principal with staff training and reviewing the individual educational plans of the students. The staff evaluations will be done again this year by the principal, Tim Scott, who has a current Type B certificate.

This charter school has a strong Academic Policy Committee and is operating very successfully. The school has leased additional space for meetings and storage of their extensive inventory at their office on Fairbanks Street. In addition to the Fairbanks Street location, this charter school uses many District classrooms and community locations; these arrangements are made on an individual basis by each family. Teaching staff are in three categories: 1) staff hired by FPCS, 2) currently employed ASD teachers on an after school and summer basis who are paid with contract addenda, 3) retired teachers on special activity agreements. This arrangement has been very successful and the program is in great demand.

The State Board of Education and Early Development upheld the Commissioner's ruling that programs such as the Family Partnership Charter School will be considered as a Correspondence School under the adopted regulations and definition of Correspondence Program/School. The ASD Administration had supported FPCS to be considered as an alternative school and not a Correspondence School for school funding purposes. FPCS successfully appealed a previous DEED ruling and the school was restored to 100% funding for the 1999-2000 and the 2000-2001 school years. The Department of Education and Early Development has now determined that the new regulation will require the funding of FPCS as a Correspondence program in the future. This charter school is funded at the Correspondence program level of 80% for the 2001-2002 school year under the School Funding formula. FPCS is appealing the ruling of the DEED and the State Board of Education. The ASD has chosen not to join the appeal.

Village Charter School

The Village Charter School was approved for 154 students in grades K-8. The current enrollment stands at 154 students in grades K-8. One of the teachers also oversees the special education program for identified students at the school. This program combines an interdisciplinary program with a strong emphasis on art and music and Norwegian and Spanish languages. Linda Sharp is the head teacher at the school.

The school currently occupies leased space in the Z Plaza Mall on Minnesota Street in two spaces renovated to meet E-1 occupancy codes which is paid for

out of their annual budget. They also occupy the four classroom pod and one relocatable at the Charter School Center. They have worked out a joint-use agreement with the Aquarian Charter School for the custodial services and the use of the gym/multipurpose room and the playground. The Academic Policy Committee will have to contract with someone with a current Type B certificate to do the required staff evaluations again this year.

CC

Prepared and Approved by: Carol Comeau, Superintendent