



# A MESSAGE FROM DR. MCFARLAND



## Harambee! Let's Pull Together

Oct. 7, 2019

I attended the Tarrant County Harambee Festival this weekend, and it was an awesome celebration of culture, heritage, community and children. The festival originates from Kenya and is a time to come together and be reminded that in order for us to move forward, we must all pull together as a community, a city and a county to work for the common good. I enjoyed the festivities and watched as community leaders and children, young and old, celebrated each other and took pride in our community.

**Harambee is a Swahili word that means, "all pull together."** In Kenya, the concept of harambee evolved because after receiving their independence, the leaders realized that by operating alone, they could do so little. In order to survive and thrive, they needed to work as a community, and collectively, they could do so much more. Whenever there was a project, the community would identify the project and the government would provide seed money, but it was the community that would pull together to make it happen. This spirit of harambee became a part of life in Kenya and remains today. In Kenya, when no schools existed, harambee happened. When no streets to link the townships together were available, harambee happened. The school system, hospitals and all vital aspects of community-building came into play around the concept of harambee.

Developing a school system that works well for all students is no easy task. In Crowley ISD, we have a diverse district with students from around the world, representing 44 different home languages, cultures and values. We have families from all different levels of the economic spectrum with varying levels of educational experience. Our aspiration is to design a system that addresses each individual's needs in real-time and ensures that when they graduate, they are equipped to achieve their full potential. This is our challenge, and it is no easy feat. In order for us to meet the challenge before us, it will take all of us working together, collaborating, communicating and creatively taking action in the spirit of harambee.

I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we have what we need to provide an excellent education for all students. I have enough evidence to prove that point. **We must add a spirit of harambee to the knowledge, skills, talents and abilities that we currently possess.** If we all work together, pull together and focus on taking actions that are best for our students, then we will create a model school district and become the top educational institution in Tarrant County.

In the spirit of harambee,

Mike McFarland

