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Dear Silverton Public School Board of Education and Silverton School Community,

I am writing to express my strong interest in applying for the Superintendent position at Silverton Public School District. My deep commitment to students, families, and the school community—along with my passion for continuous learning, professional growth, and school improvement—make me a highly qualified candidate for this role.

It has been a privilege to be part of the Silverton School community since 2003, as a teacher, administrator and parent. I have gained expertise in education and developed the skills necessary for successful school leadership. I have successfully navigated the day-to-day challenges, nurtured the core values of the organization, and contributed to school improvement with both proficiency and grace. When I began teaching at Silverton School, immediately after completing my student teaching at Durango High School, I made a personal and professional commitment to this community. Now, I am ready to deepen that commitment by applying everything I've learned to benefit our students, families, teachers, and staff.

My professional growth is rooted in a 20-year mentorship with Kim White, an exemplary educational leader known for her innovative approaches. Under Kim's guidance, Silverton School has earned a well-deserved reputation as an exceptional institution. Few incoming superintendents have had access to such extensive coaching before stepping into such a significant role, and I am deeply grateful for Kim's mentorship and the support of my colleagues. Their encouragement has given me the confidence to pursue this opportunity. Because the educator team that has emerged at Silverton School is a group of highly qualified, devoted, passionate teacher leaders, I feel strongly that we can continue to make Silverton School a meaningful and high quality educational experience for all students. I also believe that our educators and I are ready to expand the possibilities for our students.

Throughout my career as a middle school teacher and principal, I've gained extensive experience in addressing immediate challenges, often referred to as "putting out fires." Over time, I've learned to shift my focus from merely resolving issues to effectively regulating and supporting people in challenging situations. My training and coaching with experts in areas such as Neurosequential Model (with Jessica Pfeiffer and Bruce Perry), leadership development (with Cyndi Gueswel), Theory U (with Candice Bataille), Restorative Practices (with Lee Copenhagen and Rachel Turiel), and Conflict Engagement (with Andrew Nalani and Selena Sermeno) have equipped me with the tools to navigate

complex situations with care and skill. Whether it's a classroom management issue, a parent concern, or a larger community challenge like a forest fire or a pandemic, I have the experience and support to guide our community through immediate challenges and unpredictable times.

Nurturing the core values of Silverton School is central to my leadership philosophy. This work is done through ongoing collaboration with teachers, staff, students, parents, and our partners. Ensuring that our professional development is aligned with best practices—such as those outlined by EL Education, Colorado State Standards, and Social and Emotional Intelligence Competencies—has been a cornerstone of my efforts.

Beyond maintaining high-quality programs, continuous improvement is key to expanding our school's capacity. Silverton's unique size and rural location offer us the opportunity to turn perceived limitations into strengths. By embracing improvement science, we can test new innovations, assess their effectiveness, and adjust accordingly. Through my leadership, I have secured funding and led initiatives such as high-impact tutoring, dual enrollment coaching, specialized counseling systems, and Social Emotional Learning frameworks—all of which have contributed to Silverton's growth. These initiatives are made possible by state and private grants from organizations such as Education First, EL Education, and the Colorado Department of Education. I am excited about continuing to push the boundaries of what is possible for our students, rooted in an authentic and human-centered approach to education.

I am deeply passionate about education and the impact it has on our students. Silverton School has provided me with a sense of professional fulfillment, and I am eager to continue giving back to the school that has given so much to me.

When I reflect on my career here and the professional climate and culture of our school I am reminded of an insight that Alex Carter, a former Superintendent of Telluride School District and Director of CEI, shared after attending a site seminar a few years ago:

"By the end of two days, I started thinking of Silverton School as 'Hogwarts' made real, because everywhere I looked, I saw magic happening. But I think I'm going to end that narrative. It doesn't give your school enough credit. That's because the work you've led isn't magic. It isn't fantasy. It's hard work, it's real-world, and it's replicable."

This quote speaks to the essence of what makes Silverton School unique—the magic is in the hard work, collaboration, and care that we pour into our students, families, and community.

I am fully committed to bringing everything I have learned over the years to the role of Superintendent, and to continuing to use the collective wisdom of Kim, my colleagues, families and students, our partners and the school board to support and lead our school into the future.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to the Silverton School District in this new capacity.

Yours in education,

Elizabeth Barszcz