U.S. Department of Education
2011 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School

School Type (Public Schools): (Check all that apply, if any) ☐ Charter ☐ Title 1 ☐ Magnet ☑ Choice

Name of Principal: Ms. Anne Salzer

Official School Name: Chugach Optional Elementary School

School Mailing Address: 1205 E Street
Anchorage, AK 99501-4499

County: Municipality of Anchorage

State School Code Number: 50130

Telephone: (907) 742-3730

E-mail: salzer_anne@asdk12.org

Fax: (907) 742-3747

Web URL: http://www.asdk12.org/schools/chugach_optional/pages

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Ms. Carol Comeau Superintendent e-mail: comeau_carol@asdk12.org

District Name: Anchorage School District District Phone: (907) 742-4000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. John Steiner

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

11AK1

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2010-2011 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.

5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2005.

6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010.

7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

11AK1

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district: 67 Elementary schools
   (per district designation) 10 Middle/Junior high schools
   14 High schools
   2 K-12 schools
   93 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 15158

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Urban or large central city

4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7

5. Number of students as of October 1, 2010 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	15	17	32
K	18	18	36		7	0	0	0
1	18	17	35		8	0	0	0
2	25	12	37		9	0	0	0
3	19	17	36		10	0	0	0
4	18	21	39		11	0	0	0
5	20	21	41		12	0	0	0
					Total in Applying School:			256

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

1 %	American Indian or Alaska Native
3 %	Asian
1 %	Black or African American
4 %	Hispanic or Latino
0 %	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
82 %	White
9 %	Two or more races
100 %	Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2009-2010 school year: 2%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred ***to*** the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	2
(2)	Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	4
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	6
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	256
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.02
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	2

8. Percent limited English proficient students in the school: 2%

Total number of limited English proficient students in the school: 5

Number of languages represented, not including English: 5

Specify languages:

Russian, Korean, Ukrainian, German, Thai

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4%

   Total number of students who qualify: 9

   If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 8%

    Total number of students served: 21

    Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

1	Autism	0	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	1	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	3	Specific Learning Disability
0	Emotional Disturbance	14	Speech or Language Impairment
0	Hearing Impairment	1	Traumatic Brain Injury
0	Mental Retardation	0	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0	Multiple Disabilities	1	Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	Full-Time	**Part-Time**
Administrator(s)	1	0
Classroom teachers	10	2
Special resource teachers/specialists	1	5
Paraprofessionals	0	2
Support staff	4	2
Total number	16	11

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 23:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only high schools need to supply graduation rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any student or teacher attendance rates under 95% and teacher turnover rates over 12% and fluctuations in graduation rates.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Daily student attendance	95%	94%	94%	94%	94%
Daily teacher attendance	95%	95%	90%	95%	93%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

If these data are not available, explain and provide reasonable estimates.

Our District reports teacher absence data through substitutes requested; these data include substitutes requested for extra help and professional release time. We request extra help to cover classroom responsibilities when the teacher is in an iep meeting or to provide for small-group administration of state tests. We provide release time when teachers participate in district-wide curriculum development or mentoring. During 2007-2008 we had a high-needs student requiring more frequent meetings. In 2005-2006 a staff member was absent for months due to serious illness.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools): Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2010 are doing as of Fall 2010.

Graduating class size:	_____
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	_____%
Enrolled in a community college	_____%
Enrolled in vocational training	_____%
Found employment	_____%
Military service	_____%
Other	_____%
Total	**0**%

PART III - SUMMARY

Chugach Optional started as a pilot program in September 1973, through the efforts of a group of parents who recognized the need for an alternative learning environment and a school community, which included parents, teachers, and students. The group researched open-concept education and strove to create a model of education with a progressive approach to education. The following assumptions are core beliefs that guide decision-making at Chugach Optional.

We believe that children are naturally curious, want to learn, and can learn. We believe instruction should be child-centered and responsive to the special interests and aptitudes of each child. At Chugach Optional we strive to create a learning environment that nurtures the growth of the whole child, emphasizing physical, emotional, and academic development. It is our belief that the joy of learning lies in meeting challenges, discovering new territory and gaining knowledge through experience. Children who share responsibility for their own learning and are encouraged to think independently will grow into self-directed responsible adults.

