



Birchtree Charter School

Principal Report for APC Meeting

March 3, 2015

- **State Board of Education/Early Literacy Screener:** I have attached a draft waiver request for the early literacy screener pending APC approval. The request is for students in kindergarten and first grade only.
- **Juneau Charter School Conference:** The conference goals were to establish a charter school organization that can collectively advocate for changes for state-wide charter schools. The priorities at this time are facilities, equitable funding, and improved communication among charter school administrators.
- **MSBSD and MSB Board Members:** The attached letter was sent to the Borough Assembly regarding a property tax waiver. We are waiting for a response from the Assembly.
- **Board Retreat:** The board retreat will be on March 21st with Foraker group.
- **Building/Lease renewal:** Mr. Bowen and I have met with the building owner and with two realtors to discuss the current building. The owner will be meeting with us next week to discuss the renewal of the lease and will also provide us with plans for adding a multi-purpose room and an expanded parking lot.

The realtors discussed with us what the needs of Birchtree are and what we are looking for in terms of land and price. They will be meeting again with us to discuss some options. Regardless, they felt we need to have in place a five year plan for the school building.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cathy Busbey, Principal

To: Mayor DeVilbliss and Borough Assembly Members Skyes, Beck, Arvin, Colligan, Mayfield, Doty and Halter

From: Jennifer Schmidt, Fronteras Spanish Immersion; Cathy Busbey, Birchtree Charter School; Becky Huggins, American Charter Academy; Jeanne Troshynski, Midnight Sun Family Learning; John Weetman, Twindly Bridge Charter School

Date: February 20, 2015

Re: Property Tax Waiver

As Mat-Su Charter School Principals we are writing to request a waiver from property taxes for our schools.

As you are aware AS 29.45.050 was amended to read "a municipality may by ordinance classify and exempt or partially exempt from taxation all or a portion of privately owned real property rented or leased for use as a charter school under AS 14.03.250." Because of this change the above charter schools are requesting a waiver from paying property taxes.

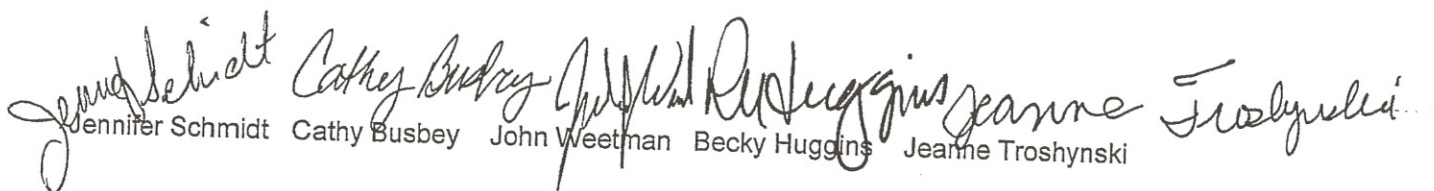
Recently, the Anchorage assembly passed a similar waiver request for the charter schools that reside in the Anchorage School District.

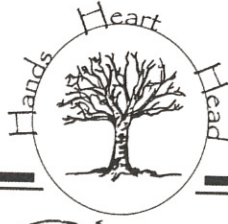
The charter schools in the Mat-Su School District enroll about 1,600 students. In addition to paying property taxes the charter schools also pay rent for their facility. Both of these costs are taken from each Charter School's operating budget. The following chart shows the amount each charter school pays for rent and property taxes:

<u>Charter School</u>	<u>Rent</u>	<u>Property Tax</u>
Birchtree Charter	\$368,000/year	\$75,000/year
Fronteras Charter	\$288,000/year	\$32,000/year
Midnight Sun	\$387,600/year	\$50,000/year
Twindly Bridge	\$131,292/year	\$10,384/year
American Charter Academy	\$224,490 for both rent and taxes/year	

We would welcome the opportunity to speak with the Borough Assembly about this request and answer any questions regarding the waiver and/or charter schools.

Sincerely,


Jennifer Schmidt Cathy Busbey John Weetman Becky Huggins Jeanne Troshynski Twindly Bridge



Birchtree Charter School

7107 E Palmer-Wasilla Highway - Palmer, AK 99645

TO: APC
FROM: Donna Levesque, Pedagogical Dean
SUBJECT: Pedagogical Council Update
DATE: 2/27/15

In recent weeks, the Pedagogical Council has pursued the following topics:

1. **Field trips:** A final draft of the proposal for standard field trips, organized by grade, is slated for approval at our next meeting, March 19th.
2. **Fundraising:** In its fundraising proposal, the Council has delineated specific activities and financial targets at each grade level in order to reach financial goals by eighth grade. This proposal has yet to dovetail with the BPG's fundraising guidelines so that efforts are both coordinated and sustainable.
3. **Birchtree's Core Values:** The Council has finalized a working document that outlines common values as identified by Birchtree's staff. This set of core values will serve as a source document as the Board engages in strategic planning.
4. **Second Grade Assessment:** A team has studied the components of the Second Grade Assessment, selecting elements that can be implemented in the short time remaining this school year with a group of current second graders who would most benefit from the evaluation. The team would like to utilize a fuller complement of second grade assessment tools with next year's second grade, starting in the fall.



