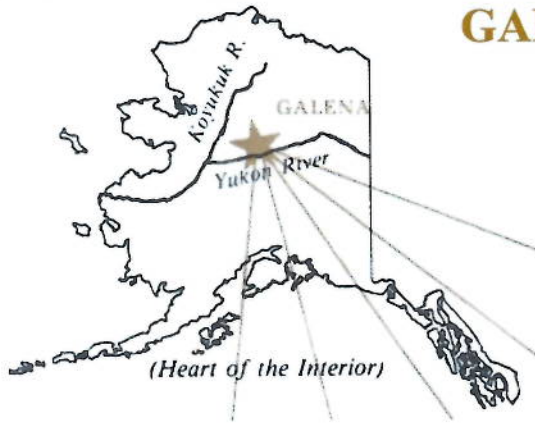


# GALENA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

**SUPERINTENDENT**  
Jim Merriner



February 21, 2019

Dear GCSD Families and Community Members:

February flies past. Valentine's Day, that time-honored festival of romantic love, has passed. Today, however, is "National Love Your Pet Day" in case you were unaware. Moreover, according to [nationaldaycalendar.com](http://nationaldaycalendar.com), we still have 23 National Days to celebrate between now and the end of the month.

Speaking of celebration ... the IDEA Region F (Fairbanks-area) Lego Robotics team known as "Team Philosophers" won the state championship recently, beating 51 competitive Alaskan teams. An amazing accomplishment representing thousands of collective hours of hard and creative work, their well-deserved success has qualified them for the international championship in Houston, Texas in April where they plan to represent proudly Alaska, GCSD, and IDEA.

Our IDEA Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) members, our IDEA field reps, and the IDEA administration are finishing two days of strategic planning meetings today. This important annual event provides a collaborative venue for GCSD administration to hear IDEA PAC members' program kudos and program improvement suggestions. During the February GCSD School Board meeting last night, school board members enjoyed live testimony from participants.

On Friday, February 9, 2019, GCSD school board members and administration visited Juneau and met with the Department of Education & Early Development and key members of the House and Senate. GCSD's focus for our legislative visits was three-fold:

- Thank legislators for their continued support of the school choice options GCSD offers families across Alaska.
- Advocate for increased revenue for boarding school operations.
- Inform key members of the House and Senate about the importance of the Department of Education & Early Development's (DEED) Major Maintenance and School Construction grant programs and the need to protect funding for capital projects.

As you might remember from my January letter, DEED 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 this aged facility on the GILA campus into an

energy efficient state-of-the-art instructional facility. During the February 20, 2019 GCSD School Board meeting, the Board approved a fee proposal from Architects Alaska to bring construction documentation to 100% to position this project for appropriate next steps.

On Wednesday, February 13, 2019, Governor Dunleavy submitted his budget for next fiscal year (FY20) which included 300 million in cuts to K-12 education funding. GCSD's portion of that proposed cut in funding is approximately five million dollars (20% state funding cut). As you can imagine, Alaska's budget conundrum is legislators' primary concern and drives the majority of conversation in Juneau. Alaskans concerned about K-12 education funding might want to consider contacting legislators to share thoughts. If you decide to do so and would like help locating contact phone numbers, email addresses, etc., please feel free to reach out to me or to another GCSD administrator.

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 long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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