

March 27, 2019

Dear Salem Public Schools' families:

Your voice and perspective on the future of our school district is critically important. Therefore, I am excited to share with you several upcoming opportunities for communication with families of students in the Salem Public Schools. In the coming month, specific details will be shared about a survey intended to gather input on the methods of communication that work for families, and topics for upcoming family workshops. I hope that you will participate in the survey, and join me at one or more of these events as we work together to ensure all of our students reach their greatest potential.

This is the first of what will be monthly letters from me, in an effort to strengthen our communication and engagement, and to share important news and updates. In addition, we will be publishing quarterly newsletters. This is the beginning of a family engagement plan, and more opportunities and avenues for communication will be forthcoming. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to me at superintendent@salemk12.org or 978-740-1212.

I would like to thank the students, families, staff and members of the community who have attended School Committee meetings and community meetings, and those who have called or emailed to share their concerns, insights and questions with all of us. I truly believe that the more we work together, the better we can serve all of the students in the Salem Public Schools.

There is so much to be proud of in our district. We have highly committed, hard-working teachers in our schools day in and day out, teaching our students and finding ways to address their needs in the classroom. We have amazing opportunities for students to participate in arts, music programs, sports, and extracurricular activities. We have school leaders who are working, just as hard, to ensure we have a strong academic focus and positive school cultures; and we have a team of district leaders who are highly committed to supporting the work of our schools and to address any barriers that prevent our students from their success now and after they have left our district.

However, some members of the community have expressed frustration recently, and I understand that. There have been many changes throughout the district, and not enough communication to provide the context and collaboration needed to move forward successfully. I have heard that, and I am committed to resetting the communication throughout the district to ensure that families understand why we are doing what we're doing, and for us to ensure that all voices are heard.

I must say, though, that I am frustrated too. I feel a great sense of urgency around the work of ensuring that our schools provide ALL of our students with the education they deserve. Yet, I know that not all students in our district are getting the opportunities and learning experiences to which they are entitled. I lose sleep at night over the work we still need to do to break down the barriers that are keeping a good number of our students from achieving their goals.

This great sense of urgency is the impetus for looking closely at every corner in this district where we have barriers to the success of all of our kids. Doing so has generated a great deal of change in our district, and I realize that this has caused anxiety. We need to continue to move forward, but we need to

**Margarita Ruiz
Superintendent**



**City of Salem
Salem Public Schools**

do so methodically, ensuring that we communicate what we need to change and why, engaging more members of the community in the process.

All of us need to work together as a community to develop and implement solutions that will reach all kids and benefit our district as a whole. In order to achieve this work, we must have all voices at the table. While the recent forums and School Committee meetings were well attended, there are still many voices that have not been heard.

I am committed, along with the entire leadership team at SPS, to transparency and to collaborating with students, families and staff in the work that we all agree is of the most paramount importance for this district: ensuring that all our kids are locally engaged, globally connected and fully prepared to thrive in a diverse and changing world.

Attached to this letter I am sharing the proactive steps that I am taking to having structures that will allow us to better communicate and engage with the community. I want to hear more from you about the best ways we can achieve this goal. I hope you will join me in one or more of the upcoming opportunities to collaborate as we continue to move the district forward.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership and for entrusting your children's education to us!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margarita R. Ruiz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Margarita Ruiz
Superintendent

**Superintendent's Community Communication Plan
Starting April 2019**

Actions	Time Frame
Letters from the Superintendent A monthly letter to all families to provide timely information about key initiatives, appointments of new district staff, upcoming events, etc.	Monthly
Survey A survey will be sent to all families to determine the communication preferences for hearing from the Superintendent and topics of interest to parents and students that could be covered in the family workshop series.	Late April/Early May
SPS Family Workshop Series The Superintendent will host a series of workshops for families to learn about and discuss topics of mutual interest. Topics may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School safety*• Supporting the social, emotional & behavioral needs of our students• Curriculum updates• Digital learning initiatives *ALICE meetings are scheduled: Grades K to 5 - 4/29 at 6:30 PM HMLS Grades 6 to 12 – date TBD at 6:30 PM SHS	May - June
SPS Community Newsletter Quarterly newsletter to be published outlining strategic plan updates, leadership changes, updates from the academic and operational departments in the district, general district news and updates, etc.	Quarterly – 1st Publication Issue May

Informal communication and feedback is always welcome at superintendent@salemk12.org.