

# **Administrative Review**

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM

October 20, 2004

TO: MASTER'S PREPARATORY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CHARTER  
SCHOOL ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

FROM: JAN CHRISTENSEN *Jan Christensen by mlk*  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, INSTRUCTION

SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OF CHARTER SCHOOL PROPOSAL

Your charter school proposal was submitted to my office on Friday, October 1, 2004. An Administrative Review meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, October 28, 2004, from 2:30 p.m. -4:30 p.m. in Room #320 at the ASD Administration Building

The Administrative Review was done by the following individuals representing key departments who reviewed different aspects of your proposal for a charter school: Connie Bensler, Charter School Liaison; Jan Christensen, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction; Janet Stokesbary, Chief Financial Officer; Marie Laule, Director, Budget; Mike Henry, Executive Director, High School Education; Jerry Sjolander, Executive Director, Special Education; George Vakalis, Assistant Superintendent, Support Services; Mike Klawitter, Director, Risk Management; Eric Tollefsen, Executive Director, Human Resources; and Jeff Wood, Chief Information Officer

Key issues identified by each department are listed below for our discussion.

**CHARTER SCHOOL LIAISON**

- You will need to add parents of students to your Academy Policy Committee once you have them. It's State law.
- Several times you mention highly skilled and qualified teachers. They tend to be more expensive than others are, but you have budgeted in the medium range for teachers. It may be too low.
- How have you ascertained that there is a definite demand for your school? Surveys, meetings, etc?
- Your specific instructional curricula will require teacher training for these models. How and who will provide it? (example is Wilson Language System)

- Personal educational plans will be derived for each student, but when and where will this take place? Before school starts?
- Are you flexible enough to enlarge your special education staff? You have two teachers but no teacher aides listed. That probably won't be enough for your targeted student population.
- Is the potential facility the one pictured in the appendix? You might want to say that on page 15. It is necessary to be pretty specific about your facility at this point.
- You mention several times about vocational components to your school but none is listed in staffing or curricula. Are you going to have any vocational instruction?
- Your part-time art, music, and tech instructors are listed, but not as teachers. Will they be teaching kids? If so, they need to be certified. They may cost more than is listed.
- What contingency do you have if there aren't 200 students at first?

#### **ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, INSTRUCTION**

1. The composition of the academy policy committee is a definite strength, both in its diversity and level of skills and talents (p. 4).
2. The hours of operation for the school are an asset for those high school students who have difficulty starting school at 7:30 a.m. (p. 5).
3. While the need for the academy is delineated (p. 7-8), there is not quantifiable data indicated in this section to suggest how many students might be interested in attending the charter school. How are the school's proponents going to determine there is an actual demand by parents and students for this charter school? Have any surveys been done? Have there been any parent or community meetings to determine any interest for the school?
4. The charter school will use the Anchorage School District curriculum, code of conduct for students, and the ASD calendar (p. 13). This will enable an easier transition for students from other ASD schools.
5. The school has a potential facility (p. 15). The Department of Education and Early Development will not recommend approval of a charter school without a definitive location for the school.
6. The character education component of the schedule is the strength of this proposal.

7. The salary indicated for teachers at \$45,000 might be unrealistically low, especially if one of the ten teachers is to be a “master teacher” as indicated in the proposal.
8. The budget appears to be based on 200 students. What contingency plans have been developed if the school receives fewer than 151 students? The school needs at least 151 students to receive the additional school size factor for its budget.

### **HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION**

1. There is always a need for quality alternatives for high school students at risk of dropping out of high school and for those who have previously dropped out.
2. The concept of “self paced” instruction has proven effective with students who have been unsuccessful in the traditional high school. Will there be a minimum amount of academic progress a student should make? How will that be determined? What will be the effect on student status?
3. The idea of starting school later in the morning might have some advantages for student attendance, performance and progress. This might also have an adverse effect on the number of work experience opportunities for students.
4. Student enrollment is based upon an application completed by the deadline. Will applications and students be accepted after the deadline (count period)?
5. If students decide to return later to an ASD comprehensive or alternative high school, will grades, credits and student graduation status transfer back easily?
6. High school at-risk programs generally experience a higher level (percentage) of student turnover and mobility than do comprehensive schools. What plan is in place for the permanent or temporary replacement of students who drop from the Master’s Preparatory Leadership Academy?
7. The teacher to student ratio of 1:20 is certainly better than that of many of the ASD comprehensive high schools, but is unusually high for “self paced” instruction. Will technology be used in all of the academic areas to help equalize this high ratio of students to teachers?

## BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Overall, the proposal for the Master's Preparatory Leadership Academy Charter School is very well thought-out. However, there is information provided in the budgetary section of the proposal that requires further clarification.

