Superintendent's Website Message
November 2026

Greetings, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Families!

As we turn the page on the calendar to November, I find myself reflecting on the incredible people who make Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools such a special place. Every day, I have the privilege of seeing our students learn, our educators inspire, our staff serve, and our families and community partners support our students in ways that make a lasting difference.

It is this collective commitment to children that makes me so proud to be part of CMS.

Last month, we launched our ***#CMSProud*** initiative, a celebration of the people, programs and accomplishments that make our schools and our community extraordinary. Throughout the year, we'll be sharing stories that highlight the achievements, innovation and heart found across our district. I encourage you to follow our district social media channels and join us in celebrating all the reasons to be ***#CMSProud***.

Families are invited to learn about the many school choice programs and pathways offered across our district at the ***Endless Possibilities Fair*** on November 14. Whether you're exploring choice programs, career pathways or specialized academic offerings, this event showcases the countless ways CMS helps students discover their passions and reach higher.

Additionally, applications for the ***2027-28 School Choice Lottery*** open on November 2. We encourage families to consider the diverse educational options across CMS and find the school setting that best supports their child's interests, talents and future goals.

As we continue through the school year, I also want to emphasize something that has a powerful impact on student success: attendance.

Through our ***Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow*** campaign, we are reminding families that every day in school is an opportunity to learn, grow and build meaningful connections. We understand that illnesses, appointments and other circumstances can

occasionally keep students away from the classroom. When that happens, we are committed to helping students stay engaged through available learning resources and ensuring caregivers know how to document absences so schools can respond with the support students need.

We are especially grateful for partnerships that help remove barriers to attendance and learning. Through our collaboration with Atrium, programs like *Meaningful Medicine* are making a real difference for students and staff.

Atrium's school-based virtual care program provides access to healthcare services at 126 CMS locations, allowing students and staff to connect with a healthcare provider without leaving campus. The school-based virtual therapy program also supports students' emotional well-being at 32 schools by connecting them with licensed therapists during the school day.

Since these services launched in 2022, nearly 25,000 students and staff have utilized them, and approximately 75% of students receiving care have been able to return to class the same day. Those numbers represent more than data points. They represent students receiving the care they need, remaining in the classroom and continuing on their path to success.

As we enter cold and flu season, I encourage everyone to practice healthy habits, including frequent handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when you're sick. Small steps like these help protect our school communities and keep our classrooms healthy and productive.

Report cards for schools following the traditional calendar will be available on November 13, providing families an opportunity to celebrate progress and discuss goals for the months ahead.

With Thanksgiving just around the corner, I want to close with a simple but heartfelt message of gratitude.

Thank you to our students, who inspire us every day with their curiosity, resilience and potential. Thank you to our teachers, principals and staff, whose dedication and care help create endless possibilities for every child. Thank you to our families, whose partnership is essential to student success. And thank you to our community partners and supporters, who continue to invest in the future of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

Together, we are building something remarkable. During this season of Thanksgiving, please know how deeply I appreciate each of you and the role you play in helping our students thrive. I wish you and your loved ones a joyful Thanksgiving filled with peace, gratitude and time spent with those who matter most.

In partnership,

Melissa

Melissa Balknight, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent