

## → ACTing to Transform Learning by Dr. Mary Wegner, Superintendent of Sitka School District

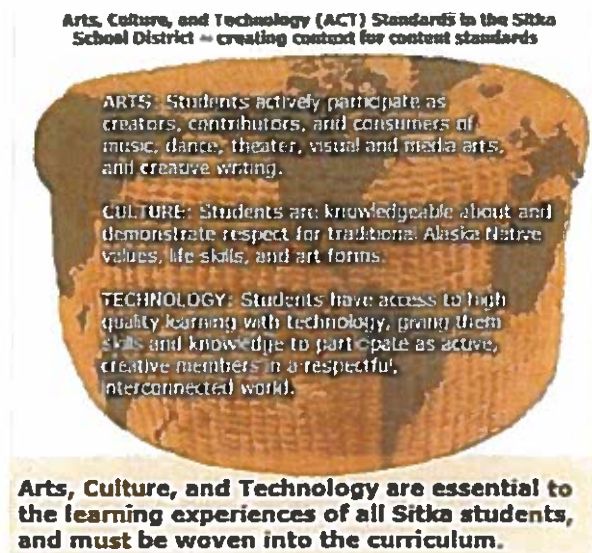
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2 mins read

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**A**rts, culture, and technology are more than words in the Sitka School District. To us, arts, culture, and technology represent education that is grounded in our explicit embrace of culture as a context for learning, a desire to have students graduate with an appreciation for the role of arts in community life in Sitka, as well as in personal happiness, and a need to prepare students for success in a digitally-rich life. The Sitka School Board adopted our Arts, Culture, and Technology (ACT) Standards in 2014, and we haven't stopped ACTing since then!

**Yaa.at Woonel ~ Respect**



One of our initiatives, ACT Integration Teachers (ACT+IT), partners with the Sitka Fine Arts Camp and the University of Alaska Southeast's Education Department to help early career teachers build confidence and competence in the integration of arts, culture, and technology into daily classroom learning. This includes a 2-year mentoring program with the triad of an early career teacher, an experienced teacher, and a teaching artist. The teachers participate in professional learning activities and also work with a teaching artist to implement an ACT project of their choosing. One example of the power of this triad is the 14-Miles documentary project, which was supported by an Artist in Schools grant from the Alaska State Council on the Arts (<https://www.facebook.com/14miles/videos/2103293253275358/>).



Last year 19 of the 31 early career teachers in Sitka Schools were part of at least one ACT+IT learning opportunity offered by the Sitka Fine

Arts Camp or the Sitka School District. Our expansion is to welcome pre-service teachers so they can start their teaching career with a supportive network of colleagues, as well as the knowledge and skills to engage students by leveraging the power of integrating arts, culture, and technology in the learning process. Sitka Tribe of Alaska is a key partner in all of our ACT+IT learning activities.

ACT+IT learning activities are open to all teachers in the district, and many from around the state have joined us in Sitka over the years. To learn more about the ACT+IT professional learning, visit our website (<https://www.sitkaschools.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=2278>).



An exciting project that falls under our ACT umbrella is our Mobile Makerspace Project that launched in the 2016-17 school year (<https://www.sitkaschools.org/Page/3189>). In an attempt to bring Life to Learning, we created a mobile cart that traveled between schools for an entire school year. Our hope was to build pathways for all students in Sitka Schools to develop their coding and computational thinking skills using electronics and recycled objects. We held numerous Maker Faires, provided a Sitka Winter Fellow to person the cart and help teachers learn how to use the resources, and supported students and teachers in doing amazing projects throughout Sitka Schools. By the end of the year, each school wanted their own mobile makerspace cart, which we secured. Success!

Gunalchéesh to our partners, funders, and teachers who are ACTing on behalf of student learning everyday!

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Have a story to share from your own school/district? You can either fill out this Google form, or simply send Sam Jordan content directly to work up a post. We are looking for posts of no more than 500 words, accompanied by 1-2 pictures if available. If you need ideas, check out this doc <https://bit.ly/2HDqyGx>