There is healthy tension between our belief that children learn at their own rate and the Alaska State Grade Level Expectations. As we balance these two priorities for our students' education, we have opportunity to reflect and establish specific goals for each child. Teachers hold the Alaska State Grade Level Expectations close as they plan instruction for children. They continually evaluate students' daily work for evidence that students are mastering the Alaska State Grade Level Expectations. When a student struggles academically or socially, teachers incorporate formal assessments to help pinpoint the area of concern. Grade level team meetings and parent meetings, both informal and formal, occur as the team searches for effective supports for the child. Helping students understand that they are valued members of a community is important and therefore there is an emphasis on cooperation, rather than competition.

Students are encouraged to take an active part in their own learning process. Teachers set up regular opportunities for students to make decisions. Children may choose to some extent how, when, where, or with whom to learn. They may spend some time working alone and other times working in small or large groups, or collaborating on an activity with a peer. These choices help the children give direction to their own learning, and teach decision-making and time-management. As they demonstrate the ability to handle increased responsibilities, students are given more choices. Students are expected to carry through with the choices they make with support from home as well as at school.

Children are constantly encouraged to improve their own work and to compare their past and present performances. They have many opportunities to share work with the group so the children are aware of what other students are doing. This gives students an opportunity to share their strengths and learn from one another.

Because the program is designed to develop self-reliant learning, students develop the habit of self-evaluation starting at kindergarten. Students use rubrics and guided reflections to learn essential metacognitive skills. The evaluations are shared with parents twice a year at parent conferences. Letter grades evaluating student work are not used at Chugach Optional in order to encourage the nascent voice of the student self-evaluator. Parents are kept abreast of their child's progress through frequent conversations with the teacher, both formal and informal.

A highlight and essential component of the program is parent involvement. Parents help in the classroom and outside of the classroom. They work with small groups on special projects, or provide one-on-one support for students who need additional support. Parents may work with one small group, the teacher with another, while the remaining students work independently. Because parents are in the classroom regularly, they have an intimate understanding of the classroom goals and activities. They can see where their student is and ask questions of the teacher in a timely way. Therefore, evaluation is often informal, founded in the relationship that has developed with the parent and teacher, and grounded in the context of a specific learner. The relationship between the teacher and parents is critical to developing a strong team approach that supports each child. To that end, classrooms are multi-age allowing parent/teacher relationships to develop over a two-year period.

The multi-age classrooms in grades 1/2, 3/4, and 5/6 also compel the teacher to provide learning experiences that can meaningfully support the learning needs of a very wide range of learners. Learning activities tend to be open-ended. Multi-age classrooms also support the Chugach Optional ideal of a learning community. The students create bonds with students both below and above them in grade level. These classroom relationships extend on to the playground creating a web of social relationships. The older group of students in each class, the “Elders” take on important leadership role and learn to be role models for the "Youngers." This structure builds student confidence in their leadership skills and a healthy school community.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

11AK1

1. Assessment Results:

In the State of Alaska students in grades 3-6 are administered a criterion referenced test aligned to the Alaska Grade Level Expectations annually in April. All students are evaluated in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics and 4th grade students are also evaluated in the area of science. The test is designed so that a scale score of 300 is proficient in all grade levels and all content areas. The scale scores for Far Below Proficient/Below Proficient and Proficient/Advanced vary by grade level and content area. For example, in third grade, the range for Far Below Proficient is 100-260 in reading, 100-217 in writing, 100-262 in mathematics. The third grade range for Below Proficient is 261-299 in reading, 218-299 in writing, 263-299 in mathematics. The third grade range for Proficient is 300-391in reading, 300-401 in writing, and 300-389 in mathematics. In third grade the range for Advanced is 392-600 in reading, 402-600 in writing and 390 to 600 in mathematics. The constant is that scale scores run from 100-600, and 300 is the lowest proficient scale score.

