



SUFFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Dr. John B. Gordon III, Superintendent

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Dear SPS Families,

As we close out the 2019 - 2020 school year, I want to take this time to thank you, our students and parents, for not only all that you have done over the course of the school year, but especially for what you have accomplished over the last nine weeks during this pandemic. Governor Northam's decision to close our schools was unexpected for us all. However, our school families have been valuable partners in distance learning and together we have ensured instruction continued during the final months of the school year. The transition was challenging, but as always, we are grateful to have such a wonderful school community here in the City of Suffolk and I am so proud of how all of you handled this unprecedented time.

As we plan for the 2020-2021 school year, our Fall Learning Survey will be released on June 22, 2020. We want to hear from you on potential options that will work best for our Suffolk Public Schools Community. All of us want a return to normalcy as soon as possible, but it is still our primary responsibility to keep both students and staff safe. The information that you provide to us, along with the feedback that we have received from our Continuity of Learning Survey, will help to shape our plan for the fall. We currently have several administrators, parents, and teachers working in our task force to help us iron out logistics for the fall. It is our plan to share this information at our July 9, 2020 school board meeting.

All school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia are required to submit both a health and instructional plan to the Virginia Department of Education before the fall semester. We have started to complete the template for both, and are working with our district and region colleagues to develop a consistent health plan for athletics and extracurricular activities. This plan will include guidance for safety, group and team schedules, and a parent permission form for participation. More information will be forthcoming.

Thank you to our staff and students for adjusting to our new normal. I want to give a special thanks to the Class of 2020 for their resilience this school year. Even though the school year did not finish in the traditional sense as planned, your flexibility, love for your school, and the pride that you have for the city will never be forgotten. I am sure that all of you will go on to do great things and we will officially celebrate you in our graduation ceremonies on Saturday, June 20, 2020, that will be broadcast on the SPS YouTube channel.

As Summer School begins on July 6, 2020, we will continue with our online instructional platforms for both the elementary and secondary level. This week, we revised our model so that all courses for Suffolk

Public Schools students are free of charge. This includes new courses, and we apologize for any confusion. We made this adjustment to better support our students and families. We never know how the pandemic, and current civil unrest has affected each person. Suffolk Public Schools will continue to be a beacon of love, support, and hope for our city. We are all in this together, and we will all be successful and reaching our goals, if we keep kids first!

It is an honor to serve as your superintendent. Please take care, stay safe, and enjoy your summer!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John B. Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Division Superintendent