

**EAST ORANGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

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Assistant Superintendent

Ms. Anita Champagne

Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Deborah M. Harvest

September 2, 2020

Greetings East Orange School District Staff,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year! This has been one of the most challenging times in our history and I commend you all for your courageous and extraordinary efforts. My prayer is that your families and loved ones are doing well and that you've had the opportunity to relax and recharge over the past few weeks. The COVID-19 pandemic has been an epic test of character and determination for millions of people around the world. Nothing compares to your sacrifice last spring as you were one of the nation's Heroes at Home ensuring that your students were safe, educated, and supported. For this, I applaud you and I thank you.

As we begin the school year, it is important to recognize that it will be unlike any other that we've ever experienced. I've heard the stories of how you've stepped up to the challenge during school closures by reinventing instructional delivery models on the fly, working tirelessly to provide connection, support, and learning opportunities for the East Orange School District students and families, as well as personally contacted and/or visited the homes of our most vulnerable populations. This year will require a great deal of ***flexibility and adaptability*** as we navigate our "new normal" by overcoming odds and achieving success. It will require that same grit, determination, and relentless drive to navigate this new landscape. To that end, your role as an essential staff member is critical as it lays the groundwork and foundation for improving outcomes for schools and students, especially *now*.

We are a few days away from our students officially starting the school year, thus, I am leaning on you to become thought partners in this work. Due to the global pandemic, we are facing a number of obstacles including mental health challenges, learning losses in children, physical losses that have been endured, as well as inequities with the digital divide in our city. Though this is the reality for many in our community, I am confident that we can work together to breakthrough barriers and overcome obstacles, even in the midst of difficult times.

You *are* the "boots on the ground" of this district as you serve on the frontlines daily interacting with children and families. As your Superintendent, I want to hear from you, support your efforts, and remain in close contact. Throughout the course of the next few months, I plan to host virtual round tables to gather feedback and input on critical matters of the district that impact our students, staff, and families. There will be additional information forthcoming.

"Developing Leaders One Student at a Time"

In closing, I want to emphasize that *together we can go far*. I am looking forward to a year filled with stories of success even in the midst of challenging times. Thank you in advance for your commitment as we all navigate this new journey, *together*.

Educationally Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "ASR Hasan", with a stylized flourish extending to the left.

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