



July 29, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As the new superintendent of schools, I am excited to start a new beginning with so much promise. There is a quote by Alan Cohen that says, “Do not wait until the conditions are perfect to begin. Beginning makes the conditions perfect.” Although the Coronavirus pandemic has caused so much uncertainty, please rest assured that the safety of both scholars and staff are priority. I feel that starting school, whether virtual or face-to-face, will be therapeutic for most of us. We will face and overcome some fears while also providing a service to educate our scholars in the safest ways possible.

This year, starting August 4th, you report to your designated campus to begin the ground work of our reform process as outlined in our *Madison Start Strong* reopening plan. Our accomplishments will be determined by our determination and positive outlook toward our actions. Our community needs us even more than ever. The focus will remain on teaching and learning, and we will continue to support our scholars and each other throughout this unprecedented time. While maintaining the district’s focus of teaching and learning, this year we will lay the foundation for creating a positive image and establish an environment of collaboration, support and respect for all. Throughout this process, remember that we must celebrate every success—both large and small. I have no doubt that we can meet and exceed our goals that we have set for Madison. Throughout our highs and lows this year, I would like each of you to know in advance that the entire staff is appreciated and valued.

You will hear me referencing the theme for 2020-2021 throughout the school year: “Madison Matters: A New Beginning Together!” We will explore what that means, how it applies to our practices and behaviors, and what we plan to achieve by improving Madison’s image with in the community and beyond. As we prepare for a new school year, I want us all to realize we can be the turning point in a child’s life. Undeniably, teaching is the most important profession in our society because it paves the way for all professions. As our district’s mission states, we have been chosen for a very special assignment—to inspire and prepare scholars to pursue limitless college and career pathways by promoting a challenging, scholar-centered instructional environment, providing 21st century educational experiences that reflect the diversity of a contemporary world, and establishing a culture of innovation, excellence and social responsibility within a safe and supportive environment. While it may sound like a herculean task today, the benefits of staying the course will be so much greater tomorrow.

Also, keep in mind that the vision of Madison Parish Schools is not only to impact our community, but to also change the world, by instilling a tradition of determination, excellence, and ambition in the community’s future leaders. Let our district’s mission and vision serve as daily reminders that we shape the future.

I wish everyone the greatest success as we welcome scholars to their educational pathways in 2020. I know each of us wants to make a difference in the lives of our scholars, but please let me reiterate that I expect you to expect excellence from yourselves, your colleagues *and* our scholars. I encourage you to reflect on the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.” I am confident that we will be the example of a progressive district where amazing things happen as a result of *our* togetherness. We will launch the best year yet for Madison Parish Schools. I look forward to seeing you all upon our return for professional development, starting August 4th, and at our virtual convocation, August 7th.

Sincerely,

Dr. C. E. Butler, Jr., Superintendent