Dear East Orange School District Students, Staff, Parents/Guardians/Caregivers, School Partners, and Community at Large:

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year! I am extremely proud to be back in the great city of East Orange and honored to have been selected to serve as your new Superintendent. As a former Principal of East Orange Campus High School, I can certainly attest to East Orange School District’s unwavering commitment to excellence, unparalleled district pride, and family and community support. I look forward to our working together this year on behalf of our students.

As we look towards the future, we cannot forget about this past year. Looking back, it was certainly a school year like no other. Over the past few months, we have faced challenges that none of us could have imagined. Educators worked tirelessly to keep the school community alive through remote and virtual instruction, counseling and mental health supports, as well as in other critical areas. Families were forced to turn their homes into classroom settings, all while coping with the impact of COVID-19 on their own personal and professional lives. Students remained steadfast and resilient during this “new normal.” I commend you for your courageous and extraordinary efforts during these unprecedented times. I strive to meet the example you all have set.

In addition to the overwhelming impact of COVID-19 on our entire community, the country has experienced civil unrest as we all watched the unjust murders of black men and women at the hands of those in authority. More than ever before, I believe in the power of education. As a community and as individuals, it is important that we soldier on with our civic duty to educate our children, ourselves, and one another about our shared history. Our duty is to teach students about activism, empathy, and prepare them with the skills and knowledge necessary to understand and negotiate our complex world.

As your Superintendent, it is my moral and ethical obligation to ensure high quality educational experiences for all of our students, and also prioritize their health, safety, and overall social and emotional well-being. It is my core belief that all students must have the best educational opportunities available to prepare them for life beyond East Orange School District. How we educate today is far different from that of ten years ago, five years ago, or even last year.

July 24, 2020

“Developing Leaders One Student at a Time”
I believe that the challenges that we’ve faced over the past few months will serve as opportunities to improve and transform our practices which will lead to inspiring and relevant lifelong experiences in the future.

In accordance with the school reopening guidelines set forth by the New Jersey Department of Education’s The Road Back School, each district will be expected to develop, in collaboration with community stakeholders, a plan to reopen schools in the fall that best fits the district’s local needs. To that end, I look forward to engaging with representatives throughout the district and community in creating a specific Restart Committee for East Orange School District, utilizing a design thinking approach, guided by the NJDOH’s COVID-19: Information for Schools and CDC’s Considerations for Schools.

In addition to the Restart Committee, the East Orange School District will also develop a Pandemic Response Team (PRT), comprised of representatives throughout the district, to assist in supporting key decision making and district implementation as it relates to COVID-19. The PRT will include a cross section of administrators, staff, and parents and will be reflective of the diversity of both the district and community. The Restart Committee and PRT will work closely together in the upcoming weeks.

As the African adage goes “It takes a village to raise a child,” I believe that we all share in the responsibility to support the positive education and growth of our young people in East Orange. As a result, I will be relying heavily on our village this school year as we work to create a safe environment where all children can learn, flourish, and grow. Thus, All Hands-on Deck.

I am confident that while working together, we will inspire success and a lifetime of learning. Throughout the summer, I plan to host a series of virtual “Meet and Greet Superintendent Hasan” sessions for the East Orange School District Community. There will be more information forthcoming. I look forward to meeting and growing with all of you!

Educationally yours,

AbdulSaleem R. Hasan

AbdulSaleem R. Hasan, Ed.S.
Superintendent of Schools

“Developing Leaders One Student at a Time”