The data tables included in the Blue Ribbon Nomination form reveal that our students are very nearly 100 percent proficient in reading and mathematics across grade levels and over time. We are proud to note that our students were 100% Proficient/Advanced in 3rd grade reading and mathematics, 4th grade reading, and fifth grade reading in 2010. We fall short of 100% Proficient/Advanced by 1 student in 5th grade mathematics, 6th grade mathematics and 6th grade reading. A highlight is that 83% of 6th grade students were Advanced in reading in 2010. In 2010, we notice that 60% of Special Education students were proficient/advanced in mathematics, whereas the school average is 96% proficient and Advanced. Further examination revealed that the 40% percent of special education students not proficient was comprised of four students. These four students continue to receive intense instruction in mathematics in their special education class and in the regular education classroom.

In 2006 our staff focused on mathematics instruction in-depth, looking closely at our curriculum and how we could improve student achievement while developing strong mathematical thinkers. We see in each grade level, except 4th grade, evidence of that work. The results are most dramatic in 6th grade mathematics where the percent proficient and advance went from 77% in 2006 to 98% Proficient/Advanced in 2010. The percent Advanced went from 47% to 76% Advanced over the same time period.

Chugach Optional has made tremendous strides in reading over the past five years. In 2005-2006 students were 97% Proficient Advanced in reading in grades 3 and 4. In grades 5 and 6 they were 95 and 94 % Proficient /Advanced, respectively. In 2010 only one student in grade 6 was not proficient in reading in 2010. Students were 100% Proficient/Advanced in grades 3,4, and 5.

Because we are relatively close to 100% Proficient and Advanced, we find it most helpful to think in terms of individual students. In that way, we can target supports for those individuals. We also find that our school goals and interventions need to be written so that we consider school-wide strategies to improve instruction for all students and raise the percent Advanced. In 2010 that analysis revealed that in third grade, one student was not proficient in mathematics; in fourth grade three students were not proficient in mathematics; in fifth grade one student was not proficient in mathematics. In sixth grade one was Not Proficient in reading, one was Not Proficient in mathematics and one student was Far Below Proficient. In two grade levels, third and fourth, the proportion of students Proficient compared to Advanced was not consistent across subject areas. The relative number of students Advanced in mathematics was disproportionate to the other subject areas in grades three and four.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Annually, the staff engages in a whole-staff analysis and discussion of the State Standards Based Assessment data. We use the data to find insights into how we might improve all students' achievement. The data reveal individual students who need support. This data helps teachers pinpoint instructional areas of needed focus. We use the state assessments as a broad identifying tool and use further assessment to identify specific areas for interventions. For example, one teacher discovered that a student new to her classroom was not proficient in Reading. She watched the student closely, looking for evidence in his work to support the data. At Chugach Optional we believe the best measure of students' level of achievement is the work accomplished every day. She found that he made multiple miscues when working in small groups. He misunderstood directions, took a long time to complete his work and wasn't progressing at the level she expected. At that point she gave him a Developmental Reading Assessment to further assess his reading skills. That evaluation revealed that he had difficulty decoding words. Further assessment revealed that he had a particular difficulty identifying and decoding diphthongs. This student's issue in reading cleared up because the data revealed an issue existed, confirmed by the teacher's observations. Further analysis revealed the splinter skill that needed remediation.

As a school, we seek ways to enhance instruction for all students. We look for school-wide trends across content strands, evaluating the relative strengths of one strand to another. Data analysis revealed that the content strand of Computation and Estimation in mathematics was relatively weak at several grade levels. While students were doing well overall in mathematics, in this particular area achievement was less strong. As a result, classroom teachers all examined their daily instruction to find ways that computational fluency could be more strongly emphasized in instruction.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Alaska schools receive the statewide assessment data for individual students in late May, though the state does not make its AYP determinations until August. A letter including the students' assessment data is sent to the parents in the spring. Information on interpreting the data is included in the letter.

