Superintendent Report – January 2019

Enrollment Update: Current enrollment is 1,200.25. Our October official count was 1,207.17.

Since the last School Board meeting:
- Thank you to School Board Member Amy Morrison, Mayor Gary Paxton, Assembly Member Valerie Nelson, and Assembly Member Kevin Mosher for spending an entire morning touring our schools. It was a very meaningful opportunity to share with the newly elected School Board and Assembly Members the work we are doing from our preschool to our high schools. School Board President Dr. Jenn McNichol also assisted in being a tour guide along with Cultural Director Nancy Douglas and myself. A special Thank You goes out to each of the teachers who let us come in and witness student learning in action, and to the principals/assistant principals who helped to make it happen!
- Senator Stedman along with staffers Melissa Kookesh and Randy Ruaro recently toured our SHS Career and Technical Education (CTE) facilities. The Senator was instrumental in securing the funding for the CTE addition, and this was his first opportunity to see the facility since the dedication. Thank you to SHS CTE teachers Mike Vieira and Tim Pike, as well as SHS Principal Laura Rogers and School Board Clerk Eric Van Cise for helping to make the tour such a success!
- I recently met with a partnership specialist from the 2020 Census who was in town helping to start a Sitka Complete Count Committee, which will look at outreaching to families to make sure that the count is accurate. Census data is key to allocation of funding to communities and districts, and thus we will be involved as it makes sense to do so in helping to ensure we have an accurate count of citizens in Sitka.
- Thank you to Business Manager Cassee Olin for her ability to work on revising the FY19 budget while also building the FY20 budget structure. We are fortunate to have someone as skilled and precise as Cassee!

Current Happenings:
- Working with Diana Browning Wright this past fall has been very beneficial to our District’s work to close the achievement gap. Diana is working with a team of teachers and administrators from each school, which will be in place for 3 years, as we do the difficult and necessary work that is needed to implement an academic and behavioral multi-tiered system of support. This week Diana will also be working with all of our teachers during the inservice days. To have someone so uniquely qualified and effective in providing applicable resources is a great benefit to us.
- We are continuing our negotiations with both the Sitka Education Association (SEA) and the Sitka Educational Support Professional Association (SESPA) unions. Both contracts are expected to begin on July 1, 2019.
- Next week we will have two events related to the District’s interest in moving to a self-insurance health insurance model. One event will be a Worksession with the School Board on Wednesday, January 16th @ 6:00 pm in the SHS Library, and the other will be a meeting with Insurance Committee members from SEA and SESPA. Our health insurance agent will be in town to help share information during the events. Self-insurance is an option for us to better control the previously uncontrollable health insurance costs without impacting health insurance benefits.
- I have been appointed to the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Board of Directors to represent superintendents. This is a 3-year appointment, and ISTE covers all expenses related to attending board meetings. I am the first Alaskan in known history to be on the ISTE Board, and my appointment started on January 1, 2019.

Things on the Radar:
- The Sitka Rotary Club and AFS Intercultural Programs USA are sponsoring A Community Conversation: Where our Cultures Meet event that will be held on Friday, February 1st from 6:30pm – 8:30pm at the Sheet’ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi Tribal Community House. Exchange students from Sitka High School and Mt Edgecumbe High School will share information about their “cultures, families, beliefs and impressions of their experiences in Sitka”, and look forward to engaging with people in the audience. The exchange students are from China, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, India and Thailand, and audience members are encouraged to bring a dessert from one of the countries represented. Call Krisanne Rice (738-4932) or Jeff Budd (747-4821) with questions.
- I will be traveling to Juneau to attend the SERRC Board Meeting on January 10th and 11th. By state statute, all districts in SE Alaska must have a representative on the SERRC Board, and SERRC pays the costs for me to attend the meetings. At the SERRC Board Meeting we will be discussing issues that are important for districts in Alaska. While in Juneau, I will also be attending a STEPS grant meeting focused on building post-secondary pathways.