- Included on the funding page of the charter school proposal totaling \$1,433,707 is the 20 percent special needs factor. The proposed annual expenditure budget does not appear to address expenditures related to providing special need services such as special education and bilingual education.
- On page 15, under location and description of the facility, is the reference to a real estate transaction intended to mean a lease or purchase of a facility? Consideration of the Home Rule Charter, for The Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska, Section 13.08 (b) Administration of the budget; the following appears to apply. "A lease purchase agreement with respect to acquisition of a capital improvement valued in excess of \$1,000,000 is not valid until approved by the majority of the qualified voters voting on the question" needs to occur. Additional discussion and clarification should be taken before further action is taken.
- The following comments pertain to the expenditure portion of the Proposed Annual Budget provided in the charter school's proposal:
  - In the total column for 270 TRS for classroom teachers, the amount should be \$9,450, not \$94,500.
  - Under Senior High Principal, retirement should be calculated on the 155 Added Days as well as 130 Salary.
  - The calculation for contracting out the art instructor, music instructor, technology instructor and nurse using 32 weeks equates to approximately eight months. Will these services be offered less than the regular number of weeks in a school year?
  - Under Food, the per day rate for meals and snacks calculates to \$.50/day rather than \$5.00/day in order to equal the \$19,000.
- The following comments pertain to the expenditure portion of the Grants and One-time Expenses provided in the charter school's proposal:
  - Request further information on how the amount of the \$30,000 planning grant and the \$172,500 implementation grant were derived. Additionally, a separate expenditure budget needs to be provided for each grant.

- Under Curriculum in the Expense portion, the formula for calculating the \$60,000 total amount appears to be calculated based on \$300 rather than \$3,000.00.
- Under School Library in the Expense portion, the formula for calculating the \$30,000 appears to be calculated based on \$150 rather than \$1,500.00.
- Voice Mail is an on-going expenditure and should be charged to the general operating budget, not the grants as a one-time expenditure.
- Under Staff Computers in the Expense portion, the calculation of the \$12,000 needs to be reviewed. \$12,000 is equal to \$800.00 x 15 each, not \$700 each.

## **BUDGET**

The proposers of the Master's Preparatory Leadership Academy (TMPLA) must be commended on a well thought out proposal and a very aggressive revenue and expenditure budget presentation. It has been rewarding to work with the proposers and to see the enthusiasm toward starting this charter school. There are a few budgetary questions and I am looking forward to the discussion during the administrative review. The following areas have been identified for discussion:

### **Revenues**

- The revenue generated from the Alaska Public Funding program for the General Fund based on a projection of 200 FTE students is \$4,433,707. The \$4,433,707 incorporates the \$4,576 basic student allocation, \$16 for Quality Grants and the current 4.38 percent indirect cost rate. This rate is subject to change; therefore, the revenue/expenditure ceiling could be adjusted once the District receives the approved rate for FY 2006. This proposal is based on this revenue funding for the General Fund.

On page 16 of the proposal under Number of Students Served it states, "The Master's Preparatory Leadership Academy proposes to initially serve a minimum of 150 students with a maximum of 200 students." Does "initially" mean for FY 2005-2006? Using the current formula, the reduced enrollment of 50 students would generate \$258,528 less revenues. Will the charter school be able of operate with revenues generated with only 150 students?

- On page 14 under Funding Allocation and Annual Program Budget, fourth paragraph it states, "...budgetary allowance per student allocation will be supplement with Technology Grant funds." Request additional information on this funding and the budgetary impact.
- Again on page 14 under the same heading and paragraph as above, it states, "The Master's Preparatory Leadership Academy will obtain a

gaming permit from the State of Alaska to professionally qualify to incorporate a fundraising component." More information is requested on this revenue generating activity. There are several rigid requirements under the charitable gaming statutes and regulations and a discussion on when and how this will work for the Academy would be beneficial.

## Expenditures

The expenditure budget presentation has been done very well. There are a few questions/suggestions in the following areas.

- Additional funds should be allocated for the function of "Master Teacher". Also, if any hired teacher has a Master's Degree or obtains one during employment, a \$500 per teacher bonus plus appropriate payroll taxes will need to be budgeted.
- On page 15 under Location and Description of the Facility information is provided about TMPLA seeking a 10,000-30,000 square foot building. On page 2 of 2 on Attachment J, in the budget presentation there is a line item for "Lease of Building with option to Purchase." Also in the budget presentation, there are other line items for utilities and phone lines, so it appears that this is not a full service lease. Without knowing the final contract arrangements a budget line item for a custodian should be included. Or will this be a "Lease of Building with option to Purchase" and the following applies.

Per the Home Rule Charter, for The Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska, Section 13.08 (b) Administration of the budget; the following appears to apply. "A lease purchase agreement with respect to acquisition of a capital improvement valued in excess of \$1,000,000 is not valid until approved by the majority of the qualified voters voting on the question." A discussion should be held with the ASD Administration and the Purchasing Department for guidance before negotiating the final contract, as much lead time is required if this will be a lease purchase.

- It appears that quite a few positions may be contracted. Some discussion should occur with the Director of Contract Administration to ensure that this does not conflict with current ASD practices of hiring on a contract if a position of the same nature is included in current ASD employee negotiated contracts.
- Is it anticipated that the two positions for special education teachers will cover all of the special services requirements, i.e. speech language, or should funding be considered for ASD Contracted Services (charge-backs) for other special services requirements outside the responsibility of the nurse?
- Funds for repair parts and equipment repair should be budgeted.