Beginning of the year assessment data is shared with parents during the first quarter parent/teacher/student conferences. A school newsletter article in the fall celebrates the highlights of the student achievement data and reports trends and successes. During the same time of year a group of parents and teachers meet to look at the data together, making observations and setting academic goals. The results of this committee are reported to the parents in the school newsletter and at parent meetings. Because the Anchorage School District understands the importance for parents to understand not only their individual child's level of achievement, but also the achievement of the entire school, the school district reports the individual school scores in the local newspaper and on the school district website. The school's performance is also available for review on the State Department of Education web site.

Consistent with our philosophy that assessment data is one piece of information among many that shed light on student achievement, we use built-in structures within the program to encourage frequent information-sharing about a student progress. It is our belief that there should be no surprises regarding a student's level of performance during formal assessment opportunities, whether it is state assessments or student/parent/teacher conferences. Parents are encouraged to participate frequently in the life of the classroom; in fact they are required to volunteer 36 hours per year as established by the Chugach Optional Parent Assembly. During classroom volunteer activities, parents develop trusting, long-lasting relationships with their child's teachers over a two-year period. These relationships facilitate communication regarding a child's progress. Because parents are in the classroom, they have specific and frequent questions about their child's achievement. These informal opportunities to share information are just as valued and valuable as formal assessments in communicating with parents.

More formally, parent/teacher/student conferences held twice a year are opportunities for parents to learn about their child's progress and ask questions. The comprehensive conversations are centered on a portfolio of student work and timely classroom assessments gathered together for the purpose of

informing the parents of the child's progress. Conferences at Chugach Optional are student led. During the weeks prior to the conferences students are guided through a process of self-reflection, writing self-evaluations and gathering exemplary work to share with their parents and teachers in a comprehensive portfolio. The overview of a student's current level of performance, as demonstrated in the work itself, provides an authentic picture of achievement. Students gain confidence in their ability to justify their work and share their satisfaction regarding their growth. At Chugach Optional the portfolio conferences serve a celebratory purpose; concerns of either the teacher or the parent are the focus of conversations outside of the conference itself. Teachers guide the conversations in the early years, but as students mature they take on a larger role in leading the conversation.

4. Sharing Lessons Learned:

We believe that our program's approach to student learning is helpful for many students and can enrich student learning. When students are engaged directors of their own learning and parents are valued partners in the process, student success is the result.

Chugach Optional teachers are mentors to other teachers throughout the District, sharing what they have learned about how to create an exciting and compelling classroom environment for all students. They serve on Anchorage School District curriculum committees, lending their perspective to discussions of standards and evaluation. They serve as District trainers in Science. Chugach teachers are valued hosts for University of Alaska student interns, modeling and teaching best practices of instruction for pre-service teachers.

This year the principal joined a cadre of principals from other schools working on the STEM approach to curriculum. The integrated nature of our theme-based curriculum made STEM a natural fit for our school. In addition the principal worked with three other Anchorage principals representing, a charter school, a Title 1 school, and a school on the army post, to encourage further integration of the arts throughout the core curriculum. Through this collaboration we were able to bring our staffs together for a dynamic in-service on infusing drama into the literacy curriculum. We meet regularly to deepen our understanding through shared readings and discussion of the vital role that the arts play in educating citizens for life. The Anchorage School District and the Alaska Arts Education Consortium support this professional collaboration.

The success of the program is born out, not only by the students' achievement as measured on standardized tests, but perhaps more importantly, by the appreciative voices of students who return as young adults. We relish the stories of their adventures and successes and they in turn thank the school for providing them with an abiding joy for learning.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The most important goal of our curriculum is to develop competent and confident learners for life who contribute their gifts to the benefit of all. Decisions are made with that goal in mind.

A child's day at school is planned within the structure of required activities. The children have some choice as to how, when, where, or with whom they do each activity. These choices help the children give direction to their own learning, and teach decision-making, and time-management. Children spend some time working alone and other times working with a group. Children are given more choices as they demonstrate the ability to handle increased responsibilities. Providing frequent opportunities for choice within the curriculum also empowers learners and strengthens their commitment to their own learning.

