August 18, 2022

Dear Chester Upland School District Family,

As your Superintendent of Schools, I want to officially welcome teachers, support staff, and administrators back to the Chester Upland School District for the 2022-2023 school year. Through commitment and perseverance, we will continue to make great things happen for our students in the district. The theme for this upcoming school year is For the Betterment of Our Children.

Our focus is to make sure that everything we do this school year is viewed through the lens of what is in the best interest of our students. As we focus on the “whole child” we will introduce a new social-emotional curriculum, with a focus on mindfulness. The approach to this initiative will be explained in further detail at convocation.

Here are a few highlights to note in beginning the school year:

- As we work to be more proactive about providing support to our students, I have set a district goal to significantly reduce the number of discipline incidents and provide alternatives to suspension. As a team, we will utilize our new social-emotional curriculum, mindfulness, and youth court to assist us in meeting this goal.

- While we have significant room for improvement in our academic scores, our focus with academics this year will be performance growth. As a district, together we can move all our students forward and help them to grow. There are several factors that will need to be addressed in making this happen: student attendance, parent engagement, and intentional planning to create specific outcomes in collaboration with the attendance committee. You will receive further communication about this initiative throughout the school year, as we began the work in this area over the summer.

This will happen with your great work, presence, and support. I sincerely thank each of you for returning or joining the Chester Upland School District Family. I have often shared that things are not always perfect,
and we will not always agree on everything. However, we will make progress and find success if we share passion, love, and dedication for our students.

**District Safety**
The district is committed to providing adequate training to staff to promote school safety. All staff will be required to complete an online ALICE training. The information to complete this will be sent to you from Mr. Moss, Lead School Safety Officer. There will also be scheduled trainings throughout the school year to prepare staff in the event of a building crisis and working with students who display disruptive behaviors.

**School Uniforms**
This year all students will be expected to be in uniform for the first day of school and onward. The principals have communicated this expectation to parents, and we have planned as a district to ensure our students have what is needed to adhere to the dress code.

**CUSD Staff Dress Code**
All staff members are expected to be role models for our students and representatives of our district to the community. As such, staff must be well groomed and maintain a professional, neat, and tasteful appearance at all times. These dress guidelines are not intended to limit employees' personal expression or hinder individuality, but to provide guidelines that ensure an educational environment free from unnecessary or inappropriate distractions. All staff will receive a copy of the district's dress code policy prior to Convocation Day.

**Staffing**
The Department of Human Resources has worked extremely hard on behalf of the district to ensure that we had all staff in place for the start of the 2022-2023 school year. I am happy to inform you that we are close to achieving that goal.

There have also been some positive changes that have occurred between the end of last school year and the start of our new school year. Receiver Nafis Nichols was appointed to a three-year term supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This past year Receiver Nichols was able to bring a great deal of stability to our organization. We believe that over the next three years, we will be able to continue to build
upon the early success. After being appointed by Receiver Nichols as the Superintendent for a five-year term, I was provided the opportunity to appoint Dr. Latrice Mumin as the Assistant Superintendent of the CUSD. This will provide the central office stability that the district needs. Together we have set some lofty goals for the district, many that were shared during the state of the district to the community. We will be sure to share these with you again during convocation.

In addition, as you are aware, we acquired the Widener Partnership Charter School at 1450 Edgmont Ave. from Widener University. We were fortunate to inherit many of the students and staff who attended this school, which is now a public school in the Chester Upland School District. One of our greatest goals has been to return many of our students to the district. This acquisition has given us a great head start. We are pleased to appoint Dr. Percell Whittaker as the schools’ next leader, to support and provide our students and staff with exceptional learning opportunities. We are also excited to share that Dr. York Williams is the new school leader of CUSA Elementary School. Please also join us in welcoming Dr. Angela Thompson as Supervisor of Career and Technical Education and Dr. Dontae Wilson as Director of Pupil Services in Central Office.

Thank you for taking time to read this update. I look forward to seeing you at convocation on Tuesday, August 23, 2022.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Craig L. Parkinson
Superintendent of Schools