Birchtree Charter School

Budget Transfers Approval

March 3, 2015

Account to be reduced	Account to be increased	Amount	Explanation
Supplies 100.066.110.0000.1.0.450	Equipment over \$500.00 100.066.110.0000.1.0.457	\$2,000.00	Purchase a new office copier
Supplies 100.066.110.0000.1.0.450	Library Supplies 100.066.400.0000.1.0.450	\$1,000.00	Library supplies to barcode newly ordered library books
Supplies 100.066.110.0000.1.0.450	Office Supplies Communication 100.066.330.0000.1.0.450	\$1,000.00	Advertisement for upcoming lottery for FY-16

110 = Regular Education
 200 = Special Education
 301 = School & Student Safety
 320 = Guidance Counseling
 330 = Health Services
 400 = School Administration
 450 = School Admin Support
 600 = Custodial
 770 = Student Activities

Budget Report
03/03/15

Non Discretionary		Approved budget*	Actual budget	Revised Budget	
Regular Education (110 F)		2,168,218	2,168,218	2,168,218	
Special Education (200 F)		401,972	401,972	401,972	
Recess Monitors (301F)		31,737	31,737	31,737	
Guidance Counseling (320F)		30,753	30,753	30,753	
Health Services (330F)		22,003	22,003	22,003	
School Administration (400F)		292,198	292,198	292,198	
Admin Support (450F)		130,591	130,591	130,591	
Operations and Maintenance (600F)		57,799	57,799	57,799	
Student Activities (700F)		20,391	20,391	20,391	
Total Non Discretionary		3,155,662	3,155,662	3,155,662	
Discretionary		Approved budget	Actual budget	Revised Budget	Expended as of 03/03/15
Regular Education (110F)					
Staff Travel (420 OC)		20,000	20,000	35,000	12,782
Student Travel (425 OC)		13,000	13,000	13,000	1,818
Purchased Services (440 OC)		35,500	35,500	35,500	23,847
Supplies (450 OC)		482,131	482,131	226,131	37,290
Supplies > \$500 (457 OC)		3,000	3,000	43,000	38,595
Textbooks (471)		5,000	5,000	5,000	4,547
Other Expenses (490 OC)		0	0	0	0
Contingency (527 OC)		128,354	128,354	303,354	0
Admin Support (450 F)		15,000	15,000	15,000	4,128
Communication (Postage) (433 OC)		500	500	500	410
Total		702,485	702,485	676,485	
Indirect (550 F 495 OC)		149,462	149,462	149,462	149,462

Operations and Maintenance (600 F)			
Garbage	1,500	1,500	
Purchased Services (440 OC)	105,000	105,000	439
Rental/Lease (441 OC)	368,400	368,400	98,137
Ins/Bond (445 OC)	2,796	2,796	276,300
Supplies (450 OC)	8,000	8,000	0
Supplies > \$500 (457 OC)			5,788
Total	484,696	484,696	
		485,696	
Utilities	36,604	36,604	
			24,613
Total Discretionary	1,157,814	1,157,814	678,157
Total Operating Budget	4,278,476	4,278,476	
*Current approved budget is based on salary and additional fund estimates. Actual additional funds and other staffing situations caused the actual budget to look slightly different than the estimated budget.			

[illegible]

BPG would like to see all entities of the school (Administration, APC, BPG, Pedagogical Council, Teachers...) to coordinate next year's calendar.

No Pastry for Parents in March because it falls on parent/teacher conferences and the following week is spring break.

The grant writing committee is currently looking for education grants to help with teacher education and training. Looking at creative ways to free up some of the operating budget (ex. USDA has an energy grant if solar panels are installed).

Fundraising Committee – waiting for fundraising guidelines that fit each grade.

School of Choice Fair – tabled for now due to calendar conflicts.

Pool Day – will be schedule into the calendar for next year.

Volunteer Potluck – 18 March at 6 p.m. after the regular meeting.

Next Meeting – 18 March

Board Retreat – 21 March

Waiver Committee Report

3/3/2015

The Waiver committee did not meet this month, however, it appears our already proposed language meets the criteria being proposed by the School Board, if 4AAC 06.714 is amended.

We already operate under an instructional model that makes early literacy screening in K-1 inappropriate.

We as the governing board may need to adopt a “written policy finding” that early literacy screening in kindergarten and first grade is inappropriate under our Waldorf instructional model, assuming our Charter is insufficient for this purpose.

I would encourage any interested parties to please call in to the hearing on March 19, 2015 at 1-855-463-5009 between 8:15 and 9:00 am to voice your concerns.