The children are surrounded by a wealth of learning materials, many of which are games designed to help teach specific skills. We believe that the joy of learning lies in meeting challenges, discovering new territory and gaining knowledge through experience. To this end, our children and teachers blend their work with fun, their learning with enjoyment.

Parents and community members for the children at Chugach offer a number of enrichment activities. These include various mini-courses, guest speakers or instructors, field trips, assemblies, sports, fine arts and community service projects. Chugach emphasizes family responsibility and commitment. Children are expected to carry through with the choices they make with support from home and at school. Teachers see themselves in the role of facilitators of learning rather than dispensers of knowledge to help children guide their own learning.

The emphasis at Chugach is on cooperation; competition is generally deemphasized. Children are constantly being encouraged to improve their own work and to compare their past and present performances. At times the children choose to compete with each other in their work, either individually or as teams. There is also a great sharing of individual work with the group so the children are aware of what other students are doing. This gives students an opportunity to share their strengths and learn from one another.

Multiage classrooms have a significant impact on curriculum. Teachers must design learning activities that engage all learners meaningfully, including the least mature "Younger" and the most precocious "Elder." The students are specifically taught skills of self-management, which enables the teacher to address individual and small group needs, while the remaining students are engaged in productive work. The multi-age classroom compels the curriculum to open up; it must hold the Grade Level Expectations for all students. For example, two students may be playing a math game. For one student the learning point is to reinforce one-to-one correspondence, for the student next to him, the game is an exploration in probability. This differentiation is not evident to a casual observer, but is crystal clear to the teacher who artfully asks students the question appropriate to advance their learning goal.

The arts are taught specifically during designated times. A certificated music teacher teaches music for two half hours per week. A certificated art teacher teaches visual arts two hours twice a month. Having certificated content area specialists in the arts ensures that basic skills are correctly taught. In addition, at Chugach Optional the arts are infused throughout-the curriculum. A math activity in solid geometry becomes building a mobile in the 5/6 classroom. Painting a snowflake is a lesson in symmetry in kindergarten. Building beautiful patterns provides the basis for an algebra lesson. Building model castles provides the basis for practice with scale and measurement in the ¾ classrooms. Students make curricular connections through music and drama. These experiences are typically collaboration projects with the classroom teacher and the music teacher. Students may produce a musical to show their understanding of the Constitution or demonstrate an Alaskan native dance for the student body to illustrate this aspect of

Alaska culture. In addition to classroom music, nearly all sixth grade students participate in band and orchestra.

A certificated physical Education teacher teaches physical Education for three half-hour periods per week. During this time the physical education teacher works to build a love of movement and the skills to enjoy physical games and activities for life. She collaborates with the classroom teacher to reinforce classroom values and social emotional goals for the children. In addition health is taught for one half hour once a week. During this time the children engage in a curriculum that teaches specifically safe and healthy lifetime habits, including nutrition and personal safety.

2. Reading/English:

Chugach Optional uses a literature-based, balanced approach to literacy. We do not use a specific literacy program, but rather, teachers use a variety of instructional approaches to teach early literacy skills. These approaches include McCracken phonics, Word Study, and Dolch words. We believe that students become better readers by reading, and to that end, generous class time is provided for students' self-selected reading. Students read trade books and learn skills to help them select books at an appropriate level. During the daily silent reading time, teachers meet with individual students or small groups of students to work on specific skills. During those "mini-lessons" teachers specifically teach phonics, reading strategies, or comprehension skills. On occasion, when student need arises, teachers may use Houghton Mifflin leveled readers to provide a common text at the students' instructional levels. Comprehension is further developed during all-class discussion and written responses to literature. Drama plays a role in helping students comprehend text, analyze character and plot and build fluency. Students perform their work both for their classes and the school.

