



SOUTHEAST ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Superintendent Board Report September 26, 2018

Workshop Strategic Plan

It has been a number of years since we reviewed the Strategic Plan. I believe it is still quite good, although there are a few issues that stand out. Service Learning has fallen by the wayside and we no longer have a district-wide counselor. We have offered a few Advanced Placement classes but have not made any serious attempt to maintain that effort. Summer opportunities for students are minimal without grant funding to support those activities.

We have done a good job of keeping technology in the hands of students, have solid course offerings for secondary students, both onsite and through VTC, and provide reimbursement of up to \$250 for advanced courses for any student who desires taking classes beyond what we can offer.

We provide an astounding number of opportunities for students. We have been able to do this by being efficient with our spending and staffing. We are lucky to have an excellent district office team that keeps a firm handle on expenses and we have been fortunate with an equally excellent grant writer. If we did not continue to acquire grant funding, opportunities would dwindle quickly. On the down side, lack of grant funding is also the reason some opportunities have dwindled. The secret to success with grant funding is paying attention to where the money is.

I would not anticipate a radical change in direction for the district. Our focus has been on having excellent employees who provide a wide variety of opportunities that keep students excited about school, attending and graduating. We have built our fleet to make vehicles available at schools for student transportation. We have started summer food programs where there are enough students to support it. We have added greenhouses to most of our schools, and most now have small livestock or other animals as well. We have added a culinary arts program and offer Thursday electives in Thorne Bay that are open to commuters from other schools. We attempted running a café.

It would be reasonable to give thought to which activities we wish to support. We cannot do everything. For example, funding full-time counselor and summer programs can eliminate funding for some of these other opportunities.

If we want the best teachers we can get, we have to be competitive with pay and benefits. We subsidize housing by renting well below market value. We currently do not

require teachers or full-time staff to pay any part of their insurance premium. Juggling funding to maintain the quality of our district is like three-dimensional chess.

Our stature within Alaska is excellent and is part of the reason we are successful on Alaska-based grants. We get local and national press and recognition on a regular basis for our innovation and creativity.

AASB Resolutions

Of the existing resolutions, 1.1 on page 9 opposes forced consolidations. 2.3 on page 20 supports Secure Rural Schools (timber receipts). Both are important to us. Of concern will be the outcome of the Governor's race. I was in Juneau recently and it seems probable that Governor Walker and former Senator Begich will split the vote and former State Senator Dunleavy will be elected. I see two problems that could result from this scenario.

For the first time during my tenure, we have had a Commissioner of Education that understands the needs of rural schools. Senator Dunleavy has an urban perspective and he will not be supportive of small rural schools. The Commissioner would not likely remain after the transition. Senator Dunleavy is a proponent of vouchers, which will hurt primarily urban schools. He is also in support of more boarding school opportunities designed to close small schools. A resolution supporting small schools and opposing vouchers is in order.

Café

Our intent is to continue leasing the restaurant to Roxy and Brian Wilson of Coffman Cove. While we have struggled to provide the service, the Wilson's have done a nice job this year. I regret that we have been unable to find a way to make it an educational experience for our youth, but cannot see a way to continue to operate the café ourselves with subsidizing it financially.

School Count

All schools are stable. It is still early to predict, but Thorne Bay may come in a little short of projections and we may come up a little short on funding for intensive special education services.

Greenhouses

We would like to hire an additional person to support the greenhouses. Megan Fitzpatrick is doing a fine job but must be gone quite a bit. I will come back to the Board when and if we have a strong candidate.

Grants

Dancing with the Spirit

Thankfully, the weather has treated us well so far for Jason and Stella Norris's travel to Hyder and back, and then to Port Alexander where they are this week. We would not be able to offer this terrific event without help from a number of different sources. AK Airlines has generously donated the round-trip airfare from Anchorage for the musicians, as well as their voluminous amount of oversize baggage! Other contributors

include the Prince of Wales Health Network and Southeast Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC). Each school is fund raising to help with the cost and the district is using funds from a state grant (Title IV) as well as money from its general operating fund.

Kitchen Equipment Grant – Hollis

The district was awarded a grant for \$8,020 to purchase a new refrigerator, a 3-compartment sink, a range and a freezer for Hollis School. Maintenance Director Branzon Anania, Priscilla Goulding, and the Hollis teachers and food service worker will be working together to order the equipment and plan for installation. Hollis has two separate seatings at lunchtime and the new appliances will make for more efficient food preparation and serving.

Farm-to-School Grant

The district was awarded this grant in June, which provides \$100,000 over two years. The overall goal of SISD's project is to expand its current capacity to produce local food for all school sites, thereby improving our students' nutrition. In order to accomplish this goal, the following activities will be implemented:

- develop a volunteer group of community members, parents, and Native elders to assist with agricultural operations, both during the academic year and on breaks
- provide GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) training in farm-to-school efforts to all food service workers in the district and Kasaan café workers - [Already scheduled for Nov.](#)
- hold community harvests and traditional Native food gathering events
- expand the district's ability to process fresh produce by obtaining salad spinners for all sites and washing stations for Coffman Cove and Thorne Bay
- reclaim food waste (from food program) by incorporating it into compost to upgrade existing garden beds

Megan and Priscilla went to a Farm-to-School grantee gathering in Detroit, which was paid for by the grant. Ian LaForce, our new food service director, is on board with this project and working closely with Megan to ensure we are using as much local produce as possible. Megan is responsible for a remarkable improvement in the greenhouse in Coffman Cove. Kasaan is operating and Naukati is close to production. Thorne Bay awaits a remodel. With the improvement in Coffman Cove, we are close to a dependable supply of produce for road system school food programs.

10. A. AASB Proposed Policy Updates

All three can go to a second reading if desired. I am comfortable with approval on a first reading if you have had time to review. (Board Policies 3300, 3311, 4112.4, 4218 and 6179)

10. B. Request for Approval of purchases over \$10,000

We have all of these items on the "watch" list this year. We did purchase a pickup this year, but have not stumbled on the other items at a reasonable price. Our intent with vehicles is to rotate our stock while they still have resale value and before we have to

put a lot of money into repairs. Something with forks makes it possible to expand sites that operate wood-fired boilers without the expense of moving wood by hand. A man-lift is an obvious need, as we have high buildings to paint and maintain. We would like to continue to have the ability to move quickly if we find a good value even though the search may continue for some time. **I recommend approval of the three requests.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lauren Burch".

Lauren Burch
Superintendent