

January 30, 2018

Dear Board Members,

It is with mixed emotions that I submit my resignation as superintendent of the Oklahoma City Public Schools.

During my tenure as superintendent, our district has had some great successes that we accomplished together:

- We have implemented new, more rigorous standards to better prepare our students to be successful after high school.
- We have increased the number of Advanced Placement exams being taken in our district and have all of our high schools participating in the College Board's "All In" Challenge in order to better prepare them for success on the PSAT/SAT.
- We have implemented the "Summit Basecamp" personalized learning program at 8 schools with plans to continue expansion to additional schools next year.
- We started an Office of School Climate & Culture to provide more discipline support and coaching for schools. Our overall suspensions are down 30% and long-term suspensions are down 81% since 2014-15.
- We passed a \$180M bond which has allowed us to provide maintenance to our aging facilities, purchase new school buses, and upgrade our technology in schools.
- We applied and were awarded district "Community Eligibility Provision" status which means that every child at every school now eats for free in OKCPS.
- We worked with the OKC Compact to develop a Mental Health Task Force and identified funding to increase the number of counselors and social workers in OKCPS schools.
- We have taken a number of courageous actions to make sure that every child in this district knows they are important, loved and appreciated because of the diversity and talents they bring to our district. We now teach about the Land Run and Thanksgiving in more culturally responsive ways. We passed a resolution supporting LGBTQ students and employees. We are about to start the process of changing the names of the three schools that were named after Confederate generals.

I am proud to say that we accomplished those things despite the fact that the state funding crisis forced me to cut \$30M from the budget in my first 30 days as superintendent. We eliminated 200 teaching positions, 100 administrative/central office positions, and 100 operations positions. We canceled textbook purchases, made cuts to arts and athletics, and eliminated supply budgets. We closed two

schools and shortened our school year in order to get through that first round of cuts.

One year later, the budget situation went from bad to worse. The cuts deepened. Class sizes got larger. The legislature failed to pass a teacher raise, causing our teacher shortage across Oklahoma to worsen.

This has been an incredibly challenging few years for districts across the state of Oklahoma, but I am proud of the work that we have done together to help our district stretch every penny and identify ways to save money by becoming more efficient in our operations. The lessons learned will allow us to reinvest more dollars back into classrooms when the funding returns.

Our board has gone through some transitions during my time here and I believe that it is now time for me to step aside and allow you to come together as a team to find a leader that will be right for you as a new board. I am prepared to work with your legal counsel to determine the details involved with the transition.

There is a lot of work still to be done in this district, but there is an amazing team of dedicated teachers, principals, support staff, central office administrators, and senior leadership team members who are here to support you.

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to serve the students and families of this community. Please know that Oklahoma City will always hold a special place in my heart.

Respectfully,
Aurora Lora
Superintendent
Oklahoma City Public Schools