When beginning of the year screening reveals that a student's reading skills are a concern, the teacher will assess the student more carefully and begins to intensify instruction. Parent volunteers are a tremendous asset, freeing the teacher to work intensely with a small group of students. In addition, the Anchorage School District has supported a part time tutor to work with high-needs children. The teacher monitors the student's progress, meets with team teachers to collaborate on intervention ideas, and if insufficient progress is made, will recommend that the special education staff evaluate the student. Throughout this process parents and teachers engage in conversation in respect to the child's growth.

Writing skills are developed through Writing Workshop. Students use writing to convey a message that is important to them. They write self-selected fiction and non-fiction pieces. Starting in the primary grades students also write frequently in the content areas. Students are taught to evaluate their writing using Six Traits writing rubric.

3. Mathematics:

At Chugach Optional we strive to help students become a confident mathematical thinkers who approach unfamiliar problems with confidence and a variety of strategies. We use a constructivist model in all grade levels.
In 2006, the staff delved deeply into our student achievement data in mathematics and determined that a unified curriculum in grades kindergarten through six would enhance student achievement. After careful examination of several curricula the staff selected "Investigations in Space Data and Number" by Scott Foresman. This program seemed well aligned to the State of Alaska Grade Level Expectations and to supported our mathematical goals as an open concept, multi-age school. As we continued our work with Investigations we found that it did not best meet the needs of our six graders or our primary students. Currently we use "Bridges" and "Visual Mathematics" by the Math Learning Center as well as Scott Foresman's "Investigations." Staff found that whatever program we selected needed supplementation in the area of computation and estimation to varying degrees. We use math games from Everyday Mathematics, internet based computation practice, and teacher created materials to help build computation fluency. Students use manipulatives to demonstrate and explore mathematical ideas. Art is infused in mathematics as children explore symmetry, patterns and geometry. Students learn to express

their thinking clearly in verbally and in writing as they justify and explain their strategies for solving problems.

In order to support our struggling students, we work to ensure that our parents have a good understanding of our approach to mathematics education. Teachers have leveled math nights and write explanations of math games in their newsletters. The school expectation that parents will be in the classroom helps parents become comfortable with a constructivist approach to mathematics. In addition, teachers have developed targeted activities to help students develop weak skills.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

As much as possible, science, art, music, social studies, language arts and mathematics are incorporated in interdisciplinary theme studies. The integration of the content areas makes the student learning more cohesive and maximizes student-learning time. As a public school in the Anchorage School District we create curriculum and learning opportunities that address Anchorage School District curricula in science and social studies. The thematic, multiage approach means that curricula are presented to students in a different manner and perhaps at different grade levels. We approach the curricula through the lens of experiential learning and inquiry learning. Students articulate what they know about an area of study and identify questions for further study. Through a series of hands-on experiences, presentations, and research students investigate their questions. For example, this year in grades ¾ students incorporated a study of the impact on invasive plants in our urban setting while studying Alaska native plants. As part of their study the students identified invasive plants, learned about their impact on the ecology of the area and actually participated in helping to remove plants from the neighborhood.

Presentation of ones work is an important aspect of communication and Chugach Optional students have frequent opportunities to present their work formally and informally. The use of technology is integrated throughout the curriculum. In kindergarten students do not use computers regularly in school. In the Primary grades they are introduced to the computer and work in the computer lab one half hour per week. In grades 3/4 students learn correct keyboarding and begin to use a word processor. In grades 5/6 students are using a variety of multi-media. Internet research skills and safety are taught and presentation skills honed.

Inquiry-based learning and hands-on experiential learning experiences help our students develop life-long skills. Visitors to our school frequently remark that all the students are on engaged. We believe that the thematic approach increases student engagement, and therefore, achievement.

5. Instructional Methods:

Our instructional approach is founded upon the assumption that children possess a "natural curiosity and drive to learn", so the Chugach Optional program provides a challenging, engaging curriculum that will prepare the students to be informed, compassionate, ethical citizens for a global society. At Chugach Optional we believe that basic research skills and a keen desire for discovery will best prepare children for our rapidly changing world.

