

# FALL RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*"The Scholarship City"*

417 Rock Street, Fall River, MA 02720

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*Matthew H. Malone, Ph.D., Superintendent*

August 15, 2018

Dear Fall River Faculty and Staff,

I hope this letter finds you rested, healthy, happy, and enjoying the summer break with family and friends. Certainly, the best and most important part of the summer is spending time with those whom you want to spend time, doing things you want to do. It's a time to rest, relax, recharge, and recommit ourselves to pursuits outside of our profession – the fuel that fires us up to return to the very hard yet honorable work we do in schools. In the space between the end of one school year and the opening of the next, I pause and I think. I take some time to admire the things that make me love serving as the Superintendent of the Fall River Public Schools. Every single time I get asked what makes me run to work, I respond without delay – THE PEOPLE!! Pound for pound, I would put our team up against any team in the Commonwealth. Our strength is in the quality of our people – teachers, paraprofessionals, clerks, facility crews, nurses, counselors, administrators, support staff, food service professionals, school committee members, City of Fall River employees, and of course, our students and their families.

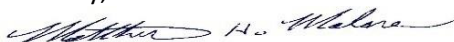
This summer I was moved when I read a Boston Globe article about a camp in Connecticut that serves disabled children (*see attached*). Once I finished reading the story and dried my eyes, not only was I proud to make the right choices in purchasing salad dressing and lemonade (Newman's Own), but I also thought of the core value of **Diversity** (aka **Inclusivity**) and what that means for us in Fall River. The behaviors we model and the actions that we take - from budgeting, to staffing, to scheduling - make clear statements about our beliefs. From what I have seen, we believe in inclusive practices that meet the needs of a diverse group of students and families. We are far from perfect, but we are moving in the right direction and will continue to do so because our educators value and love each and every single child we serve.

I was glued to the news from Thailand this past July – the young members of the Tiger soccer team and their coach trapped in an underground cave in total darkness with rising water from the monsoon season rain cutting off all attempts of rescue. For a few weeks, nations united in their collective humanity to demonstrate **Teamwork** and **Collaboration** eventually achieving what appeared to be impossible. Working together, they defied the odds, rescuing the entirety of the soccer team. The power of teamwork is unbeatable within each school and across the system. When we work together, Fall River cannot be defeated.

Following the tragic, heartbreaking loss of 14-year-old rising 9<sup>th</sup> grader, Eddiel Benetiz, I witnessed tremendous **Love** and **Kindness** from faculty, staff, and leadership at Talbot and Lord's ESY program, towards Eddiel's family and friends. The bystanders and first responders, especially the heroic members of the Fire Department who jumped into the South Watuppa Pond, made valiant efforts to save a young life. In Fall River, it is evident to me that we Never Give Up, and **Family** supersedes any and all differences that separate us. In Fall River, **We Take Care of Each Other**, always.

The bold font statements contained herein are not the whole of who we are, but offer a glimpse of our collective ethos. This summer, I reflected on these aspects of our shared experiences, connecting them to the synergy I feel walking with you on our collective journey towards excellence in everything that we do. As we deepen our alignment as a school system, we are poised to launch to a level of performance that will move the perception of our schools to match what we all know is the reality – the **Truth** of the Fall River Public Schools. Please join me on Tuesday, August 28, 2018 for our annual convocation in Durfee High School's Nagle Auditorium. Light refreshments/networking will begin at 8:00am with the core programming starting promptly at 8:30am in order to get you back to your schools by 10:00am. As we do each year, we will be collecting canned foods and toiletries for our community partner, *United Neighbors*, to help those in need.

Cordially,



Matthew H. Malone, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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