

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #308 (2003-2004)

June 14, 2004

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: ALASKA STUDIES CURRICULUM GUIDE AND MATERIALS
APPROVAL

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to approve the curriculum guide and materials for the new Alaska Studies course for high school juniors and seniors.

PERTINENT FACTS:

On December 10, 2001, the School Board approved a recommendation that a new one semester course in Alaska Studies be developed and become a high school graduation requirement beginning with the class of 2006 (Board Memo #95, 2001-2002). This was the culmination of a lengthy period of community discussion and groundswell of support for such an offering. Between February 2002 and February 2003, three public meetings were held and a public survey was conducted. This input led to development of a pacing guide and drafts of major units by curriculum writers Terry Jorgensen and Dr. Patricia Partnow.

During the spring of 2003, a steering committee of 12 members including District educators and community representatives met a total of eight times to review drafts of the curriculum and to make recommendations for revisions. The steering committee was co-facilitated by Edna Lamabull, Indian Education Supervisor, and Steve Ex, Social Studies Coordinator. A status report was presented to the Board on May 19, 2003 (Board Memo #267, 2002-2003). Nine major themes or units were developed and included in the pilot guide, which was printed last summer. Materials to be used during the fall semester pilot test were ordered, or duplicated with permission.

The pilot test was discussed with the Board February 9, 2004. As anticipated at that time, the curriculum guide has been substantially revised pursuant to the evaluation of the pilot test. Copy editing has been accomplished, and final formatting with icons, colors and a consistent design for ease of teacher use is well underway. Teacher training at Anchorage School District Teacher Academy

(ASDTA) began June 7 and continues through this week. A fall credit course for Alaska Studies teachers is on track for late August through January 2005. Purchasing and production of materials will take place through the summer, and meetings have been organized for mid-August in order to collate and package all materials for late August distribution to schools.

Numerous individuals within ASD, including teachers, principals, publication services, instructional technology, curriculum, and central administration have made tremendous contributions to these ongoing efforts. The revised curriculum has been taken to and approved by high school building principals, curriculum principals, MECC, SAB, and the PTA. The social studies curriculum committee has discussed Alaska Studies throughout the year, and the curriculum materials have been made available for review.

The Superintendent's consistent message has been that no waivers for this course shall be granted, and university Alaska history courses will not be accepted for credit by choice in meeting this high school graduation requirement. In recognition of the scheduling complexities for students taking multiple AP courses, an online course will be offered beginning fall, 2005. As additional assistance to those students, a summer school course will be offered beginning in 2005. It is likely it will require an extended summer session in order to accomplish the goals of the course. Such an offering will also alleviate the potential burden for all high schools relative to scheduling students who do not successfully pass the course, as well as providing another opportunity to those individuals.

Community support and collaboration has been strong. The Alaska Humanities Forum (AHF) is supporting our ASDTA training with a grant the Board accepted May 10, 2004 (Board Memo #299, 2003-2004). ASD's curriculum is forming the basis of their web-based course for the statewide Alaska History and Culture project currently under development. Their Website will form the basis for the online alternative offered to ASD students. Ira Perman and Marjorie Menzi have been instrumental in those developments. A federal grant to AHF has supported those statewide projects for the past year, and another federal grant to provide statewide training and materials is in the proposed budget Congress should deal with this fall.

The Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC) has provided a substantial three-year grant of \$50,000 annually to support the course development and implementation up to this point and into the 2004-2005 school year. Various individuals from ANHC, especially Steven Alvarez and Barbara Bernard, have directly contributed to these processes, including service on our steering committee and input at other meetings.

Attachment A includes the organizing ideas, pacing guide, enduring understandings, standards, and materials list for each of the six units included in the curriculum. The comprehensive curriculum guide and student materials are available for review in the School Board Office at 4600 DeBarr Road.

Attachment

CC/JC/EN/EL/SE

Prepared by: Steve Ex, Social Studies Coordinator
Edna Lamabull, Supervisor, Indian Education
Enid Hunter, Executive Director, Curriculum/Instructional Support
Approved by: Jan Christensen, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction.