



March 4, 2020

Dear Members of the School Board,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be the Superintendent of the Sitka School District for the past 6 years. During my tenure, we made noteworthy progress on achieving your School Board Goals of closing the achievement gap and increasing the positive climate and connectedness in our schools. Granted these are big goals that require systemic change in order to achieve; however, our progress in moving the needle cannot be disputed. As a matter of fact, our efforts served as a prominent feature in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's 2019 Culture of Health Prize Sitka recently won. Another example of progress is that Cultural Director Nancy Douglas and I were selected to share our equity work at the *Inclusive Innovation Showcase* held at the National Press Club in Washington, DC last November. It should be noted that we were 1 of 10 school districts in the nation asked to share at this event. Our efforts are real and meaningful, and are making a positive difference for our students and families.

One of my proudest accomplishments during my tenure as superintendent is our partnership and the integral nature of our work with Sitka Tribe of Alaska. Although significant groundwork had begun prior to my superintendency, our work towards true co-creation to achieve equity for our students and families has progressed significantly through the many grants we have been part of, as well as our commitment to listening, growing, and learning together during my tenure.

We are so fortunate to have deep and meaningful partnerships with statewide and community organizations. I hope I don't forget to mention any, as we have numerous partners and I want to publically thank them one more time for their vision, dedication, and contributions to the learning opportunities we offer students in the Sitka School District. Our partners have been:

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| Alaska Arts Education Consortium | Mt. Edgecumbe High School |
| Alaska Professional Learning Network | Pathways Coalition |
| Alaska Staff Development Network | Sitka Conservation Society |
| Alaska State Council on the Arts | Sitka Counseling |
| Association of Alaska School Boards | Sitka Fine Arts Camp |
| Center for Community's Early Learning Program | Sitka Sound Science Center |
| Central Council's Head Start Program | Sitka Tribe of Alaska |
| Department of Education and Early Development | Sitkans Against Family Violence |
| First Alaskans Institute | Southeast Regional Resource Center |
| Hames Center | Special Education Service Agency |
| Island Institute | University of Alaska Southeast – Sitka and Juneau |
| League of Innovative Schools | Youth Advocates of Sitka |

Although the school year is not yet over, during my tenure as superintendent our students have won 30 Region V titles, 24 State titles, 12 Second at State titles, as well as numerous individual student State titles. We have graduated 5 National Merit Finalists in the past 5 years, and this year we have a National Merit Semi-Finalist to add to the incredible accomplishments of these students. During the past 5 years, 404 graduates have walked across our stages with 18 Valedictorians and 5 Salutatorians, and during a number of years we had multiple

Valedictorians who graduated with a 4.0 GPA. Our staff are not immune to awards either, and I have previously commented on 18 staff members who have earned awards and/or their work with our students has been recognized in books and through presentations they make – all the way to South Korea! And the school year is not over yet.

Three specific accomplishments that I am proud to have ushered in as superintendent include Sitka Schools being the first and currently 1 of only 2 school districts in Alaska invited to be part of the League of Innovative Schools. The League is a collaborative of selected school districts from around the United States who are recognized for their innovative learning and leadership practices. There are currently only 114 League member school districts in the United States. Also our work with the InnovateK12 collaborative that works to accelerate strategic initiatives by increasing shareholder voice and agency. Our *Leave Your Print* strategic plan challenge engaged students, staff, families, and the community to contribute 186 ideas, 78 comments shared on those ideas, 3,673 ratings of the ideas, and 10,297 pairwise votes to help us identify our next Strategic Plan. Voices were heard! ...and of course, the fact that President Obama recognized me and our work in the East Room of the White House during the *White House Summit on Technology in Education* where superintendents from just over 100 schools districts in the nation were invited to be honored and celebrated for their work in bringing digital tools to their students, which was an effort started in Sitka Schools as a School Board Goal because students asked.

During the past 6 years as your superintendent, I have risen to positions of leadership in a number of organizations that enhance and support our work in Sitka Schools:

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| Alaska Council of School Administrators | InnovateK12 |
| Alaska State Council on the Arts | International Society for Technology in Education |
| Alaska Superintendents Association | League of Innovative Schools |
| Consortium for School Networking | Southeast Regional Resource Center |

Additionally, I have presented on behalf of the Sitka School District in order to represent our work to achieve the School Board Goals and have been recognized locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally. During my tenure, Sitka Schools has benefited from over \$3,000,000 in grant funds that has played a significant role in moving our School Board Goals forward – especially in times of declining revenue.

As superintendent, I have had the distinct pleasure to work with 12 School Board Members, 6 School Board Presidents, 3 Mayors, 2 City Administrators and 3 Interim City Administrators with a 3rd City Administrator to start this month, 2 General Managers at Sitka Tribe of Alaska, 1 Senator and 1 Representative in the Alaska State Legislature, 5 UAS-Sitka Campus Directors, 3 Coast Guard Commanders, and 3 Superintendents at Mt. Edgecumbe High School.

As much as I have truly enjoyed being your Superintendent over the years – and yes, despite any challenges I make this statement – I have recently learned that the impact of the intensity and stress in both the nature of the work and the hours required to do the work of being your Superintendent have taken a personal toll on me that I am no longer willing to accept. I am currently on contract to the Sitka School District through June 30, 2022. I respectfully ask that the School Board release me of the remaining 2 years on my contract, and allow me to leave the district on June 30, 2020.

Thank you to the current and previous School Board Members, to the Sitka School District learning community, and to the community of Sitka for supporting our work in achieving our School Board Goals.