

July 27, 2020

MISD Staff and Families,

As I start my first official day as the superintendent of our district, I was reflecting on a very busy past week. There was a lot happening at the Montgomery ISD board meeting last week. First, I was extremely humbled, and very honored, to have been officially made the new Superintendent of MISD. From my first interview with the board, to being named lone finalist, to the official decision last week, this has been an amazing journey, and I could not be more excited to be part of this school district and community. I am also grateful to the Chamber of Commerce and all of the MISD campuses for presenting me and my family with wonderful welcome gifts at the board meeting.

While this was a big part of the meeting, the most important part of Tuesday was staff presenting our current reopening plans to the board. There has been a tremendous amount of work and collaboration with the senior leadership team and principals coming up with multiple options for returning staff and students safely to school. Two pathways had been emerging: one that would allow parents to choose between in person/traditional instruction and remote learning, and the other that would prepare for all students to start with virtual learning. Prior to the board meeting, the Montgomery Health Department issued guidance for all school districts to start the first three weeks remotely. This is the plan that was shared with the board and is now available to review on the district's website.

Highlights are:

- We will welcome staff back to campus on August 5th. Extensive cleaning protocols are being implemented, and we will follow state and local guidelines regarding social distancing and masks to keep our employees safe;
- Students will start school on August 13th, as scheduled, but will do so virtually. A number of actions have been taken to ensure a much better experience than happened in the spring including additional training, common platforms, and proactive scheduling;
- We will have some special populations of students on campus during this time; for example, those that may be receiving special education services;
- The district sent out a technology survey to assess the needs of our families with devices and connectivity. Another survey will go out the week of August 24th asking parents to select which instruction option they want moving forward on September 8<sup>th</sup> -- in person/traditional instruction or continuing with remote learning.

There is an extensive amount of information in this portion of the website with a focus on our core commitments to ensure safety and excellence in our instructional programs. I hope you will take the time to review this plan, Montgomery Moving Forward, and share your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions. It goes without saying, the plan is subject to change based on direction from state and local officials and input from our community.

I have been touched with the amount of support for my transition into the superintendency of MISD and community members understanding this is occurring during an unprecedented time of dealing with COVID-19. I appreciate that support. As I have often shared, leaders do not get to choose the challenges they face; they only get to choose how they will face them. We will face the challenges of starting our school year in very unique ways and dedicate ourselves to returning our students safely back to campus as soon as possible. And we will do this work together.

With appreciation,

Heath