



# PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MILTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02186

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August 21, 2021,

Dear MPS Faculty and Staff:

I hope this letter finds you and your family doing well and hunkering down in preparation for Hurricane Henri! A wise person once said, "It is only during a storm that a tree knows how strong it is." Think about that statement and relate that to your experience as an educator over the past year. Each of you illustrated how strong you are in the midst of "the storm" known as COVID-19. You have been battle-tested and you survived! Thank you for all you have done, and I am eager to see what this new year will bring.

Every year I find myself to be a little anxious and, at the same time, very excited about the beginning of a new school year. Despite conversations about the Delta variant and the debate about masks and vaccinations for the fall, this year is no different. I am enthusiastic about returning to full time in-person learning with a renewed sense of urgency to start this year out right. In my excitement, I try never to forget or take for granted how lucky I am to be the Superintendent of the Milton Public Schools. I truly believe there is no better school district in the Commonwealth. We are very fortunate to have such a fabulous, diverse community with supportive families; beautiful school buildings; excellent students; and, of course, very gifted and talented faculty and staff members.

With that said, in the past 18 months many of us (students, families and staff) have experienced unprecedented hardship, grief, and challenges, but at the same time we were resilient and persevered. I admire each of you for the dedication, professionalism, and flexibility that you displayed all of last year. That too was unprecedented! To our new faculty and staff, welcome aboard! I am sure you will be positive contributors to our excellent team as well, and I am eager to learn more about you.

Our ability to support our students will be contingent upon how well we take care of ourselves physically, socially and emotionally. Moving forward, it is my expectation that we continue to support one another as best we can. As I stated in my weekly blog on Thursday, August 19<sup>th</sup>, I wholeheartedly disagree with the statement "we need to recover to a pre-COVID 19 normal." On the contrary, we need to be better! We need to do better! That means families supporting the educators; educators teaching all students and helping them reach their full potential; students entering the buildings with an open mind and willingness to learn; and all of us as a community working in concert with one another for a common interest that centers on supporting the whole child. I know you as educators share the same sentiment.

## 25 Gile Road, Milton, Massachusetts 02186

The Milton Public School system does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, gender identity, transgender status, gender transitioning, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, pregnancy/parenting status, marital status, sexual orientation, homelessness, or military status, in any of its programs, activities or operations. These include, but are not limited to, admissions, equal access to programs and activities, hiring and firing of staff, provision of and access to programs and services, as well as selection of volunteers, vendors and employers recruiting at the Milton Public Schools. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, students, volunteers, subcontractors, and vendors. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Dr. Karen L. Spaulding, Asst. Superintendent for Curriculum & Human, 617-696-4812

Now is the time for all of us to change the narrative of COVID-19. Instead of the negative, it's time to flip the script. Therefore, I have taken the liberty of changing the COVID-19 acronym. I need each of you to be...

- C** - Committed to all of the district's goals and initiatives
- O** - Optimistic about the upcoming school year and what we can accomplish together
- V** - Vehement in your approach to your role and responsibilities within the schools
- I** - Innovative in how you teach and assess your students
- D** - Determined to help ALL students succeed
- 19** - Believe it or not, September 1<sup>st</sup>, the first day of school for students, marks the 19th month that the pandemic has impacted the educational system

With all that we need to do this coming year, I would like to focus our attention and energy on Teaching and Learning, Equity, Social Emotional Learning and Student & Family Engagement. These four topics include so many other goals and ideas that are highlighted in the MPS Strategic Plan, but they are at the core of what we should be doing each and every day. We need every adult, no matter your role, to commit to these district goals to accelerate student learning and elevate student achievement, health and citizenship.

Now it is time for us to take hold of the reins, put on our mask, get vaccinated if you're eligible, and let's devote our time and energy to making this coming year the best year ever!

In closing, I would like to give special thanks to the Central Office staff, Business Office, Registrar /Residency, the Parent Liaison and Food Service personnel as they have worked hard all summer long. The same holds true for the administration, administrative assistants, custodial staff, Technology Department and Consolidated Facilities as they have been working feverishly to prepare for your arrival. A few schools made some modifications to their space to create additional learning spaces for students and we have made some upgrades in technology to make sure teachers have what they need to support teaching and learning.

I look forward to seeing everyone on Monday, August 30<sup>th</sup> for the **ALL STAFF** Opening Day. Coffee and pastries will be served at 7:30am in the Milton High School Lobby and our day begins promptly at 8am in the Milton High School Auditorium.

One last thing, the date that many of you have been waiting for - your first paycheck for the 2021-2022 school year will be deposited September 9, 2021.

In the spirit of education,

James F. Jette  
Superintendent  
Milton Public Schools

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