COLE, CAROLANN <ccole@ucityschools.org>

From the Desk of Sharonica Hardin-Bartley: SDUC Updates and More

1 message

Sharonica Hardin-Bartley <news@ucityschools.org>
Reply-To: communications@ucityschools.org
To: communications@ucityschools.org

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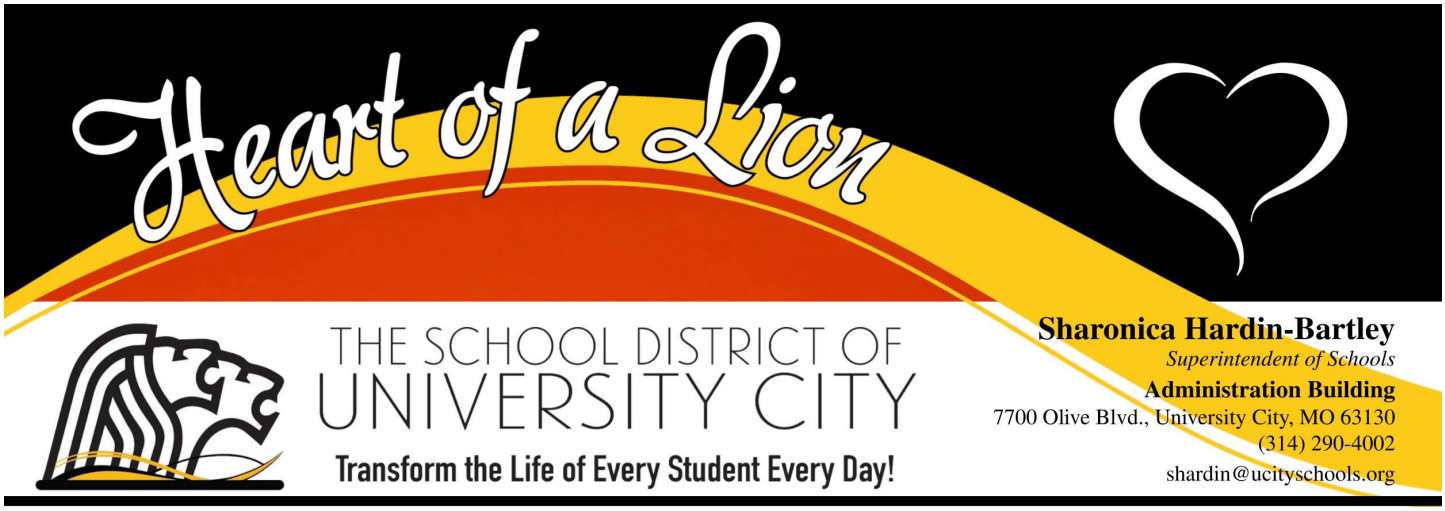

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February 3, 2023

From the Desk of Sharonica Hardin-Bartley

Greetings School District of University City Community:

It has been a busy start to the New Year as students and teachers undertake new learning projects. Our students have so many wonderful activities planned for February. While this month is technically called Black History Month, in University City, we celebrate the contributions of African Americans and other human beings throughout the year. Amid these life-affirming activities, we are, again, dealing with a national tragedy with the cruel and horrific death of Tyre Nichols during a police traffic stop. These sickening and inexcusable assaults are culturally and socially traumatic. They ripple into our consciousness and stir deep and often overwhelming emotions, especially in our youth. This leads me to thoughts about well-being among our students and staff.

As a superintendent, I get to attend celebrations, give hugs, and shake hands as students receive their diplomas. I can walk freely through schools when I choose and almost always find a smiling face or a warm hello. And when I see a child that is upset or stressed, I get the chance to walk with them and talk it through with them. When we can't talk any longer, I guide them to a trusting adult so their day can get a little bit better. And when that happens, my day gets a lot better.

My position also finds me sometimes on the front lines of tragedy. Mercifully, these moments aren't frequent, but they do happen. I can't predict when they will occur, or when I will get the call or a text alerting me that a child is deeply in trouble, or worse…. (read more in the Superintendent's Blog)

News and Updates

School-Based Community Engagement Meetings, February-April

We are excited to continue our ongoing efforts to hear reflections from our community on our vision of Learning Reimagined and our individual schools' strategic plans. We invite you to attend building-specific meetings in which school leaders will present their plans and listen to your input on the work being done in their schools. These are modeled similarly to two district-wide community meetings that were held in October. I encourage you to attend your schools' meetings. They start next week at Jackson Park and Flynn Park. The full schedule is below. Please register to attend.

