



September 18, 2020

Dear Mayor and Assembly Members,

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to have a work session with the Sitka School Board on September 24<sup>th</sup>.

We would like to use this time to talk about shared goals and how we can reach them. We also want to provide a report of our current enrollment and its effect on our budget. Our estimated enrollment in April at the time our budget was approved was 1186. Our current enrollment is 1133. Business Manager Cassee Olin has ran the updated enrollment numbers through the Foundation Formula, which results in a revised revenue of \$11,440,507 from the State of Alaska. Our projected revenue at the time we created our budget was \$12,155,665, leaving a current deficit of \$715,158.

In addition to this shortage, we have experienced other unforeseen costs due to COVID-19. We are anticipating additional costs of at least \$750,000 - \$1,000,000, which is for additional custodial, food service, PPE, transportation, internet services for students, and utilities. We received \$304,307 in CARES Act Funding directly from the federal government, plus the \$430,000 that we received from the City & Borough of Sitka. We are extremely grateful to the City for this, as this money has helped considerably in offsetting our expenses. We will be working diligently to close the budget gaps.

Our top priority these past few months has been to get school opened and students in the classrooms. This could not have been done without the CARES Acts funds that we received from the City. We appreciate your generosity in providing the additional funding.

These funds were used to bring 19 AmeriCorps volunteers to Sitka, an increase of about 12 over previous years. This has greatly helped with the management of the students as they disembark from the buses, as well as screening students who arrive by other means. Social distancing takes a significant effort, and the additional work required has been fulfilled by the AmeriCorps volunteers. We are truly thankful for their work.

Additionally, your funding, along with our partners, Sitka Tribe of Alaska and the Alaska Association of School Boards, allowed us to significantly upgrade our technology. Distance delivery was difficult and inefficient last spring, which resulted in a less than acceptable instructional program for our students. If or when we need to again move to distance delivery, our staff will be providing a much better product to the students.

We are proud of the fact that most of our students are attending school in person every day, with the exception of Sitka High School where social distancing simply does not allow for all of the students to be in attendance every day. Some students have elected to be educated entirely through distance delivery, but some of those students have already returned to attend classes in the buildings. Our administrators worked throughout the summer, and most of the teaching staff were engaged during the entire month of August, even though their first contract day was August 17<sup>th</sup>. This hard work and planning for contingencies has paid off.

Another one of our mitigations is the testing of our 225 employees every two weeks. We are very grateful to Dr. Elliot Bruhl and SEARHC for providing this testing at no cost to the District. Our partnership with them has been a very bright spot in a difficult time.

We look forward to visiting with you on September 24<sup>th</sup>. It is our desire to forge a stronger partnership and work together with you for the benefit of our students, the District and Assembly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy J. Morrison".

Amy J. Morrison, President  
Sitka School Board