

From the Desk of Assistant Principal Fullen

May 12, 2022

Dear DES Families,

While I've written many messages to you over the years, I will say this one is by far the hardest message I've had to compose. Mainly because telling a school community that you love, that you are leaving, is never easy or fun.

I'll begin by letting you know that having been able to serve Dighton, as our school's assistant principal, for the past 10 years has been a highlight in my life. I have found so much enjoyment in helping to lead and support our schools, through all the ebbs and flows. It has truly been such a pleasure to support our amazing students and families alongside such dedicated teachers, secretaries, paraprofessionals, related service staff, custodians, bus drivers, and food service staff.

During my tenure, I've found much reward in creating new opportunities, helping to challenge thinking while deepening learning, and making it ok and safe for anyone in our school to think out-side-the box. Additionally, I have always felt blessed that so many families have really opened up and allowed me to be a part of their child's journey, especially when they've needed the help, to work through the tough moments by being vulnerable, problem solving and then being able to witness together the breakthrough moments that have resulted in such profound growth in our students. With that said, and for obvious reasons, I very much struggled with the decision to accept the opportunity that emerged before me.

I was initially approached by members of the Bristol Aggie community to consider applying for their new Vocational Director position. This position will help support and lead the teachers and students in all of their science and environmental technical majors, including Natural Resource Management, Animal Sciences, Landscape Design and Construction, Agricultural Mechanics, Arboriculture, and Floriculture working to refine these programs and expand into new offerings. For those of you who know my outside of school passions in life, I'm sure you can imagine how this position truly encompasses many of my joys and the various skills in my wheelhouse. When this opportunity presented itself it really felt like the "stars aligned" and the push from the universe, to grow, was there.

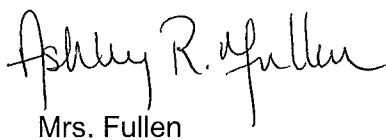
Although I was honored to be offered the position right away, I truly had a great internal struggle and spent many tearful-sleepless nights stuck in this decision making loop, weighing all pros and cons, while also being flooded with thoughts of leaving everyone I know and love.

But at the end of the process, I did end up deciding to just “let go” of the thoughts, trust my heart and take the leap into the unknown and try to make the transition as positive as I can for all involved. I’m trusting that I will be challenged in ways I didn’t know possible, I am trusting that I might inspire others to do the same when opportunities present themselves, and I am trusting that I will still be able to work with and see you all again if it is meant to be.

I am excited and honestly can’t wait to see some of my former students again in a different setting and capacity. Fun fact: the current Dighton Freshman at BA were part of my first kindergarten class here at DES, shocking right! Additionally, I hope to still be there for our current students if they choose the Aggie for high school later down the road. I feel that the biggest bonus of this particular move (for our school community at least) is due to the proximity of the campus, and the fact that my role includes “community outreach.” With that I am promising to work hard to coordinate with our teachers and Mrs. Dessert to set up field trips for ALL grades (not just kindergarten) to walk over (no buses needed) to a large and inspiring campus, and work with the students and teachers at the Aggie. How fun it will be for our students to extend their thinking during one of their elementary units by seeing presentations, and hands-on demonstrations from some high school students who are passionate about their work. I will also work to coordinate some of the BA students coming over to help in our campus greenhouse.

Now that I’ve shared my heart with you, please know I’ll be wrapping the year up with our kiddos and will work diligently with my replacement to get her up to speed before I begin my transition to BA. I’ll end by saying just how thankful I am to each and every one of you, for all of the love and support you have shown not only to me, but our entire school community, and I’d like to leave you with my favorite leadership quote: *“Leadership is about making others BETTER as a result of your presence, and making SURE that impact lasts in your ABSENCE.”* Don’t ever hesitate to reach out now or in the future; you can find me on the Bristol Aggie campus or on our family farm in Berkley!

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ashley R. Fullen". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name "Mrs. Fullen".

Mrs. Fullen