- The Liability Insurance amount appears to be low. This item should be reviewed with the Director of Risk Management.
- It appears that funds for the supplies and equipment will be expensed against grant funding for FY 2005-2006. For future years, will the General Fund be able to support these expenditures.

#### **Other**

- If there are adjustments that need to be made for salary or benefits due to rate adjustments, or other expenditures that should be included as those mentioned above, there is \$69,699 unallocated in the General Fund in this proposal to do so.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

- Early school facility identification is important
- Fire Marshall approval is required
- Asbestos issued will need to be identified and addressed
- Risk Management & Emergency Preparedness & Security should also have the opportunity to view the facility
- Charter school insurance requirements are attached and should be budgeted for: most charter schools use a brokerage firm to market their coverage (Willis of Alaska is one source and can be reached at 273-4141)

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES**

- With the alternative programs that ASD currently has, how much of a need is there for a program such as this one?
- Have other schools obtained a gaming permit to raise funds and does this support the philosophy and the mission of the school?
- They have included the ASD calendar in the proposal. Does that mean they will follow the ASD calendar? Even if it changes?

#### **INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY**

One of your stated goals is 'Students will demonstrate a proficiency in technology skills designed by the school community to be important for lifelong learning and preparation for a technologically-based workforce and personal use.'

Your recommendation for attaining this goal is 'The Academy will introduce students to vocational and technological resources to enhance their learning and pre-professional skills'.

Based on the above statements I assume that you will want Internet access, but I don't see a provider, cost or a funding source in this document.

In attachment J page 2. Item phone lines (includes computers). I don't understand the costs of 9,000; 600X15X50.00 is greater than 9,000.

You identify 20 student computers on the one-time expenses page. What is your equipment refresh cycle and how is it funded?

Will these systems be managed by a server?

On the same page, 15 staff computers are identified. Are these the same computers that are referenced on page 2 of Attachment J? What is your equipment refresh cycle and how is it funded for these systems?

There is no network infrastructure equipment or cost identified. How will these computers systems connect to one another and share information?

Will your workstation and network support be site based, or will you require ASD support?

Will you need access to the ASD network to perform various administrative functions?

ASD requires that all computer hardware be purchased from either Dell or Apple, unless it becomes the property of the student/parents. Which vendor are you selecting for the hardware?

There are no software licensing costs identified for products such as Office and Email or for any student use applications.

If you like, the ASD Information Technology staff will work with you to determine these costs and networking requirements.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Mr. Sjolander, Executive Director of Special Education, will provide his review at your meeting on Thursday, October 28.

Cc: Carol Comeau  
Connie Bensler  
Jan Christensen  
George Vakalis  
Enid Hunter  
Mike Henry  
Jerry Sjolander  
Janet Stokesbary  
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Eric Tollefsen  
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ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM

October 25, 2004

TO: JAN CHRISTENSEN, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, INSTRUCTION

FROM:  JERRY SJOLANDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SPECIAL EDUCATION

SUBJECT: THE MASTER'S PREPARATORY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL PROPOSAL

I have reviewed the proposal for the Master's Preparatory Leadership Academy and agree that a learning environment that addresses the "individual needs of the students with different learning styles" will provide an option for some special education students of the district. The Academy's proposal has included a comprehensive statement regarding its commitment to serving exceptional children. The goal that ensures that all staff is trained in Special Education issues and ways to implement accommodations for students is commendable. The plan to provide in-classroom support, resource support, direct instruction, extended practice opportunities is critical to the design of services compliant with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Charter schools are not exempt from compliance with federal or state statute and regulation regarding provision of services to special education students. Special education students with a wide range of diverse learning and behavioral needs may be selected by lottery into optional and charter schools. A school must be prepared to address the needs of any student it accepts. The proposal appears to address the needs of students eligible for services as learning disabled; however, there are thirteen other categories of eligibility defined by IDEA. The school must be prepared to address the unique behavioral issues of students as well as their academic needs. All schools of the district must follow the guidelines of the Special Education Handbook produced by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. It is recommended that the committee review the handbook which can be found at [www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/sped/](http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/sped/) on the department's website.

Approximately fourteen percent of the district's students qualify for special education services. With an enrollment of 150 to 200 students, it would be expected that the school would select at least 21 to 28 students with active Individual Education Plans. Given the school's target population, an even more significant proportion of special education students may apply. The proposed staffing of 2 certified special education teachers is appropriate for the initial estimate; however, additional staffing may be

required based on individual needs of students. A student cannot be denied acceptance to a school or services due to a lack of resources at the school.

A significant piece missing from the proposal is how the school plans to address related services for special education students. Students may require speech, occupational or physical therapy, adaptive physical education, or other related services as defined in the student's IEP. In addition, psychological services are required to conduct assessments for new referrals and triennial evaluations required by IDEA. There is no reference in the plan or budget regarding these services.