

July 13, 2021

Dear Stoddert Elementary School Community,

It is with tremendous pleasure that I write this letter as the incoming Principal of Stoddert Elementary School. I am honored to have the opportunity to join this thriving and supportive community with such persevering students and a dedicated team of professionals. I look forward to working with you all, Principal Bryant and Assistant Principal Villegas to support a smooth transition.

As we get to know one another, I'd like to share a little about myself. The 2021-2022 school year will mark my seventeenth year as an educator. I have served in the classroom as a teaching assistant serving English Language Learners, a lead classroom teacher, classroom observer in Baltimore City and school administrator in the District. Most recently, I have been Principal at a DC Charter school serving an international community. I hold master's degrees in Education Administration and Executive Leadership and completed Principal training with New Leaders. Serving as an elementary principal is a distinct honor at the intersection of my passion and expertise: closely supporting teachers and young learners while bringing system design and collaboration to ensure a high quality education for all. On a personal note, my husband and I have lived in the DC area since 2005. We have a son entering high school, a daughter continuing in middle school and my youngest begins pre-Kindergarten this fall. Rock Creek Park is a favorite of ours for hikes on weekends with our two big dogs. We love the District and its beautiful expressions of diversity.

Communication and collaboration are key to supporting trust and creating the best circumstances for our students to thrive. I place a high value on connections (both in person and virtual) and look forward to upcoming engagements. Later this month, I will share opportunities for meet and greets, and continued planning conversations for the school year ahead. I see Stoddert's motto, "Today we learn, tomorrow we lead," as an excellent touchstone as we return to the building, while learning our new normal. Whatever the road ahead holds, our whole-child approach to realizing Stoddert's vision, "To be a role model for academic excellence," is inspiring, and provides us all with lift and light as we look to return to our building after a year like none other.

To our Stoddert Superstar Students, I cannot wait to meet you all! I hope that you are excited for this coming school year and that you are enjoying a summer filled with safe outdoor fun, and lots of reading with friends and family. We will have a joyful year of learning together.

In closing, please know that until our in-person meetings begin later this month, my virtual door is open to you. I heartily welcome your thoughts and collaboration for our journey ahead!

Karen Rivas

Principal, Stoddert Elementary School