

Dear Heidi Sipe,

It is with great sadness that I write this letter of resignation. Working in this district for my whole career says a lot about the district, staff, and students I have worked with.

I would like to thank Heidi for being more than a superintendent 8 years ago when I needed help and an advocate while going through a divorce. This speaks a lot about a district whose personnel go above and beyond for its people. Thank you for so many opportunities to learn and grow, such as allowing a group of women led by David Lougee to Morelia, Mexico for language school. We still talk about it all these years later! Thank you also for sending the instructional coaches to a Jim Knight conference in Kansas of all places, who I didn't realize was so famous and such a HUGE deal!

I would like to thank Bob Lorence, who has been the BEST boss, co-worker, and friend. It has been such a joy to work for him at the elementary school, as well as the high school. I am grateful to him for letting me join him at the high school when he probably was grateful for the quiet. I would also like to thank him for all the trips we took for reading and math trainings, and for ALWAYS taking us to the BEST places to eat. You made EVERY trip FUN, and I apologize for embarrassing you many times—but at least you were laughing!!

Thank you to the School Board for your generous support and love for the district. During my early years, the board was not as supportive and could be very difficult to work with; I do not take you for granted. We are VERY fortunate to have had MANY years with such a dedicated, amazing board.

Not having my family nearby when I first started at McNary, the staff became my family. We worked together, as well as enjoyed many special occasions together. We celebrated many weddings, babies, graduations, retirements, and were there for each other during life's challenges.. These friendships continue to this day, even though most of them have moved on or retired. I have come to realize that this is a rarity in school districts, and I'm so grateful for this family that I had for most of my career.

Finally, the hardest part of resigning is leaving the students. When you start teaching students' children, you know you've been somewhere for a long time. They have taught me empathy, compassion, and the importance of doing my BEST EVERY DAY to make connections, make learning meaningful, and sometimes even fun. I will miss working with all the different ages. I have many special memories: being in charge of the Talent Show at MHES for many years, putting on the school carnival, which was a LOT of work but so much fun, being a cheer coach, chaperoning the dances, traveling with FCCLA, being a Cross Country and Track Mom for so many years while my sons participated and cheering for everyone. One of my very favorite memories was actually during COVID when school was online. This was a very difficult time for students AND teachers. What was the MOST difficult for me was the isolation and the inability to personally check in with students. April Dirksen, another teacher and myself would bring snacks and hotspots and meet students at Shady Rest Park to help them with work. Word spread, and other students drove with friends to join us. It was such a bright spot in a dark time.

Thank you for giving me so many opportunities and experiences to learn and grow, financing my Masters Degree and other classes and trainings which helped me to become the teacher I am today, and for being my family. It takes a village to raise adults too. I am forever grateful for this village.

Sincerely,

Corinne E. Funderburk