



William R. Hite, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

September 15, 2009

Dear Students of Prince George's County Public Schools,

On last Tuesday, President Barack Obama delivered a speech to the students of America encouraging you to focus on your education, study hard, set your goals, and create possibilities for yourself and for your country. Today, I am asking that you embrace this challenge as only a proud Prince George's County Public Schools student can.

During the 2008-2009 school year, the state of Maryland was voted number one in the country for public education. The students of Prince George's County Public Schools were largely responsible for that honor. Because of your increased test scores and progress with closing the achievement gap among our diverse demographic groups, we have shown this country that we are capable of excellence and are proving it every day. Our work, however, is not yet done. We must continue to create opportunities for ourselves and those that will follow. Now is the time for you to increase your dedication to yourself and your education. Take those rigorous courses that are going to challenge you. Run for student government or join that academic or sports club in your school. Become a leader for you and for your community. Invest in yourself, because you are worth it!

I want to thank you, individually and collectively, for being supportive and understanding during the first week of school while we experienced scheduling issues in our high schools and some of our middle schools. I extend my sincere apologies, as the Superintendent and leader of this school district, to those of you that were impacted by this unfortunate occurrence. We are continuing our work to determine exactly what happened with the schedules, and will report the findings to you and your families as soon as they are available.

I did hear from many of you who did not have schedules, but refused to allow it to deter you from receiving your education. It is your right, as an American citizen, to receive a quality public education. It is our job to ensure that you receive it every day that you sit in one of our classrooms.

As President Obama said in his speech Tuesday, we can have the most dedicated teachers, the most supportive parents, and the best schools in the world -- and none of it will matter unless you fulfill your responsibilities by showing up in school, paying attention to your teachers, listening to your parents, grandparents, guardians, and other adults, and putting in the hard work it takes to succeed.

We look forward to the increased levels of learning and achievement that you will reach this year. Regardless of where you live in Prince George's County, your academic well-being is at the center of every decision we make. *You are* our first priority. We expect great success from you throughout this school year.

What matters is now! Who matters is you! We are America's Classroom!

Sincerely,

William R. Hite
Superintendent of Schools