

## Update Regarding Dr. Gibbon

Dear Snoqualmie Valley Families,

As a board, we would like to update you on the status of Dr. Gibbon's separation from service with our school district. As you may know, Dr. Gibbon was removed from his role as acting Superintendent and placed on leave in early September by the school board. His separation from service was signed and effective mid-November.

Some background: The unexpected departure of the previous superintendent due to health issues in 2021 necessitated the search and selection of a new superintendent during the midst of the global pandemic. A national search was conducted using a national search firm, resulting in the selection of Dr. Gibbon.

Unfortunately, concerns emerged immediately about Dr. Gibbon's leadership skills, particularly his perceived focus on matters of his public persona rather than attending to the substance of Teaching and Learning. He also demonstrated a lack of engagement with the larger district leadership team. As a board, we became deeply troubled as we saw cracks forming quickly in the culture of our educational community. After a significant number of key leadership changes in the last year and word that more could be coming under Dr. Gibbon's tenure, we grew mindful of the increasing risk that we could lose a critical mass of the larger district administrative team if we did not address these concerns swiftly and directly.

Accordingly, the school board consulted with legal and human resources experts in advance of Dr. Gibbon's mid-year performance review and instituted a well-vetted and thoughtful plan of improvement. Rather than seeing a course correction, the issues continued to worsen. It became clear to the Board that it was in the best interest of our district administrators, staff, and students to separate Dr. Gibbon from service effective November 15. The board decided unanimously to move forward with negotiation of a settlement agreement. We are unified in our confidence that this was the right decision for the Snoqualmie Valley School District.

We want you to know that we did not take these steps lightly. We realize that the payments necessary to reach a settlement are not without impact and may cause concern, especially for a superintendent whose leadership was not up to our standards or expectations. It speaks to the seriousness of our concerns about the amount of damage we felt that Dr. Gibbon could have done had he been allowed to stay. Quite frankly, it would have hurt worse to allow the district's hard-won culture of excellence to deteriorate under his leadership. Once lost, the synergies that come from having quality in terms of the depth and breadth of an organization's leadership can take a generation to rebuild. We are a district with a clear mission and vision, focused on maximizing student potential in every decision we make. Yes, we want to communicate well and hone a positive image, but the substance of teaching and learning is what any positive educational image must be built upon.

Thankfully, our district had the benefit of a thoughtful, highly capable, learning-focused leader who was ready to step into the role of Interim Superintendent. Dan Schlotfeldt was appointed to the role on October 13 and has done an exemplary job. Having watched him become the district's top instructional leader has only deepened our confidence in Mr. Schlotfeldt and given us a greater appreciation for the

steady leadership he is providing the Snoqualmie Valley School District team. We will communicate the next steps regarding our long-term plan soon.

This decision will be briefly addressed during tonight's school board meeting.

Thank you for your support of Snoqualmie Valley's public schools and all the students we serve.

Warmest regards,

Melissa Johnson, President

On behalf of the Snoqualmie Valley School District Board of Directors