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Dear SAU 7 Parents and Guardians,

Welcome back! On this first day of the 2023-2024 school year, my hope is that you have had an enjoyable summer and that you are excited about school. Students and staff in our system accomplished great things in 2022-2023 and my goal is for that momentum to continue into 2023-2024. Our graduation rate for 2022-2023 was the highest we have had in almost a decade across our district, students showed growth and academic success. Wonderful things take place in our classrooms on a daily basis. Those who work for our students, whether teaching, preparing classrooms, driving our students to school, fixing our facilities, or making sure all are fed, are accomplishing extraordinary things as well.

Students in SAU 7 schools deserve our best and we look forward to ensuring that this enthusiasm continues and grows. For those that are new to our schools, I think you will see very shortly why we consider it to be a great place for students and for adults as well.

Our top priority remains ensuring the safety of our students, staff, and all who visit our campuses. I believe our system has made a true commitment to student and staff safety and this will only continue with the implementation of practices and protocols. Our hope is to simplify communication and responsibilities for all and to help students and employees feel better prepared for any challenge which may arise. We can never become complacent in terms of safety.

We must also continue the focus on the culture of our schools. While I took great pride in how our students and staff addressed the challenges of a pandemic, I am even more proud of the fact that our expectations have not declined during this time. We understand the importance of community in order to set the stage for student success in our schools. Students achieve more when our school culture is strong. This year we will expand our efforts to build strong connections between school staff, students and families to ensure their success.

This year we continue to refine our comprehensive competency based education work, initiated in 2020. Our schools are implementing competency-based learning and standards which ensure a pathway to

success for all learners. This work will help us to fulfill our mission: *We exist to prepare all SAU 7 students for success in whatever path they choose.* We are excited to support our student needs and enhance teaching and learning. We are also implementing ALMA, our new student information system which aligns with our competency work..

All schools continue to prioritize social, emotional, and mental health support to create a strong foundation for learning. Our principals and teachers have received extensive training on responsive classrooms to build a strong classroom community (Center for Responsive Schools) and a system to support students with challenging behaviors (Polly Bath) by teaching social and emotional skills and using a multi-tiered approach to address behaviors that are restorative and equitable.

Plan to attend ***Open House*** at your School - to meet your child's teacher and principal and learn new information concerning the upcoming school year. Our school open house dates are scheduled as follows:

***Colebrook Academy and Elementary School: September 12 – 5:30 -7:00 pm***

***Pittsburg School: September 20 – 5:30 -7:00 pm***

***Stewartstown Community School: September 7 – 5:00 - 6:00 pm***

I am honored to have served as your Superintendent since 2020. Because of the efforts of many, I am more proud to serve in that role today than at any time before. Thank you for all that you do, and I look forward to working closely with you to make 2023-2024 a great year for all!

Sincerely,

*Debra Taylor*

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Superintendent of Schools