**Charter Schools**

Alaska established charter school legislation in 1995 in response to requests from parents and teachers for more educational choices for their students. Charter programs provide the opportunity to offer educational programs customized specifically to the community. Charter programs can offer new and often unique options for parental choice in the education of their children.

**Established at the local level**

In Alaska, charter schools are started by a founding group at the local level. Founding members must follow local school district policy to submit for approval to their local school board. Upon receipt of the application at the local level, the local school board has 60 days to review the application. Upon approval of the charter application by the local school board, the complete Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED) Charter School Initial Application Form is sent to EED within a 30 day period.

**Reviewed at the department level**

Once received by EED, the application is assessed for statutory and regulatory compliance by a Technical Review Committee. The review committee may request additional clarifying information from the charter school contact during the review process. Once deemed compliant, the application will be submitted to the state board for final approval. Applications must be received by EED at least 90 days prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the State Board of Education to be considered on that agenda.

**Approved at the board level**

All final approvals of charter applications occur at a regularly scheduled meeting of the State Board of Education. The State Board meets four times a year – generally March, June, September and December. Specific meeting dates are generally calendared 3 months prior to the meeting date.

**Tips for Initial Charter School Founding Members:**

* Understand the laws and regulations that govern charter schools in Alaska – you will find the statutes and regulatory guidance in the applications posted on the EED website.
* Seek guidance from the local school district charter schools liaison/supervisor – your local school district will be able to provide specific information on what your local school board will require for local approval.
* Seek guidance from other Charter Schools operating in Alaska – successful charter schools can be your best source of information. A full list of Alaska charter schools is located on the EED website.
* Complete the Initial Charter Schools Application in its entirety – missing or incomplete information can delay an application’s consideration at a State Board meeting.