

Superintendent Corner January, 2017

It's time....

As District Administrator, I tend to be keenly aware of time in its many forms and how it affects our school. There is a lot of ways we deal with time. I have over the past year and a half learned the meaning of "Island Time" which is a real phenomenon. Then there is the more traditional way of marking time by looking at the calendar year, of which we are coming to the end of 2016. In terms of the school year we are only approaching the halfway mark. We are in the midst of the "Holiday Time" as the community families celebrate the seasons. Those of you who attended the wonderful holiday program would have noted it truly was a "Special Time." Now that the cold has finally arrived we will be marking the degrees in regards to "Winter Time". As February gives way to March we will be looking forward to "Spring Time". Then of course there will be April and it will soon be "Referendum Time".

In looking at the school's financial history we have been going to referendum since early 2000. This has been in large part to assist in the short fall of the State Funding Formula in supporting and running the Washington Island School. In 2002-03 the District received almost \$23,000 in State Equalized Aid, in the years to come we can as a school district expect zero dollars in Equalized Aid.. Over the years the gap of what it costs to run a public school and what districts can levy from local taxpayers, as determined by the State School Funding Formula, has dramatically widened. The good news is in April we will be asking the Taxpayers of Washington Island to approve a two year, non-reoccurring referendum that is \$30,149 less than the last time. But that is only part of the narrative.

The School Board, Staff and myself have worked hard to take the "Long View" of insuring the high quality of education that our families and taxpayers of the Island expect. Over the next several months we will be sharing information regarding the specifics about our budget process and how we are working to constantly improve our schools. We will share our many accomplishments over the past two years, and our hard work to be fiscally transparent and responsible.

We will be having our first Referendum Committee Meeting to share with the public our school's specific financial needs. This meeting will take place, Wednesday, January 11, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the School Commons. Refreshments will be served. This meeting will not only be

about sharing our needs as a district, but also an important opportunity to begin collecting feedback about the public thoughts and questions regarding how to best reach out and share with the community as whole. It is an important time to be involved. I look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Mati Palm-Leis

Superintendent