

# Greasewood Springs Community School, Inc.

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*“The essential nature of Greasewood Springs Community School stability and continuity in maintaining our history of success.”*

January 5, 2023

Dear Parents, Community, Stakeholders and Interested Parties:

There is so much uncertainty at this time in Navajo Nation educational system. The tragedy is that our students and staff are paying the price for this uncertain change in the reapportioned of school system on the Navajo Nation.

Nonetheless, the Greasewood Springs Community School (GSCS) has worked very hard to provide stability and continuity in its governance, educational programs, treatment of staff and most importantly, developing and educating students. This has led to GSCS’s stellar record on many levels within the GSCS education systems.

1. Most importantly, GSCS students are thriving:
  - A. Midyear assessments show that overall reading scores increased by eleven (11%) percent from this time last year and math scores by twelve (12%) percent in that same time period.
  - B. The Navajo language and custom program remains robust and effective, carrying on our all-important Navajo customs, traditions and language.
  - C. Our residential program is in high demand and serves critical community, family and student needs.
  - D. Even our food services program is highly successful and good food is served to our students in a warm, comfortable setting.
  
2. The key objectives to the above accomplishments is that GSCS staff has been stable and high performing over an extended period.
  - A. Our Leader, Ms. Lucinda Godinez, has been in place as Principal at GSCS for ten years.
  - B. Our Head Teacher, Ms. Loretta Chee, has been in her position for nine years.
  - C. Our Human Resources Manager, Ms. Emaline Puente, has been in place for ten years.
  - D. Our Business Manager, Ms. Lisa Byjoe, has been in place for three years.
  - E. Our Homeliving Manager, Mary Roanhorse, has been in her position for nine years.
  - F. Our Food Service Manager, Mr. Bennie Curtis has unbelievably been in the employment of GSCS in his position for twenty-six years.

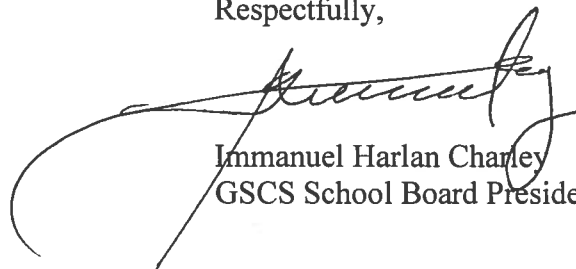
- G. Not only have the above been in place at GSCS for extended periods, they are the best in their fields and continually innovate, assess, make changes when necessary and act in a highly professional, cooperative manner.
  - H. The GSCS School Boards (“Boards”) over these years have maintained the same type of continuity with limited, periodic infusions of new energy. All of the Boards have shared in the recognition of the value of the above-noted people, the continuity and stability that they have provided to our students and the need to continue to provide stable, professional, well-informed forward-thinking governance.
  - I. At GSCS we are a committed team, it is not an accident that we have the above record, it is due in large part to our stable operational context which must be maintained.
3. We are on the cusp of having a new school, residential facility, staff housing, bus barn, gymnasium, food service area and all related buildings and infrastructure.
- A. We competed against all of the other schools nationwide to be one of the ten grant schools to be selected for a new school.
  - B. We have selected a highly competent project manager with longstanding ties to GSCS and the BIA/DFMC to lead us in bringing our new school to fruition.
  - C. We have successfully completed the preliminary twenty (20%) percent design phase and are ready for the real deal.
  - D. We, with our PM, negotiated hard to get a budget that is fair and we avoided arbitrary BIA/DFMC major cuts.
  - E. We are at a critical stage of finalizing funding, publishing a CM@R procurement, negotiation of contracts and completing our new school.
  - F. Again, a consistent thread through this entire process that has allowed our success is:
    - i. A consistent, committed, well informed Board.
    - ii. Long-standing, knowledgeable and committed staff and consultants.
    - iii. A sound, stable governance base.
4. We have a four-year record of no audit findings in our federally required annual audit.
- A. The no finding includes our finances, background checks and all other areas as required by 2 C.F.R. 200, the Super circular.
  - B. This record of performance is again the product of a highly professional, committed and attentive Governing Board, staff and consultants. We do not rest on our laurels. As a team, we do our jobs, properly hold each other accountable and appropriately support one another while never losing sight of our mission: the development, well-being and education of our communities’ children; our students.
5. There are a myriad of compliance requirements from the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), the Navajo Nation Department of Dine’ Education (DODE) and all of the related sub-groups of the foregoing. These oversight/compliance entities often interrupt and divert a school, staff and programs. We have not allowed that at GSCS. We understand our partnership extends to these entities and we work hard to maintain a positive partnership and history of compliance which avoids interruption and diversion of our programs and our work with our students.

6. For the past five years GSCS has a history of minimal staff or student disciplinary or other disruptive issues. We believe this is a direct result of our stable base as described above.
7. Over the past ten years we have also experienced a positive relationship with our community, parents, students, staff and stakeholders based upon full, open, and consistent communication with and between all of the parties by an administration and staff that has worked with and in this community for the years set forth above.
8. The past, positive performance of our team noted above, school board, administration, teachers, staff (including non-teaching staff such as maintenance workers, bus drivers and others) consultants and others must be maintained to continue our high performance, the academic and developmental progress of our students, to complete our new school and as always, the most important, to provide the best possible, safest and effective educational and development programs, experiences, and context for our students. We are certain the key to our success and maintaining that success is our stability and continuity at all levels. Therefore, this Board will take all steps available to ensure that stability and continuity at GSCS extends into the future.

This letter shall be notice to all regarding the basis for the GSCS School Board's actions and efforts. We know that continuity and stability are keys to a school's success in educating and developing positive, successful students and the continuity of our Navajo Nation based on Navajo culture and tradition. The above qualities are often lacking in an educational program in a political or a bureaucratic rush toward other goals and misunderstanding of the core needs for success of a school. Thank you for your interest in what we are doing here at GSCS and the reason we feel we are so successful in accomplishing that mission. Your interest and understanding will allow us to continue this history of success.

Please feel free to contact myself or the administration with any questions or concerns at the above address. Thank you.

Respectfully,



Immanuel Harlan Charley  
GSCS School Board President

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