

## Believe to Achieve

Halifax County Schools is committed to increasing student awareness about themselves and their community. We have a slogan in Halifax County Schools "Strive for five." You may have seen our children walking around in the community with this slogan on a tee shirt. On the back, we have five affirmations: I matter to myself, I matter to my family, I matter to my school, I matter to my community, and finally, I matter to the world.

You see, affirmations help to clear and purify our thoughts and restructure how our brains think so that we truly begin to believe nothing is impossible. The word comes from the Latin affirmare, originally meaning "to make steady, strengthen."

I have learned that you have set yourself up for a breakthrough when you set your intention every day. So much has happened this past year, and we have lost so much. But when you look into the eyes of a young child, you see hope. Just watch them play outside or be on the bus when they first arrive at school. They are filled with hope and excitement about today. Halifax County Schools has worked hard to ensure that every child receives a sound basic education. By doing so, they are tapping into their inner strength and increasing their value.

In today's competitive world, you have to remain steadfast, immovable, and focused on the goal of being better than you were yesterday. I can say with confidence that this school system has exceeded this goal. When we recognize that everyone matters, we can crush what divides us and build anew. I learned this vital role while playing basketball. Athletics taught me that everyone plays a part, and one person cannot do it all. It takes the entire team to play in harmony to win. When you look at great teams across our nation and state, you wonder in amazement how a group can work together as one to win big. We are attracted to it. Why? Because we love harmony and trust. Everyone plays a role, and everyone has value.

Today our children are growing. Yes, we have lost some ground due to this pandemic. But what we did not lose is our resolve. We are even more dedicated to our mission, and we are working tirelessly with our partners across our state and county to recover what we lost and build something new. I foresee our children contributing to the richness of our county and state. I see our children making a difference and recognizing that they bring value to the table. Each person must prepare daily for their name to be called. You only get one shot, so be ready. By focusing and setting your intention daily, you are actively preparing for your name to be called. Our mission in the school system is to prepare our students for that one shot. You do not know when it will happen, but you have to be ready for it because it will. I know this to be true. So many failures in our lives have taught us all a lesson. I may fall, but as long as there is a breath in my body, I will rise again and again.

This is the lighthouse mentality. Your light is your strength, and together, when we combine them, we illuminate the sky, and people all across the county will see and join. It is happening. I see businesses coming to our county, innovative learning centers, new developments, joining their superpowers, and shining their light together. I am proud of what we are doing. I am grateful for what we have done together. Please join in, and let's build something new.