Dear Families,

We have had a terrific start to the school year. This year we are all about every minute counts. Students are in classrooms learning and focused on increasing achievement. This is a great accomplishment given that it is the second week of school. I really appreciate that most of our students are in uniform most days. As you probably know we have uniforms in place to make things calmer at school and easier for families. Our attendance is at 92%. We are on our way to getting to our goal of 95%. And so far we haven’t had any major discipline incidences. Thank you so much for your help in making these things possible. If you have any questions about our uniform, attendance, or discipline policies, just call our main office for a new copy of the student handbook. It definitely takes a village and we are glad you are part of it!

Here are some hard truths we have to talk about. Our school is 98% African American. 60% of black males who don’t graduate from high school end up incarcerated. That’s just one statistic. The new steel factory is hiring but they require a high school diploma. The starting wage is $17 per hour – a lot higher than McDonalds. We have to make sure our middle school students make it to high school ready to be successful. Last year we made 17% gains in reading and 14% in math. This is really great and put us on the map. We still only have 43% of our students at grade level in reading and 32% in math. We are committed to helping all of our students grow so that they are ready for high school and a bright future.

One of the main things I need to do to help our students – your child! – is to be in classrooms where learning takes place. My role is to help teachers as well as be there to add extra help for students that need it. I am putting a schedule into place to make this happen. I also understand that there will be times when you need to talk with someone at school about a concern or situation with your child. Please know that I will be available with office hours from 12:00-1:00 every day. I set this time because I know that is when many of you have a lunch break and might want to stop by or call. I will also be available from 4:00-4:30. My secretary will be happy to set up appointments for you. In case that doesn’t work for you, please know that you can also speak with the assistant principals or the counselors. Our whole team is here to help!

Sincerely,