

Superintendent's Report

May 2025

Gratitude and Reflections

As the school year comes to a close, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the entire Petersburg School District community for the warm welcome extended to me and my family this year. It has been a true joy to return “home” after nearly two decades away. The positive spirit and strong support for our students remains just as vibrant as I remembered. This is indeed a unique and special community, and I am honored to be part of it once again.

Congratulations to all of our students and staff on a successful and enriching school year!

School Start and End Times for FY26

There will be a slight modification to school start and end times beginning in the 2025–2026 school year.

Starting in August, the regular school day for all three schools—elementary, middle, and high—will run from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.. On Fridays, early release will now be at 1:30 p.m., instead of 2:00 p.m.

- This change adds 30 minutes of instructional time each week for the elementary schedule.
- It also reduces 5 minutes per week for the middle and high schools.

These adjustments are intended to:

- Provide our educators with more focused professional learning opportunities,
- Offer elementary students additional time during the day for movement and wellness activities,
- And significantly reduce the time elementary students spend on the bus after school, improving their overall experience and comfort.

Capital Improvement Projects

We are deeply appreciative of the patience and flexibility shown by students, families, and staff as we prepare for the demolition and renovation of the high school office. We understand this project has disrupted daily routines, and we are grateful for the community's support.

This summer, the high school office will be remodeled to enhance both visibility and security. In addition, the roofs of both the middle and high schools will be replaced.

District and high school representatives have finalized selections for carpet, cabinet, and countertop color schemes, which will harmonize with the existing design of the school entrance.

Also in early May, LCG representatives will be conducting a district-wide condition survey. The findings will guide the submission of our six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) list.

Student Behavior Trends

All three schools have reported an increase in student misbehavior, which is impacting the learning environment. Addressing these concerns remains a priority as we strive to maintain safe and supportive spaces for all students.

Early Elementary Program (EEP)

A sincere thank you to Ginger Evens for her leadership in coordinating the district's application for the Early Elementary Program (EEP). If approved, this grant will allow Petersburg School District to establish a certified preschool program and generate Average Daily Membership (ADM) funding for enrolled preschool students.

The application reflects a significant investment of time and effort—over 200 staff hours—and included several collaborative planning meetings with partner organizations and Tlingit and Haida. It was officially submitted on May 14, 2025. In anticipation of approval, the district will move forward with advertising for a preschool teaching position.

Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant

The administrative team is currently working on submitting an application for the CLSD grant, which, if awarded, will provide five years of funding to support literacy efforts from birth through 12th grade. The application is due May 30.

COPS Safety Grant

We are actively exploring the COPS Safety Grant to support our continued efforts around school safety renovations and door FOB system upgrades.

Meeting with Governor Dunleavy

On May 8, 2025, members of the Alaska Superintendents Association met with Governor Mike Dunleavy. We sincerely thank him for engaging in dialogue with educational leaders from across the state. While there may be differences in perspective, we remain committed to working together in support of Alaska's students and schools.

We stand in strong support of House Bill 57 (HB 57)—a bipartisan proposal developed through thoughtful collaboration and input from educators throughout Alaska. The bill represents a shared understanding of the urgent needs in public education.

However, during our meeting, the Governor expressed his intent to veto HB 57, citing the absence of provisions on cross-district open enrollment and charter school expansion. He also raised concerns about the inclusion of reading incentive funding in Senate Bill 113 (SB 113).

We are deeply concerned that this stance may undermine bipartisan progress and delay essential funding for Alaska's schools. Nonetheless, we are grateful for the Legislature's robust support of HB 57 and SB 113, and we urge continued legislative commitment to Alaska's public education system.

SB 113, recently passed by the Legislature, provides critical supports such as:

- Reading incentive grants to bolster early literacy,
- And expanded Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities to prepare students for the workforce.

Petersburg School District remains steadfast in advocating for the policies and resources needed to ensure an equitable, high-quality education for every student. We will continue working collaboratively with all stakeholders to create a strong future for public education in Alaska.