LITTLE ROCK
SCHOOL DISTRICT

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

August, 15, 2024

Mr. Michael Mason
President, LRSD School Board
Little Rock School District
Little Rock, AR 72201

Subject: Letter of Resignation

Dear President Mason,

A sincere "Thank You" to the Little Rock School District School Board for providing me the opportunity to serve as superintendent of the historic Little Rock School District (LRSD). It has been an honor and a privilege to work alongside the board and staff to usher in significant changes in district operations all geared towards student outcomes.

I remain proud that my leadership in the district has been branded and associated with an unwavering focus on teaching, learning, and instructional leadership. In two years, we have been able to accomplish the following:

- Extended the elementary school day to allow dedicated time for science and social studies instruction, a key component of the science of reading knowledge building process.
- Elevated and dedicated additional resources to address early literacy gaps resulting in 76% of students receiving intervention closing Kindergarten level skill gaps and 64% of students closing Grade 1 level skill gaps.
- Doubled the percentage of K-2 intervention students meeting grade level benchmarks and tripled the percentage of 1st graders meeting grade level benchmarks from the beginning of the year to the end of the year on the NWEA MAP assessment.
- Decreased the percentage of schools with an "F" grade by 25% in one year.
- Increased the number of schools where students are meeting or exceeding expected growth in reading and math by 17% in one year.
- Implemented interim assessments in 2023-24 which resulted in a significant increase (average of +11.3%) in ELA in ALL tested grade levels (grades 3-10) and an average increase of +6% in math in grades 3-7, Algebra I, and Geometry.
- Increased the percentage of elementary students meeting or exceeding grade level standards in math by 7.4% and in reading by .5% on the 2023 state assessment.

- Increased the percentage of elementary students meeting growth targets in math by 3% and in reading by 10% on the 2023 state assessment.
- Increased the percentage of secondary students meeting growth targets in reading by 19% on the 2023 state assessment.
- Achieved the highest four-year graduation rate (81%) since 2017.
- Changed middle school scheduling resulting in middle schoolers receiving ELA, math, and science instruction every day versus every other day.
- Implemented a tiered school support plan in the 2023-24 school year which:
    - Created three school networks each managed by an Assistant Superintendent with one network solely focused on the district's priority schools (schools experiencing chronic and sustained underperformance).
    - Eliminated multiple central office roles and created multiple network support roles and school-based support roles, moving support directly to the school level versus the central office level.
    - Added additional reading intervention teachers to priority elementary schools.
    - Partnered with Relay, UnboundEd, and Schoolkit for ongoing comprehensive instructional leadership development for Assistant Superintendents, Principals, Assistant Principals, Instructional Lead Teachers, Teachers, and Network Partners.
    - Provided financial incentives for effective teachers and leaders to work and remain in the district's priority schools.
    - Provided financial incentives to all school staff (certified and classified) in schools who met school-wide growth goals.

In addition to academic outcomes accomplished, I am also proud of operational progress achieved during my administration. Some examples include:

- Implemented a new student registration system resulting in a more efficient and family-friendly enrollment process and a significant decrease in parent complaints.
- Created the role of Ombudsman, realigned, and increased parental engagement staff which has significantly increased response time and resolution of parent concerns.
- Completed a comprehensive and robust community driven process that will result in a finalized five-year student-centered strategic plan in the fall of 2025.
- Provided stakeholders increased access, transparency, and input in addressing district priority issues (i.e., budget reductions, principal selection process, task force engagement, etc.).
- Engineered the "OptimizingLRSD" process which utilized ideas and suggestions from the LRSD community to inform school closure and consolidation recommendations and other actions to address an expected $16 million dollar budget deficit in fiscal year 2025.

- Applied and received over $18 million dollars in federal grants to replace diesel buses with electric buses which will result in LRSD having the largest electric school bus operation in the South.
- Rebranded and modernized district communication tools and strategies.
- Recognized nationally and locally as a school district which prioritizes safety, security, and health utilizing the latest technologies to ensure school-safe environments and having 100% of schools CRP and AED certified.

Therefore, it is with mixed emotions that I offer my resignation as superintendent of the Little Rock School District. With all that has been accomplished and all that remains to be done, it is critical that the LRSD Board of Education employ a superintendent whose leadership style, priorities, and core values align with the direction and actions of the school board. This is the only way the LRSD can flourish.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve the LRSD community. I have learned and grown immensely as an individual and as a professional and remain sincerely grateful for the opportunity provided to me by this board.

Sincerely,

Jermall D. Wright, Ed.D.
Superintendent