

Each day for the past two and a half years, I have been driven by a singular focus: "Every child, every day, for a better tomorrow." It has been an incredible honor to lead the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools on a journey to go from good to great. Not great for accolades and honors, as CMS has been awarded them, but great for 145,363 reasons -- our amazing students.

I am so proud of what our district has accomplished for the students of this community. Our graduation rate reached 85.1% this year, exceeding the state average, with all groups of students improving. Scores on end of grade and end of course assessments improved and exceeded the state average for the second year in a row; close to 83% of our students met or exceeded growth. SAT scores improved and more students are taking honors and Advanced Placement classes.

With unprecedented community support, we launched our brand new strategic plan, "For a Better Tomorrow," last year. In that plan, we pledged to have every child become college and career ready and a champion of his or her own learning by focusing on six core goals. We are creating exciting pathways for teacher and principal development and growth, ensuring we are focused on employee engagement throughout our district. We have initiated new ways to unite with our parents and created bold business, civic, and faith-based partnerships to help our students. We have completed an extensive security project to make our schools safer at the same time as we have delved into areas of social-emotional learning and cultural competency. Each school will be going through a transformation process, with some schools already focusing on opportunity culture and personalized learning. We have launched a number of new school options to ensure every parent has at least two quality CMS options for their children. Indeed, much has been accomplished.

It is because I am so proud of our school district and humbled by the accomplishments of our employees, that it is so difficult for me to announce that I am stepping down as the superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools effective Thursday, November 6th. This has been the most difficult professional decision of my career. It has been with deep reflection and prayer that I have decided this is what I must do. While serving as superintendent is an honor and privilege, it requires a singular and unwavering focus. Recent events have challenged that focus, and I must now rededicate myself to my family, most especially my mother. When I first started here in CMS, I was excited about having my professional career closer to her, however I can't give my job the full attention it needs while making sure I address her needs at this critical time. During drives back and forth, I have been thinking about the demands of this position. There are the anticipated

challenges such as developing a budget, promoting the district's interest in the upcoming legislative session, and exhausting every avenue to reward our employees for the work they do. There are also always unanticipated challenges, which is why this job demands full attention and focus. Roy Disney once said, "It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are." While I understand the meaning of this quote, when your values are in conflict with your obligations, these decisions are still wrenching.

I am so optimistic about the future of CMS. I am exceptionally grateful to the Board of Education for giving me this opportunity and thank them for their leadership and support during my time as superintendent. I am grateful to the incredible executive team that serves this district, and I appreciate each and every one of these talented leaders. Next, I wish to thank our community for the support they provide to CMS and the way they have supported me as superintendent. I believe in the saying that it takes a village, and in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, our community support is one of our most precious resources. Finally, I am constantly inspired by our teachers, principals, and support staff. They are true heroes who dedicate themselves to the most noble of endeavors -- educating every child, every day, for a better tomorrow.

With appreciation and deep respect,
Heath