We recognize that learning involves risk-taking. Opportunities are provided to choose, plan, do and evaluate. Knowledge is a function of all the experiences a child encounters during the day. Therefore we try to integrate curriculum areas within a single area of study.

For example, during a study of the Middle Ages, students might explore the mathematical ideas of ratio and scale while designing a castle they will build. They research life in the Middle Ages and write about life in their castle. Students study technological advances such as the development of siege machines. Students study dress, recreation and crafts during the Middle Ages as they prepare to present their study at a Middle Ages Fair.

While memorization of some facts is necessary, this is most effective when preceded by an understanding of the ideas underlying the concepts. For example, before memorizing multiplication facts, students develop a solid understanding of the concept of multiplication. They demonstrate their understanding using diagrams and manipulative materials, and reinforce it through in-class explanations to their peers. Basic skills become tools rather than ends in themselves, encouraging learning experiences that require critical and creative thinking.

We value the process of inquiry so we provide experiences requiring students to pose questions analyze them and arrive at their own solutions. Children learn through self-discovery and individual exploration.

We also believe that students learn through interaction with others. At Chugach Optional children of different ages work together helping each other learn. The multiage classrooms (grade one and two, grades three and four, grades five and six) ensure that the learning community is diverse and reaches a broad range of learners. Students quickly learn to utilize each other's strengths as they work cooperatively to accomplish a project. The social and emotional aspects of providing a healthy and happy learning environment have an important place in the Chugach Optional curriculum. Classes spend time in class meetings solving problems and sharing stories. The time spent supporting social and emotional skills strengthen s the learning community and enhances student learning.

6. Professional Development:

For over twenty years Chugach Optional through the Anchorage School District has applied for and received permission from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to release our students after lunch approximately twice a month to provide opportunity for staff professional development. Our school day is lengthened ten minutes per day beyond the state requirements; therefore our students' instructional content time meets the legal requirements. Each year the staff designates an area of professional growth and we design opportunities for discussion and study around the topic. This year our over-arching topic was, "How We Meet the Needs of All Children". We have spent Early Release time working on our process for identifying students in need of academic and behavioral supports. We have met in teams to identify appropriate interventions for our struggling students. In addition we have spent Early Release reading journal articles and discussing appropriate enrichment for gifted and talented students. Early Release time is the glue, which holds together the professional practice of our school, ensuring that the program remains cohesive and consistent throughout grade levels. Early Release time also provides opportunities for grade level teams to create integrated thematic studies, and discuss student achievement.

The principal's collaboration with three other elementary principals on arts infused education helped provide the opportunity for all four staffs to join together for a professional development opportunity provided by staff from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. This in-service developed teachers' skills in infusing drama into language arts and content area instruction.

Teacher leaders at Chugach Optional in technology provide professional development in technology tools and recently introduced to the staff how to use Googledocs to facilitate student-to-student and teacher-to-teacher collaboration.

The Anchorage School District provides a wide range of opportunities for staff development, ranging from class management to effective use of data, to using Science Notebooks to integrate language arts and science content. Teachers are encouraged to participate in these enriching opportunities.

7. School Leadership:

Chugach Optional is fortunate to be a small school with a small staff. There are sixteen full time and eleven part time staff. As a small school we find that a collaborative leadership style is important. School level decisions are made by consensus within the bounds of School District policy and practice.

Staff meetings occur weekly and processes ensure that when an important decision needs to be made, everyone has a chance to talk about her point of view. We have an open agenda posted in the staff lounge. Throughout the week, staff add items they feel should be discussed at the staff meeting. There is a place on the agenda to indicate whether the agenda item requires discussion, a decision or is simply necessary information. Notes from the meeting are sent out to all staff. This practices ensures that the decisions are understood clearly and can be referred to by those who were absent.

In the principal's absence a designated Teacher-in-Charge addresses issues that may arise. The Anchorage School District supports the development of teacher leaders by providing addenda to curriculum specialists who attend training meetings and relay important news about curriculum enhancements. This has been a valuable way to build capacity within the District and at Chugach Optional School.

