

The Executive Director



Photo credit: Beverlie Lord/Satsun Photography

Dear Stokes School Community,

If you are new to our community, welcome to the Stokes family! If you are returning, we look forward to seeing you and your family again soon. We hope that everyone's summer has been enjoyable and that you are all ready for the start of a new school year.

Stokes School's goal is to provide the best educational experience for our scholars. So, in addition to well-deserved rest and relaxation, members of our faculty and staff have been working during the summer to prepare for the new school year. To better serve our scholars and families, we have participated in several workshops, trainings and professional development activities to enhance our knowledge and sharpen our skills. As the summer break comes to an end, we are prepared to start the new school year and are eager to partner with families as we journey together through 2017-18.

In preparation for the new school year, we want to share a few updates and reminders with you:

20 Year Anniversary

The 2017-18 school year marks the 20th anniversary of Stokes Schools' operation. We first opened our doors in 1998 with 35 kindergarten and 1st grade scholars in the basement of St. Stephens Church in Columbia Heights. Two decades later we have grown to 350 students in Pre-K through 5th grade – and we are actively planning for additional growth. It is an honor and a privilege to continue the work of educating a diverse group of students in the District of Columbia to become leaders, scholars and responsible citizens who are committed to social justice. We plan to celebrate this anniversary and our accomplishments throughout the school year and will commemorate with various activities and festivities. Details of all celebratory activities will be communicated as they approach.

School Replication

During the summer break the DC Public Charter School Board approved Stokes School's charter amendment application to replicate our program on an additional school site. We are planning to open a second campus in school year 2018-19 with 140 Pre-K and kindergarten students. We have identified a site that is east of the Anacostia River where we hope to locate. Work will continue in the 2017-18 school year to secure the second school site, meet with educators, community members and leaders east of the river, recruit students and hire staff for the new location. There will be opportunities for families and staff in our Brookland school community to participate in preparing for the second campus if interested. Details of these opportunities will be communicated as they approach.

Instructional Initiatives

Our major instructional initiative continues to be our transition to the IB/PYP - International Baccalaureate/Primary Years Programme. During the 2017-18 school year instructional staff will teach all six units of inquiry. You will receive information about these units as the school year gets underway. We also have a few additional educational initiatives that we will introduce during the school year. Details of these initiatives will be included in an upcoming news post about parent feedback.

Staffing Updates

As communicated at the end of last school year, several members of our staff have moved away from Stokes School and on to new adventures. Other staff members have transitioned to new positions within the building and we will have several new faces among our staff this school year.

Staff who have left Stokes School - We will miss them!

Ms. Kelly Anderson, 5th Grade Teacher
Mr. Ryan Carey, 2nd Grade French Teacher
Ms. Diandra Dalson, Coordinator of Specialized Supports
Mr. Ben Frey 4th Grade Teacher

Dr. Maura Varley Gutierrez, Director of Teaching and Learning
Mme. Annyck Hamez, 4th Grade French Teacher
Sra. Luz Pelaez Lopez, 2nd Grade Teacher

Staff who have transitioned to new roles at Stokes School – Congratulations!

Ms. Abby Sondak, Former Development & Communications	New Communications and Student Success Coordinator
Sra. Carina Caballero, Former 1 st Grade Spanish Teacher -	New Learning Specialist
Sra. Constanza Rosas, Former 4 th Spanish Teacher -	New Director of Teaching of Learning
Mr. Everett Richardson, Former Learning Specialist -	New Special Education/504/SST Coordinator
Ms. Fresia Cortes, Former Operations Manager	New Director of Operations

Staff who are new Stokes School – Welcome!

Sra. Maria Cecelia Carpio, 2 nd Grade Spanish Teacher	Mme. Julie Leogal, 2 nd Grade French Teacher
Ms. Jessie Coala, 4 th Grade English Teacher	Ms. Julie Prieto, 1 st Grade Spanish Teacher
Mme. Rebecca Courouble, ECE Instructional Coach	Ms. Aly Raphael, 5 th Grade English teacher
Mme. Yolie Gilet-Regal, 4 th Grade French Teacher	Ms. Margarita Robledo, 4 th Grade Spanish Teacher

Home Visits

Stokes School faculty and staff participate in home visits to learn about our scholars and their families, answer any questions that families may have and to develop a strong relationship with our families. Teachers have already begun to reach out to families over the summer and will continue to do so early in the school year. We will work with families to schedule these visits at times and locations that are most convenient for families. Last school year, we reached 71% of our families with home visits and we are looking forward to reaching and exceeding that goal next year.

Parent Feedback

We hear you! We have reviewed and analyzed all of the wonderful feedback provided by parents in our end of year parent survey. We will share some important take-aways from this feedback on our website very soon. Stay tuned!

Reminders

Don't forget to check the Stokes School website (www.ewstokes.org) for more detailed descriptions of IB/PYP, our school calendar, supply lists by grade and any important announcements over the summer. We have also included paper copies of the school calendar and supply lists with this letter.

We look forward to seeing you on the first day of school, August 28th for K-5th grade students and August 29th for Pre-K students. In addition, we will hold a Family Orientation on August 24th at 5pm where all (but especially new) families are invited to get to know other families, faculty and staff, learn about first day procedures, daily drop-off and pick-up procedures, important policy reminders, and get a brief curricular overview. There will also be a special presentation for parents of rising 2nd graders at 5:45pm on August 24th in the library to discuss the language model shift that takes place between 1st and 2nd grades at Stokes School and to provide an overview of some approaches to teaching math as students start working with bigger numbers.

Take care and enjoy the last few weeks of the summer break!

Best regards,



Erika Bryant
Executive Director