Superintendent Report – August 2016

Since the last School Board meeting:

• School has started – we are ready to make great things happen for students this year!
• Congratulations to our Boys’ Basketball Team who were responsible for another rescue from a fire this summer! While traveling on the annual college tour to Washington with Coach Lee, some of the players were eating at a Taco Bell when they saw a car engine become engulfed in flames. Their quick actions saved the car – true heroes!
• Congratulations to Cindy Duncan, who has been selected to be 1 of 60 teachers in the world to be part of a Sprout learning community; this is a direct result of being part of the League of Innovative Schools. Cindy was awarded free makerspace resources, such as dedicated laptops for her students, a high-end 3D printer, 3D scanner, software and training, as well as the opportunity to network with her 59 colleagues around the world!
• We recently received our School Climate and Connectedness Survey results, and we will schedule a time to go over them as a Board this fall. This year we expanded down to grade 3, so we have a bigger picture than before.
• Results of the ACT assessment also came in this summer. The ACT assessment examines English, Math, Reading, and Science skills that are necessary for success in the first year of college coursework. It is a small sub-set of students who take the ACT assessment – last year it was 21 of our students. Again this year, our students outperformed their peers from around the state in all of the tested subjects!
• Maintenance Director Mark Bautista has created a 6-year Capitol Improvement Project (CIP) plan. We currently only have 1 project on the CIP state funding request list – the covered area in the Keet Gooshi Heen playground – and this 6-year plan is a little different than the CIP funding request. The CIP 6-year plan outlines projects that are needed in the district, such as paving parking lots, in addition to the larger CIP funding request items.
• The district office now has a Facebook page. We already have 326 people who have Liked our page, and last week our total Reach was 1,595 people! Many of our schools also have active Facebook pages where they post school-specific activities. The district office Facebook page is focused on more generic school district information, such as the bus schedule for all schools, forms to enroll in the Migrant program, etc. Like us to keep informed.
• Grants: We have been busy writing grants to support our vision and work in the district, and I am thrilled to say that all of our recent grant requests have been fully funded! The following resources come by way of the grants:
  o Pacific High School now has a full-time Social Worker thanks to a federal grant awarded by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. This is a 3-year grant that covers all salary and benefits.
  o Wooch.een Preschool has a Preschool Planning grant to support a strategic plan in combination with the Sitka Tribe of Alaska and Tlingit and Haida Head Start. This grant will support collaborative planning activities as well as a Cultural Para who will focus on Family Engagement at Wooch.een. This is also a grant managed by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. Thanks to Tristan Guevin for spearheading.
  o Our Arts, Culture, and Technology (ACT) initiative received a 2-year Margaret A. Cargill Foundation grant that has the option to be renewed for a subsequent 7-year period of time. This is a partner grant with the Sitka Fine Arts Camp and the University of Alaska Southeast. This grant will allow us to hire a full-time ACT coach to support teachers as they implement the ACT standards and ACT curriculum they developed, and will pay for our summer ACT teacher training institutes called the Basic, Advanced, and Special Arts Institutes.

Current Happenings in the District:

• We are still hiring an Activities Director at Sitka High School
• Thank you, Tim, for your years of dedicated service to our students and district. You have left a lasting legacy...

Things on the Radar:

• I will be at a SERRC Board meeting in Juneau on September 8th, and then at an Alaska Arts Council meeting in Anchorage on September 9th and 10th. Travel for both of these trips are provided by SERRC and the Arts Council.
• Our Sitka Winter Fellow will start work on September 6th, and she will oversee our new STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) projects - our new mobile makerspace and our new StarLab!