

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #8 (2000-2001)

August 28, 2000

TO: SCHOOL BOARD
FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
SUBJECT: SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION/CONTRACT

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the School Board's recommendation that the Anchorage School Board and Robert Christal, LLC (an Alaska limited liability company) enter into a one year and eleven month contract commencing on September 1, 2000 and ending on July 31, 2002 for Administrative Services for the Anchorage School District. The total of the contract is a flat fee of \$160,000 for the first year of the contract and \$146,412 for the next eleven-month period. This is a decrease of \$23,739 per year (13%) in total costs to the Office of the Superintendent.

PERTINENT FACTS:

The Board and Mr. Christal, as the owner of Robert Christal, LLC (RCLLC), have negotiated a tentative two year contract which changes the financial relationship Mr. Christal has with the Anchorage School District. His company is to provide administrative services as described in Section 213.2 of the Anchorage School District Policy Manual, Duties of the Superintendent. Specific achievable goals and objectives are included in the contract.

RCLLC is an independent contractor and not an employee of the Anchorage School District. RCLLC shall be responsible for payment of all expenses associated with operating its business outside of ASD facilities, as well as all payroll taxes and insurance required for its employees. With the exception of the office and support staff in the administration building, \$160,000 is the total cost of the Office of the Superintendent for the next year, and \$146,412 for the following eleven months.

Mr. Christal's salary is currently at \$115,000, the same level it has been since the summer of 1998. In addition to salary, his benefit package and business expenses were budgeted for \$67,437 last year. The total budgeted FY 1999-2000 amount for the Office of the Superintendent was \$182,465. The position is

budgeted to increase to \$183,739 for this year, due to increases in health and life insurance.

By entering into this agreement, the Anchorage School District saves \$23,739 (13%) for the first year of the contract and \$19,350 for the second year. This exceeds the initial target of 10% budget reductions for the 2001-2002 school year in this particular budget category. The District will initiate the cost savings a year early and continue the savings in the second year of this contract.

During the last school year, five school districts in Alaska had independent contractor arrangements with their superintendents. Education Resources, Inc., a business owned by former Superintendent Don Evans, has contracted for administrative and management services with Northwest Arctic Borough, Pelican, Pribilof and Southwest Region school districts. In addition, Aleutian Region School District has an independent contract arrangement with another company. Nationally, a number of districts have had agreements with private companies for superintendent services.

EVALUATION

The School Board completed the Superintendent's annual evaluation during a Special Meeting on June 8, although it was not finalized until the Special Meeting on July 17. Mr. Christal was evaluated on his performance for the 1999-2000 school year.

The Board evaluated the Superintendent in the areas of Leadership and District Culture, Policy and Governance, Communications and Community Relations, Organizational Management, Curriculum Planning and Development, Instructional Management, Human Resource Management and Ethics of Leadership.

Mr. Christal has completed his eighth year as the educational leader of the State's largest school district and about the 80th largest school district in the nation. Unlike most large urban areas where multiple school districts are the norm, the Anchorage School District is the only district serving the Anchorage Area. As such, the scrutiny placed upon the District's operations is intense. Community expectations for increased student performance and greater operational efficiencies, while student needs increase and funding remains inadequate, make the task of leading our District especially daunting.

Under the Superintendent's leadership, both the preparation and implementation of the new State Benchmark exams and the High School Qualifying Exam were massive undertakings and done very well. The Board adopted goals in reading, spelling, math, and general academic growth were combined with increased standards to help focus curriculum efforts. The

significant increases in the coordination among the summer school offerings for students who need the extra educational time have been outstanding. The District's administrative staff has supported instructional efforts in many ways, including improvements in the sub-dispatch system and creation of a master training schedule to minimize teacher time out of the classroom.

The completion of the rewrite of the 700 Section of the School Board Policy was a major accomplishment for the Superintendent, the Board Policy Sub-Committee and the administrative staff who worked diligently and cooperatively on it with community members. Information about District staff and services has become more accessible through the District's web site, public relations news releases, a new staff recognition program and improved internal communications. The strong efforts of the Superintendent, staff, and school and community groups also helped insure passage of another school bond to fund many needed school construction projects.

This was a particularly difficult year. Highly publicized negotiation problems with the teachers and the Assembly delay in finalizing the District's budget caused significant problems. Mr. Christal's leadership and communication skills were put to the test. We are very pleased that the negotiating teams were able to reach three-year contracts with both the teachers' and the principals' associations and Teamsters Local 959. The Superintendent and his staff handled the budget situation well, including assisting the Board in making the required budget reductions.

The Anchorage community is fortunate to have Mr. Christal as Superintendent. He understands and models high ethical and moral leadership, is committed to Anchorage, and he truly cares about students. He continues to represent the District well.

COMPENSATION COMPARISON INFORMATION

Recent public discussion has focused on top District administrative salaries. The School Board therefore provides the following information to give the public a comparison reference to be used when examining the compensation rate for superintendents for large, complex districts such as Anchorage. We believe that Anchorage has been fortunate to be able to employ an experienced, capable superintendent for the budgeted salary package.

Anchorage belongs to the Council of Great City School (GCS), which is composed of 57 of the large urban districts in the nation. The average salary for GCS superintendents in districts with less than 50,000 (Anchorage has 49,225) was \$135,000 in 1999. Tulsa, Oklahoma Public Schools recently advertised for a superintendent for their 43,000-student district with a salary range from \$130,000 to \$160,000. In 1999, the average salary for a GCS superintendent in a district with between 50,000 and 100,000 students was

\$149,050. Portland, Oregon Public Schools (about 57,000 students) hired their superintendent two years ago for \$155,000.

Average pay-for-performance bonuses for GCS superintendents are \$11,360 and range from 2 to 30 percent of the base salary. Over 40 percent receive bonuses. The average benefit package costs \$37,000. In total, an average total superintendent compensation for a like-sized school district is \$172,000 to \$183,000. In addition, the average tenure for superintendents in this size range is now at two and one-third years.

In Alaska, at least three districts pay their superintendents a salary greater than Anchorage pays: Fairbanks (16,200 students) at about \$120,000, North Slope (2,100 students) at about \$135,000, and Northwest Arctic (2,200 students) at \$118,000. The cost of these positions is significantly higher when the benefits package and expenses are included.

Anchorage needs to consider competitive salaries for all of its employees when competing nationally for talented individuals.

mt/PR

Prepared and Approved by: Peggy Robinson, School Board President