

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #20 (2003-2004)

August 25, 2003

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: ACCEPTANCE OF CONTINUATION GRANT AWARD:  
PROJECT VOCES

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to accept grant funds from the U.S. Department of Education in the amount of \$146,633 for the third year of a three-year grant period. This project extends the benefits of the Spanish Immersion Program to include Spanish language and culture opportunities for all students in the Chugiak attendance area.

PERTINENT FACTS:

In FY2001, the Anchorage School District's World Languages Program, in collaboration with Chugiak Elementary School, Mirror Lake Middle School, Chugiak High School, and the University of Alaska Anchorage, applied for a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP). This competition seeks innovative model programs that establish, improve, or expand foreign language study for elementary and secondary students. The project articulates the Immersion Program through the elementary and secondary to university levels by developing Spanish language benchmarks and proficiency assessments. The U.S. Department of Education has recently notified the District of re-authorization for the third year of funding.

In year three, Project VOCES will provide Spanish language and culture opportunities for all students at Chugiak Elementary School through after-school enrichment classes; schoolwide artists in residence; and a summer program for elementary and middle school students that will target the arts through Hispanic music, dance and visual arts. Prior to the student summer program, K-12 teachers will participate in a professional development institute that will produce

thematic integrated units. Teachers will work with a national presenter to develop quality integrated content/language units around themes in the District social studies curriculum.

Under competition guidelines, grant funds may support up to fifty percent of project activities each year. The grant program does not require a cash match from the Anchorage School District. Grant funds will provide organization and support of the extended school year summer program, professional development, classroom and training materials, and contract addenda for teachers to devise benchmarks and other assessments for Spanish language development. Major in-kind contributions will include staff time and materials that already are part of the schools' programs and of the World Languages Program. Community partners will contribute time and expertise. A release time account of \$3,000 will be used among the three schools for staff to videotape oral interviews with students to assess oral proficiency in Spanish.

#### Measurement of Success:

The performance report for year two of the VOCES project showed significant progress toward increasing the number of students matriculating from the elementary to the middle and high school immersion classes. For the 2003-2004 school year, 35 students are registered for grade six Spanish immersion at Mirror Lake. This is an increase of over 19 students in 2000-2001. At Chugiak High School, the number of students taking Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish more than tripled over the last two years. This spring, a total of 21 students (17 students who have been in the program since first grade, including a learning disabled student) took the Spanish AP Exam. More than half of the students achieved a score of three or higher and as juniors in high school will earn university credit. Another 30 Chugiak Spanish immersion students took the national College Board Pacesetter Spanish exam. This exam is given simultaneously across the country to all Spanish students who have completed one year or more of the Pacesetter program. The test is scored on a range of one to five. A score of three or higher meets the Pacesetter program standards. One hundred percent of Chugiak immersion students scored a four or higher on the listening portion of the exam and 87 percent scored a five. Nationally, only 23 percent of students scored a five. On the writing portion of the exam, 70 percent of Chugiak immersion students scored a three or better. Evaluation results show that the number of students who stay with the immersion program through high school is on the rise. These students also achieve significantly higher Spanish language proficiency skills.

The project budget provides release time of two days for each of 20 teachers to attend scheduled workshops. The personnel budget provides a project coordinator and .60 FTE teaching staff for Mirror Lake Middle School.

Budget Summary, Year Three (FY 2003-04):

Personnel	\$ 80,000
Fringe Benefits	21,000
Supplies	10,000
Contractual	18,000
Travel	6,000
Other	5,885
Indirect Costs	<u>5,748</u>
TOTAL	\$146,633

CC/JC/EH/JG/BT

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