

Rilke Schule German Immersion School

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November 15, 2024

Dear Rilke Community,

The Anchorage School District has been working strategically over the last 2 years to combat increasing costs in an era of flat funding. As part of their recent cost cutting measures, ASD introduced their [“Rightsizing” initiative](#), in which schools are selected for closure or repurposing based on data, financial metrics, and community stakeholder input.

The Rilke Schule Academic Policy Committee (APC) has been working on long term strategies to ensure Rilke Schule's financial sustainability into the future. As a reflection of the financial constraints faced by ASD as a whole, Rilke Schule's operating budget has been adversely impacted by years of flat funding and steadily increasing costs. The APC has been strategically planning Rilke's long-term sustainability. One option of many that have been considered is a move into an existing ASD facility, which would have a drastic and immediate positive impact on our finances.

We have advocated through two letters ([12/4/23](#) and [10/8/24](#)) over the last two school years to the Superintendent and ASD School Board for a move into a suitable ASD facility if one becomes available. The APC is optimistic about moving into an ASD facility and has indicated a willingness and urgent need to ASD. ASD has proposed Lake Hood Elementary as a school that would be immediately available for “repurposing” for an ASD charter school in the 2025/2026 school year.

The APC held a special meeting on November 14 with the express purpose to give the APC members the opportunity to review Rilke’s current financial standing and options to ensure long-term financial and program sustainability, in conjunction with ASD's recent announcement that Lake Hood is the school they are proposing to repurpose most immediately for charter school use. Last night the APC unanimously approved our Chair to communicate through a letter to the ASD school board requesting consideration for Lake Hood Elementary, or a similar ASD facility, to be repurposed for Rilke Schule should it become available.

Even though we have increased student enrollment over the past couple of years, we have still had to cut several positions due to our budget and will be spending about \$500,000 in “roll-over / savings” funds for the 2024/2025 school year. At this rate, all “roll-over / savings” funding would be exhausted and there would be significant cuts to the Rilke Schule staff by the 2026/2027 school year. [APC Treasurer Report 8/22/24](#)

The 10-year lease on our facility expires August 2025, and the facility costs account for approximately 20% of our annual budget. Moving into an ASD building would significantly decrease our financial burden and hopefully allow us to fund additional services for our students. While we are advocating for an ASD building, we are also continuing negotiations with our landlord on our current rates as an ASD building is not guaranteed.

To be clear, we are not advocating for the closure of Lake Hood Elementary. We are advocating for our school if the building should become available.

As this could be a significant change for our school, please direct questions or concerns to Principal Herr Strauch strauch_branden@asdk12.org or Assistant Principal Herr Vincent-Lang vincent-lang_cameron@asdk12.org to receive the most accurate information. We will continue to communicate with the Rilke community as more information becomes available with the Rightsizing initiative.

Rilke Schule Academic Policy Committee (APC)

Rebecca Colvin, Katie Kelly, Mark Truog, Maggie Weyrens, Jason Hotch, Akara Anglin, Amanda Thompson, Robin Phillips, Jill Doniere