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## SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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December 13, 2016

To: Washington State Board of Education Members and Staff

From: Dan Newell, Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Education & Student Support  
Laura Moore, Program Specialist, Private Education

Re: Report on Alger Learning Center and Saddle Mountain School as Requested by  
the Washington State Board of Education

In August 2016, the State Board of Education (Board) requested the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to monitor two provisionally approved Washington State private schools, Alger Learning Center (Alger Learning) and Saddle Mountain School (Saddle Mountain), to assist the Board in determining whether to approve the schools for remainder of the 2016-17 school year.

OSPI has concluded its monitoring of the schools. This memorandum provides the update the Board requested.

### Alger Learning

The Board asked OSPI to monitor Alger Learning's compliance with new school policies designed to mitigate the major deviations OSPI identified in April 2016. Accordingly, OSPI requested the school to report the number of students attending the school, the number of credits the students attempted, the number of credits earned, and information regarding student attendance.

Alger Learning responded to the requests by providing OSPI a list of students and their fall 2016 courses, copies of course lists and daily attendance records. In this submission, Alger Learning reported that it has three students attending the school full time. The remainder of the school's students are reported to be in home-based extension program as authorized in WAC 180-90-160.

Alger Learning also confirmed by letter that it is complying with its new school policies.

### Saddle Mountain

The Board asked OSPI to monitor (1) Saddle Mountain's compliance with its new school attendance policy, and (2) student engagement in a program of educational activity planned by and under the direction of the school for a total of at least 1,000 instructional hours.

Saddle Mountain responded to the requests by, among other things, providing OSPI copies of course lists and daily attendance records. In its submission, Saddle Mountain reported that it has three students attending the school full time, under the direction of the school for a total of at least 1,000 instruction hours.

#### Attachments

- ✓ Attendance Records Requests 1 & 2—Saddle Mountain
- ✓ Courses being attempted—Saddle Mountain
- ✓ Attendance Records Request 2—Alger Learning Center
- ✓ Courses being attempted—Alger Learning Center
- ✓ Letter of Confirmation—Alger Learning Center
- ✓ Course list—Alger Learning Center
- ✓ Course list—Saddle Mountain



## THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

*A high-quality education system that prepares all students for college, career, and life.*

August 2, 2016

John Lackey  
Alger Learning Center  
121 Alder Drive  
Sedro Woolley, Washington 98284-8862

Dear Mr. Lackey,

At the July 13-14, 2016, State Board of Education meeting, the Board provisionally approved Alger Learning Center for the 2016-2017 school year, through the January 2017 Board meeting. At that time, the Board will consider approval for the rest of the 2016-2017 school year.

In a letter to you from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) dated April 29, 2016, OSPI identified major deviations from RCW 28A.195 and WAC 180-90. The letter noted that students at the school did not appear to be in attendance full time as required under WAC 180-90-160(1)(b), and it did not appear that Alger Learning Center was offering a full curriculum of instruction to all students to meet graduation requirements established by the State Board of Education. Following identification of major deviations, Alger Learning Center provided OSPI copies of school policies which, if followed, will mitigate the major deviations identified. The State Board of Education has asked OSPI to monitor the school's compliance with the mitigating school policies and provide an update to the Board prior to its January 11-12, 2017 meeting. OSPI's monitoring will focus on confirming that the mitigating school policies are being implemented. Depending on the information the Board receives, the Board will decide whether to approve Alger Learning Center for the rest of the 2016-2017 school year at the January 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,

Ben Rarick  
Executive Director

cc: Dan Newell, OSPI  
Laura Moore, OSPI

*Isabel Muñoz-Colón, Chair • Ben Rarick, Executive Director*

*Janis Avery • Mona Bailey • MJ Bolt • Jeff Estes • Connie Fletcher • Baxter Hershman • Bob Hughes • Judy Jennings • Holly Koon  
Kevin Laverty • Peter Maier • Dr. Daniel Plung • Lindsey Salinas • Randy Dorn, Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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## THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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August 2, 2016

Phyllis Magden  
Saddle Mountain School  
2451 West Bench Road  
Othello, WA 99344-8901

Dear Ms. Magden,

At the July 13-14, 2016, State Board of Education meeting, the Board provisionally approved Saddle Mountain School for the 2016-2017 school year, through the January 2017 Board meeting. At that time, the Board will consider approval for the rest of the 2016-2017 school year.

In a letter to you from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) dated May 6, 2016, OSPI identified major deviations from RCW 28A.195 and WAC 180-90. The letter noted that students enrolled at the school were not required to be in attendance at the school's physical facilities. In addition, students were not required to be engaged in a program of educational activity planned by and under the direction of the school for a total of at least 1,000 instructional hours. Following identification of major deviations, Saddle Mountain School provided OSPI with documentation indicating adoption of a new attendance policy. The State Board of Education has asked OSPI to monitor the school's compliance with the mitigating school attendance policy and student engagement in a program of educational activity planned by and under the direction of the school for a total of at least 1,000 instructional hours. The Board has asked OSPI to provide an update prior to the Board's January 11-12, 2017 meeting. Depending on the information the Board receives, the Board will decide whether to approve Saddle Mountain School for the rest of the 2016-2017 school year at the January 2017 meeting.

In addition to identifying deviations, OSPI's letter expressed the view that State Board of Education approval of a private school does not grant the school legal authority to issue high school diplomas to adults. The State Board of Education's counsel concurs with this interpretation of law, and Board staff will work on developing guidance for private schools clarifying this issue.

Sincerely,

Ben Rarick  
Executive Director

cc: Dan Newell, OSPI  
Laura Moore, OSPI

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