



September 6, 2016

Dear Lake Taylor Middle School Community:

It is a distinct honor and privilege to return to Lake Taylor Middle School and serve in the role of principal. I fully recognize the importance of all that has been entrusted to myself, the administrative team, the teachers, staff, and support personnel. For me personally, this appointment is truly a dream come true. I am humbled and grateful for this opportunity.

Our mission at Lake Taylor Middle School goes like this: *Our mission at Lake Taylor Middle School is to increase student achievement and transform our image in the community by emphasizing meaningful relationships, curriculum alignment, engaging and data-driven instruction, positive citizenship, and stakeholder involvement in order to create a caring community of lifelong learning for students and teachers.* That sounds like a lot, and it is. But if we all pull together, students, parents, community partners, teachers, staff, bus drivers, custodians, paraprofessionals, administrators, and all those who would help us, if we all pull together and work to emphasize these strategies, then I know from personal experience we can all achieve great levels of success!

I have been an educator with Norfolk Public Schools since 1996. I have served as a teacher and reading specialist at Rosemont Middle School, department chair and administrative team member at Northside Middle, instructional specialist at Blair Middle, and dean of students at Lafayette-Winona Middle. In 2007, I became assistant principal right here at Lake Taylor Middle School and helped to support the first attainment of full accreditation in school history. Since then, I have also worked as an assistant principal at Blair and Ruffner.

I graduated from Wheaton North High School, home of the Mighty Fighting Falcons, in Wheaton, Illinois. After earning a Bachelor of Science in English degree from Southern Illinois University, my first job in education was as a substitute teacher at Ferguson-Florissant High School in Ferguson, Missouri. This past May, I finally completed my formal education, graduating from George Washington University with a Doctoral degree in educational administration and policy studies. The main thing I learned was that if we pull together as a team, understand that our work comes first, and we apply feedback and build on success, there is very little we can't accomplish.

Speaking of team, we have new faculty and staff to welcome to Lake Taylor Middle School for the 2016/2017 school. Our new assistant principal is Ms. Melvin, coming to us by way of Booker T. Washington High School. We have new teachers as well: Mr. Inderlied for Spanish, Ms. Murray teaching chorus, Ms. Boyd for HPE, Mr. Polidori teaching Latin, and Mr. Ingraham and Ms. Hogan join us as full faculty as well. Please be sure to give these folks a warm welcome when you see or talk to them.

If you ever have any questions or would like to call the school, our number is 892-3230. I hope everyone has a great beginning to the school year, and I look forward to meeting and working with each of you.

Respectfully,

James M. Kirk
Dr. James M. Kirk
Principal