



GALENA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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SUPERINTENDENT
Jim Merriner

July 2, 2018

Dear Galena City School District (GCSD) Families and Community Members:

As many of you have heard, the GCSD School Board hired me, effective yesterday, as GCSD's superintendent for at least the next three years. As I begin my journey supporting and advising the Board in its visionary leadership of GCSD, I want to thank the Board for this opportunity to partner with them and with all GCSD stakeholders as we collectively provide our students the support and education needed for lifelong success in the 21st century. And on behalf of the district for which he served for over 20 years, I want to thank former superintendent Chris Reitan for his diligent efforts as a GCSD teacher, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. And now a little about my family and me ...

A lifelong Alaskan (born in Juneau), I have commercial fished in Bristol Bay for the past 33 summers. I graduated from Dillingham High School in 1988 and earned my bachelor's degree in Modern European History from Harvard College in 1993. After a year as a private investigator/paralegal, I received my teaching certification from UAF in 1995 and my master's degree in Educational Leadership & School Development from Cambridge University in 1996. I then taught social studies for four years at Pacific Northern Academy in Anchorage before moving across town to Grace Christian School where I served as the secondary school administrator for five years. After that, my time as the administrator of Chief Paul Memorial School in Kipnuk (on the Bering Sea coast) was cut short after a semester as the then newly-elected Lieutenant Governor Sean Parnell asked me to be his Chief of Staff. After moving to Juneau and helping launch the new Palin/Parnell administration, I resigned and moved back to Anchorage to be closer to extended family (my parents and my three brothers and their families). In fall 2008, I joined the GCSD team as the site administrator of the Anchorage IDEA office. In March 2015, I finished a five-year stint volunteering on the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development (two years as Chair). In May 2015, I received from UAA my superintendent's certification.

My wife of 25 years, Deb, and I excitedly moved to GCSD headquarters in Galena two years ago with our three youngest ... Annika just graduated, Carlee is a junior, and Caedon is a freshman (Dalan is studying mechanical engineering at UAA). Deb, a certificated teacher, has homeschooled our kids through IDEA for many years. One of the reasons that I joined the GCSD team and have stayed onboard for the past decade is

because of GCSD's longstanding statewide reputation as a leader in providing school choice opportunities of excellence. GCSD is well known as one of Alaska's most innovative and healthy school districts. Honored to have been part of the excellence for the past decade, I look forward to what we'll be able to accomplish together in the next years.

Please feel free to call or email with anything at any time.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Merriner', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Jim Merriner, GCSD Superintendent
Email: jim.merriner@galenanet.com