The principal at Chugach Optional attends teachers' grade level team meetings to support teachers as needed. She facilitates discussion at staff meetings. The principal attends the Parent Assembly meetings and represents the staff's views to the community parent board. In addition, she articulates the school's philosophy and instructional approach to parents and to perspective parents, working to ensure that the school's mission is clearly understood.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 3 Test: Alaska Standards Based Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2010 Publisher: Data Recognition Corp.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	100	92	89	97	97
Advanced	56	53	43	74	65
Number of students tested	36	38	35	34	34
Percent of total students tested	97	100	100	92	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11AK1

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 3 Test: Alaska Standards Based Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2010 Publisher: Data Recognition Corp.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
proficient/advanceda	100	92	89	97	97
advanced	70	63	69	85	71
Number of students tested	37	38	35	34	34
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	92	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
proficient/advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
proficient/advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
proficient/advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
proficient/advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
proficient/advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
proficient/advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES: The State of Alaska and Data Recognition Corp report the date of publication as the date of the administration.					

11AK1

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 4 Test: Alaska Standards Based Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2010 Publisher: Data Recognition Corp.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	92	97	100	94	97
Advanced	50	62	69	82	74
Number of students tested	38	37	36	33	35
Percent of total students tested	100	100	97	97	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES: The State of Alaska and Data Recognition Corp report the date of publication as the date of the administration.					

11AK1

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 4 Test: Standards Based Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2010 Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	100	100	100	100	97
Advanced	68	43	91	73	74
Number of students tested	38	37	35	33	35
Percent of total students tested	100	100	95	97	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES: The State of Alaska and Data Recognition Corp report the date of publication as the date of the administration.					

11AK1

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 5 Test: Alaska Standards Based Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2010 Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	97	93	97	97	98
Advanced	61	64	70	71	71
Number of students tested	36	42	34	35	42
Percent of total students tested	100	98	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES: The State of Alaska and Data Recognition Corp report the date of publication as the date of the administration.					

11AK1

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 5 Test: Alaska Standards Based Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2010 Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	100	100	100	97	95
Advanced	58	69	77	66	57
Number of students tested	36	42	34	35	42
Percent of total students tested	100	98	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES: The State of Alaska and Data Recognition Corp report the date of publication as the date of the administration.					

11AK1

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 6 Test: Alaska Standards Based Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2010 Publisher: Data Recognition Corp.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	98	97	94	89	77
Advanced	76	74	63	64	47
Number of students tested	42	31	35	44	34
Percent of total students tested	100	100	97	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES: The State of Alaska and Data Recognition Corp report the date of publication as the date of the administration.					

11AK1

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 6 Test: Alaska Standards Based Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2010 Publisher: Data Recognition Corp.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	98	100	100	100	94
Advanced	83	71	80	73	53
Number of students tested	42	31	35	44	34
Percent of total students tested	100	100	97	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES: The State of Alaska and Data Recognition Corp report the date of publication as the date of the administration.					

11AK1

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	96	98	97	95	92
Advanced	59	62	66	72	69
Number of students tested	152	148	140	146	145
Percent of total students tested	100	99	98	97	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced				79	80
Advanced				57	50
Number of students tested				14	10
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced	60	91	100		80
Advanced	20	55	42		30
Number of students tested	10	11	12		10
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. AK Native(2006,2007) multi-ethnic (2008)					
Proficient/Advanced			99	64	79
Advanced			64	46	36
Number of students tested			11	11	14
NOTES:					

11AK1

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advance	99	98	97	99	96
Advanced	71	62	79	74	63
Number of students tested	153	148	139	146	145
Percent of total students tested	100	99	98	97	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advance				100	90
Advanced				57	40
Number of students tested				14	10
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advance					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advance					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advance	90	100	83		80
Advanced	30	46	58		40
Number of students tested	10	11	12		10
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advance					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Multi-ethnic(2008),AK Native (2007,2006)					
Proficient/Advance			91	100	86
Advanced			73	46	43
Number of students tested			11	11	14
NOTES:					

11AK1