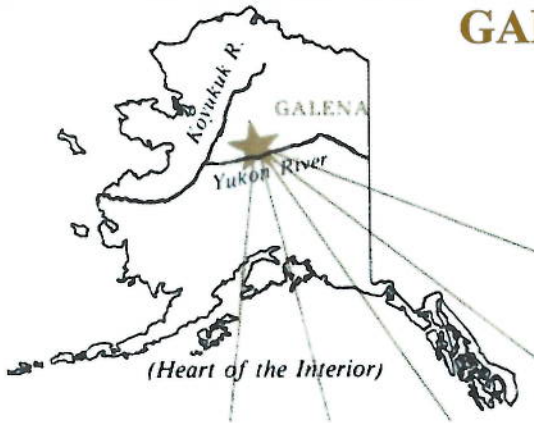


# GALENA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 299  
GALENA, ALASKA 99741  
PHONE (907) 656-1205  
FAX (907) 656-1368

**SUPERINTENDENT**  
Jim Merriner



January 17, 2019

Dear GCSD Families and Community Members:

I trust that the holiday festivities treated you and yours swimmingly, that everyone is now back in the swing of things, and that none of you posted the following regarding your New Year's resolutions:

- "My wife still hasn't told me what my New Year's resolutions are."
- "My resolution was to read more so I turned on the subtitles to my TV."

As we begin the second semester continuing to teach/learn reading, etc., GCSD's many programs of educational choice and excellence are firing on all cylinders. Second semester also marks the time when the legislature decides funding for the next school year and when the district prioritizes needed infrastructure improvements.

The 31<sup>st</sup> Alaska legislature gavelled in on January 15, 2019. Alaska's fiscal realities will constrain their work. The state of Alaska experienced an 80% reduction in revenues during the 2017-2018 school year. This 2018-2019 school year has seen better oil prices; however, this will be the fourth straight year that the legislature taps Alaska's constitutional budget reserve to continue funding state services. With a fiscal hawk Republican governor and a Republican-controlled legislature, the likelihood of significant additional revenue streams, like a state income tax and/or a state sales tax, is highly unlikely. School districts across the state will actively lobby during this spring 2019 legislative session for no reductions to state funding for public schools. However, with Governor Dunleavy's proposed budget deficit of 1.6 billion and Alaska's constitutional budget reserve down to 1.7 billion, school districts are extremely nervous about a cut to the base student allocation (BSA). Separate from the BSA issue, GCSD has been laying the groundwork with state leadership for months for the potential to increase revenue for boarding school operations. The odds are very slim for this targeted revenue increase, but GCSD remains hopeful and determined to fight for what is best for our students.

Additionally, the spring semester begins the district's process of determining major and minor facility upgrades to improve our educational programs. The Department of Education and Early Development recently ranked GCSD's Composite Building Renovation project #2 out of 47 district-submitted projects. If funded by the legislature this spring session, this project will renovate the aged "Composite" building on the GILA campus into an energy efficient state-of-

the-art instructional facility. Additionally, replacing the old, threadbare, and discolored carpeting with a more durable flooring option in the student dorm rooms of our residential living facility on the GILA campus is under discussion for a possible summer 2019 project.

In closing, GCSD delights to serve all of our new and returning families and students. Please contact me at the phone number above or the email address below if you would like to discuss any aspect of this letter in greater detail, or if you would like more information on any district initiative.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Merriner', with a large loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jim Merriner, GCSD Superintendent  
Email: [jim.merriner@galenanet.com](mailto:jim.merriner@galenanet.com)