



August 21, 2014

Dear Parents and Guardians:

For many years, we have been examining ways to enhance the educational opportunities we afford to elementary school students within the existing school day while also trying to address a long-standing issue with our teachers: the lack of sufficient time to collaboratively plan initiatives that will increase student achievement.

Addressing this complex issue has been difficult for many reasons. Increasing the length of the school day is not a viable option, and the fiscal constraints that have existed in our county have made increasing the number of teachers to offer additional periods in non-core subjects difficult given the many other pressing needs across our school system.

I am very excited to tell you, however, that today we announced a pilot project in the North County cluster elementary schools that we believe will change the face of elementary education in our county. **Triple-E: Enhancing Elementary Excellence** will allow students to expand their horizons through thematic instruction and provide teachers with precious collaborative planning time that will enhance instruction in core subjects across all grades.

Triple-E is designed to engage elementary students in rich, thematic student-centered learning that is project-based, and exciting, while simultaneously addressing the long-standing issue of a lack of collaborative planning time for teachers. Through rigorous and relevant instruction, increased access, and enhanced opportunities, the project also is aimed at accelerating the pace at which the school system is elevating all students and eliminating all gaps.

Each of the nine schools in the cluster has chosen one of four themes on which to focus, and will provide additional instruction based on those themes. They are:

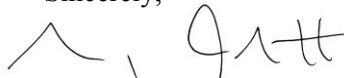
- International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program: Overlook Elementary School
- STEM in Society: Ferndale Early Education Center and Hilltop, North Glen, and Park elementary schools
- Arts & Humanities: Belle Grove and Brooklyn Park elementary schools
- Global Studies: George Cromwell and Linthicum elementary schools

Beginning on September 29, 2014, students in all grades will take part in one additional non-core subject class. None of your child's classroom teachers will change. The non-core subject teachers have already been hired and are in the process of preparing instructional lessons for these classes. While your child and his or her classmates are taking part in these classes, core subject teachers will engage in much-needed collaborative planning aimed at increasing achievement in those subjects. This type of planning is crucial to academic success because it allows teachers to share best practices and better address the needs of each individual student.

I believe without question that this pathway will pay huge dividends for our teachers and, most importantly, our students. We will be closely monitoring the progress not only of achievement in these new areas, but in our core subject areas as well. It is my hope that the success of this program will allow us to expand it countywide in the next school year.

There will certainly be more information shared with you by your child's school as the launch date approaches. The success of this program, like all of our programs and initiatives, is predicated upon the teamwork of the school staff, parents, students, and community partners. I thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,



George Arlotto, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

GA/bm