- Feb. 7: Flynn Park Elementary School, 5:30 p.m.
- Feb. 7: Jackson Park Elementary School, 5:30 p.m.
- Feb. 27: Julia Goldstein Early Childhood Education Center, 5:30 p.m.
- March 28: Barbara C. Jordan Elementary School, 5:30 p.m.
- March 28: Pershing Elementary School, 5:30 p.m.
- April 12: Brittany Woods Middle School & University City High School (joint meeting), 6 p.m. at UCHS library

Beginning Tonight! Virtual Black History Book Study Group

Back by popular demand, the District and the University City Public Library are hosting a virtual book study group focusing on the New York Times best-selling book, Four Hundred Souls, a compilation of writings by 90 different authors on 400 years of African American history. Each writer covers a different 5-year period spanning from 1619 to the present. This is an exciting and provocative read, sure to blossom into valuable discussions about race, history and the American experience. Last year, about 400 people signed up to participate in a similar online study group when they read and discussed Nikole Hannah-Jones' book, The 1619 Project. The new group meets virtually starting tonight, Friday evening, Feb. 3, and continues each Friday through March 3. Register to participate live at www.ucityschools.org/400BookStudy.

Black History Celebrations

Our teachers and school leaders celebrate Black History Month in so many creative ways that often include parents and caregivers. Please keep an eye out for emails from your school principals so you don't miss out on events. We've highlighted some of them on our website as well. Also, One U City hosts its annual Spice & Spark chili cook-off and community action expo this Sunday evening, February, 5 at Flynn Park Elementary School. Not only will our families and staff serve up great food, there will be numerous community group tables to learn about important social justice, equity and community improvement initiatives in our region.

Key Dates

Feb. 3 - Kick-off meeting for Four Hundred Souls Virtual Book Study Group, 6-7:30 p.m. Register: www.ucityschools.org/400BookStudy

Feb. 5 - One U City Spice & Spark chili cook-off and social action expo, 4:30-7 p.m. at Flynn Park Elementary School. To participate in the cook-off or volunteer, click here
Feb. 7 - Flynn Park Elementary School Community Engagement Meeting, 5:30-7 p.m. at Flynn Park. Register to attend
Feb. 7 - Jackson Park Elementary School Community Engagement Meeting, 5:30 to 7 p.m. at Jackson Park. Register to attend
Feb. 10: Four Hundred Souls Virtual Book Study Group, 6-7:30 p.m. Register: www.ucityschools.org/400BookStudy
Feb. 16 - SDUC Board of Education Regular Meeting, 7 p.m., McNair Administration Building
Feb. 17 - Early Release Day for staff professional development
Feb. 17 - Four Hundred Souls Virtual Book Study Group, 6-7:30 p.m. Register: www.ucityschools.org/400BookStudy
Feb. 20 - District closed: President's Day
Feb. 22 - Jackson Park Elementary School presents "Fight for Wakanda," 6 p.m. in the University City High School Auditorium. Click here for more information. Tickets may be purchased here through CashApp
Feb. 23 - Barbara C. Jordan Elementary School presents "Resilient: Persevering Through the Decades," 6 to 8 p.m. at BCJ
Feb. 24 - Prospective Employees Speed Networking Event, 5-6:30 p.m. at COCA. Learn more.
Feb 24 - Four Hundred Souls Virtual Book Study Group, 6-7:30 p.m. Register: www.ucityschools.org/400BookStudy
Feb. 27 - Julia Goldstein Early Childhood Education Center Community Engagement Meeting, 5:30-7 p.m. at JG. Register to attend
Feb. 28 - Pershing Elementary School premiers their documentary about influencers that have impacted students' lives, 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Pershing

In Closing

As you can see, February is very busy. I can't wait to see you at these many different events. As always, you may contact me at shardin@ucityschools.org or by cell phone at 314-389-0941.

In Service of Our Children

Sharonica Hardin-Bartley, PHD, PHR
Superintendent

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