



Willow Drive Elementary School

SUMTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

26 Willow Drive ♦ Sumter, South Carolina 29150 ♦ (T) 803.773.5796 ♦ (F) 803.778.2847

January 3, 2018

Dear Members of Eagle Nation:

Happy New Year to all! As we begin a brand new year here at Willow Drive Elementary School, where we *SOAR High with Purpose & Pride*, I would like to extend a warm welcome back to all of our scholars and staff members who contribute to making our school such a dynamic learning community. January is always about fresh beginnings and positive change. I love the promise of the New Year and all the possibilities that exist for our scholars here at WDE and their future. A new year always ushers in the sense of renewal—a renewal of purpose and collective commitment to excellence in teaching, learning, and service to our community. President John F. Kennedy once said, “Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.” With this comes the firm resolution to achieve desired results in our “championship” year together, and I am greatly enthused by the many exciting initiatives for our school that are in the works – all of which are intended to support the further development of the scholars we collectively serve in Eagle Nation.

Let us take this opportunity to reflect on the successes we have achieved in working together! Our “championship” year together has been anchored in my “Hopes & Dreams Listening Tour,” which has allowed me to meet with 253 stakeholders (81 staff, 17 district officials, 16 community partners, 24 community members, 83 parents, and 32 scholars) to discuss strengths, challenges, and their input in the vision in moving WDE forward. From these collaborative conversations, I have focused our school’s energy around five consistent themes for improvement in making the following changes: 1) increased the safety & efficiency at student drop off & pick-up areas, 2) increased the regularity and depth of scholar recognition, 3) implemented collective leadership, 4) increased community engagement initiatives, and 5) implemented a positive behavioral interventions support system. Through these changes, we have much to celebrate: 16 new community partners, nearly \$2000 in financial donations from community partners, the implementation of our “scholar token store,” \$1500 in grant funding, a transition from PTO-PTA that has yielded 67% total student membership, monthly spirit nights that have raised nearly \$1,000, offered additional extracurricular activities to include HYPE, choir, step team, and the Good News Club, and garnered a strong presence on social media to share our work with the community. These accomplishments are a reflection of the hard work & effort on behalf of our championship faculty, staff, and community partners. As the second phase of my “Hopes & Dreams Listening Tour” has come to a close, I am excited to soon share the collaborative vision for our school through a series of individual stakeholder presentations, beginning on January 17.

There have been many exciting events to talk about in December and many more planned in the month ahead. Please allow me to take this opportunity to reflect on last month and to highlight just a few in looking ahead as January promises to bring more awesome experiences for our scholars. The *Santa Shop* provided opportunities to our scholars to share in the Holiday spirit while many Holiday characters visited the Eagle’s Nest. Our second quarterly PTA meeting – *A Winter Wonderland* – was held, and it was a tremendous success, with approximately 750 stakeholders in attendance. We observed the amazing talent from our Eagle Scholar Choir, Eagle Scholar Step Team, and budding artists while also learning of important updates from various school entities – SIC, PTA, and Title I. We enjoyed a special lighting ceremony of Willow Drive’s first-ever Christmas tree, on which ornaments hung that were created by each of WDE’s 700 scholars. All of our community partners, including members of the SIC and PTA, were recognized for their commitment to strengthening our school. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of several of our community partners and staff, a memorable Christmas was provided to 29 WDE families. We also welcomed a new staff member, Ms. Sarah Flanery, a recent graduate of USC’s teacher education program, who will be taking over a fourth grade class as Ms. Laura Odom transitions into the reading coach role.

In closing, as we continue in the new year’s spirit of renewal, thank you for your continued support in the mission we are collectively pursuing to *expect excellence for all: with an “all in” attitude, every child...every day...whatever it takes.*

In it together,

Trevor T. Ivey, NBCT; Principal