



DR. BRIAN V. HIGHTOWER
Superintendent of Schools

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01 September 2023

Dear School Board Members, Staff and Community,

The purpose of this letter is to formally notify you that I will not be seeking a contract extension as Superintendent of Schools for the Cherokee County School District and plan to retire, effective May 31, 2024.

Both Sue and I have been involved with and plugged into the Cherokee County community for our entire adult lives and consider it an honor to have been part of the great work the school district has accomplished in providing a world class education to our community.

As Superintendent for the past eight years, I have been blessed to lead a school district that, in the face of some of its most significant challenges ever, continued to shine as a leader in Georgia and the Nation.

As my 38-year career in public education now stretches out behind me, the feelings of gratitude and appreciation greatly overshadow the complexities and pressures inherent in being a public school educator since the 1980s.

I am extremely grateful for those who have impacted my career, specifically the:

- Supportive, invested School Board Members who have remained true to the mission of educating our emerging learners by supporting efforts to create classroom and school environments that are safe and welcoming for all students.
- Committed local district leaders, visionary administrators and patient mentors from those who came before my generation of leaders and provided a great education to the children in this community when it was as a sleepy rural district to those who guided our district as we morphed into a suburban force in a growing Georgia ... to the many dynamic leaders who have led alongside me.
- Amazing, resourceful teachers, support staff and administrators who have poured themselves into their work and the lives of their students, recognizing that the relationships they cultivate with students create the connection and trust necessary for engaged, meaningful learning. They are true heroes in my book!
- Compassionate, involved community members who have partnered with us to put children first and demonstrated a tireless commitment to their local schools through selfless volunteerism and advocacy.
- Curious and courageous students who love to learn and see the world around them as a place they can know, impact and change.
- Family who, despite my many flaws, love me and whom I love dearly.
- The many friendships and relationships that have provided a sustaining strength during storms, comradery while doing a good work and revelry in celebrating proven successes.

As I reflect on my time as your Superintendent, I am at times able to clearly see meaningful contributions to this community. Most times however, it has been the many other people within our organization and community who have made the most difference in who we are and what we've accomplished. I will always be proud of what we've achieved together!

It is also a point of pride that, as Cherokee has continued to grow and thrive, we've prioritized the need to preserve the sense of community that makes it a desirable place to live, work, educate, worship and play.

I have been challenged daily to preserve and grow an organization that prioritizes important keys to success: continuous learning and growth, commitment to mission, leadership by guiding principles and values, an unwavering focus on children and the proof that rigor, relevance and relationships can occur in the same classroom. I have talked often about continuing to grow my "A" game as a leader for our organization and community ... you can rest assured that same fire will continue to motivate me as I transition into the role as the school district's biggest (retired) cheerleader!

Thank you for the opportunity of a lifetime!



Dr. Brian V. Hightower
Superintendent of Schools