

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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SUPERINTENDENT

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

For weeks, staff members throughout The School District of Philadelphia have been working diligently to prepare our schools for Monday, September 9, the first day of the 2013-14 school year. Yet, there remains significant uncertainty about increased funds and savings to provide additional resources for our schools.

To date, there have been no formal steps taken to advance funds that would allow the District to rehire many crucial staff members who were laid off in June. We need these staff members to ensure that our schools are running smoothly and above all, safely. While the District has recently been able to restore some staff positions, extracurricular activities and art and music programs, we do not have the support, staff and resources to provide all schools with the tools they need.

In recent weeks, we have been specifically awaiting the outcome of \$50 million in funding from the city. If the District does not receive these funds by Friday, August 16, then we will be forced to consider delaying the first day of school, either at some schools or all of them, or operating on a half-day schedule.

I must be able to tell you that when your child is walking through the hallways, eating lunch or at recess, an adult will be watching them. I must be able to tell you that an assistant principal will be there to handle any disciplinary issues that distract from the focus on learning. I must be able to tell you that the principal can leave the office to address issues and support staff in other parts of the school. In the absence of additional funds, I cannot do so.

In a broader sense, however, \$50 million really only allows us to open the doors of the school. It does not do enough for what goes on behind those doors. We must continue working with our labor partners and state officials to secure additional funds. This will allow us to avoid combining grades, continue instructional supports for struggling students, implement supplemental languages that prepare our students for the global economy, provide extracurricular activities that enrich students' educational experiences, offer Advanced Placement courses that enhance their knowledge and skills, and provide adequate counseling services to help prepare them for college.

I encourage you to continue readying your child for the upcoming school year with summer reading lists (available on the District's website) and enrichment activities. Registration for new immigrant students is ongoing and general registration at neighborhood schools will start Monday, August 19.

We apologize for these unfortunate circumstances and hope to reach a swift resolution regarding this urgent matter. Please know that we are eager to welcome your child back to school this fall.

Sincerely,



William R. Hite Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent