With the conclusion of the 2018-19 school year, I am excited to reflect on the progress over this past year and look towards the future as I assume the role of Chief Executive Officer. I am honored to have been selected by County Executive Angela Alsobrooks for a permanent term and will utilize the knowledge gained over the past year to further improve our school system.

While serving as Interim CEO, I heard your success stories and the challenges you’ve faced as students, parents and community members navigating our school system. As we strive to maintain a culture of transparency, accountability and academic excellence, please know the work done to date is only the beginning.

Through open lines of communication, we will continue to keep you abreast of our goals and initiatives as we embark on the upcoming school year and beyond. The needs of our neighborhood schools and communities are at the core of our decision-making. Next year we will invest additional funds and resources across the school system, with a focus on low-performing schools, prekindergarten expansion and increased mental health supports. It is my privilege to work every day towards building a system of schools that fulfill the promise of academic excellence for all students.

Thank you for your continued support and the opportunity to deliver greatness for our children daily. Please keep our students engaged through summer reading programs and other activities. I look forward to continuing a powerful dialogue about our future as we strive daily to instill PGCPS pride across the county.

Truly yours,

Monica Goldson, Ed.D.
Interim Chief Executive Officer
Prince George's County Public Schools

From Top: Dr. Goldson greeting students at Tulip Grove Elementary on the first day of school; Dr. Goldson greets residents at Starbucks during her inaugural Mornings with Monica meeting; Dr. Goldson has lunch with students at Dr. Henry A. Wise Jr. High School.
A YEAR OF PROGRESS

Learning from the past and actively engaging the community, we set high standards of accountability and began implementing long-overdue changes.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS: Curriculum and instruction became a renewed focus in all professional development. Assisted schools in analyzing data and setting academic priorities through the creation of School Performance Plans.
- **State Rating System**: Over 80 percent of schools achieved the top three ratings in the new state accountability system.
- **Graduation Audit**: PGCPS took important steps to improve confidence in our diplomas and accuracy in grading by fully implementing 28 recommendations from the recent audit, leading to praise from MSDE.
- **FY2020 Budget Request**: We prioritized lower class size and school safety in our $2.1 billion operating budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2020.
- **PGCPS SAT Day**: All high school juniors took the SAT during the school day to reduce barriers that prohibit students from taking this important test in preparation for college admissions.
- **Teacher Advisory Council**: Created an 18-member team of educators to review and discuss ways to improve communication and program implementation.
- **Dual Enrollment**: Increased dual enrollment opportunities by offering satellite sites for student access and creating teacher fellows to allow school staff to serve as community college staff at evening satellite sites.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Strengthened our policies and procedures, establishing an environment that ensures integrity at every level. Created an employee code of conduct to hold everyone to the same standard.
- **Establishing a Culture of Accountability**: Created an office that manages and supports transparent accountability measures throughout PGCPS, leading to more efficient operations and higher student achievement. Hired Ethics Compliance Officer to ensure appropriate follow-up and follow-through of all audits and referrals to outside agencies.
- **Reorganization of Employee and Labor Relations Office**: Created progressive discipline model to reduce the number of employees on extended administrative leave.
- **Data Analysis**: Created school, office and district performance indicators to monitor student growth and organizational effectiveness.
- **School Safety Check**: Deployed central office staff for unannounced school visits to test security and safety protocols.
- **OLA Financial Management Audit**: Implemented immediate changes to address longstanding problems with district procurement processes; requested external forensic audit of sole source contracts and moved the Office of Procurement to outside control.
TRANSPARENCY: Reformed business operations for greater openness and transparency, proactive communications and timely resolution of various challenges. When issues arise, our full PGcps team, including principals, must respond within 48 hours.

- Increased School Communication: Utilized existing resources (community e-blasts, social media channels, robocall system) to provide immediate information to parents and families regarding school incidents and district-wide matters.

- Compensation Restoration Task Force: Organized task force to assess need for restorative pay increases and provide comprehensive salary assessment compared to neighboring school districts and others of similar size and demographics. Provided longevity salary increases for 8,300 eligible employees, totaling $46.5 million over three years, based on findings and fiscal management.

- Central Office Reorganization: Reorganized central office yielded savings of $2.4 million, which was redirected to schools. Reallocated staff to create more efficiencies in resources.

- Online Information: Increased the number of publicly available documents for community review, including reports on internal and external audit findings and air quality assessments.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Provided opportunities for neighborhood meetings with families and community members. Offering multiple points of access for public input on PGcps direction, and increased avenues for business partnerships with PGcps.

- Listening Sessions: Engaged employees, parents and community members in sharing concerns and influencing next steps for improvement.

- Adopt-A-School Program: Revamped program to better align business resources with desired school and community outcomes. Increased opportunities for businesses to provide in-kind or financial resources to enhance local schools and provide ladders to success for students.

- 20,000 Meal Challenge: Established fundraising campaign during the federal government shutdown to provide hot meals to students in need. Outpouring of support allowed school system to exceed our goal, providing thousands of meals.

- Community Newsletters: Established suite of customized newsletters for families and employees, keeping each group abreast of events and activities to better serve community.

2018-2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

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<tr>
<th>September</th>
<th>First Day of School – Announced new program investments and opening of new Tulip Grove Elementary School Passport to Success Expo with Wanda Durant, mother of NBA star Kevin Durant – Workshops for parents and students, featuring 35 colleges, government agencies and local businesses</th>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Community Listening Sessions launched – Interim CEO held sessions with families, employees and residents Central Office reorganization – $2.4 million redirected to schools Compensation Restoration Task Force – Meetings began with labor partners and county government representatives to address longstanding salary gaps</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>Excellence in Education Foundation giving season – Donations from key partners and one-day fundraising drive Alumni Website launched – <a href="http://www.pgcps.org/alumni">www.pgcps.org/alumni</a> Maryland School Report Cards and Star Ratings – More than 80 schools received top three ratings Graduation rates audit results announced – Results showed system-wide improvements and helped establish goals for further progress Fiscal Year 2020 budget proposed to the Board of Education JP Morgan Chase 50H ‘New Skills for Youth’ Grant announced – New information technology career pathways through certifications, internships Maryland Blue Ribbon School Award for Glenarden Woods Elementary Dr. Alvin Thornton appointed as Board of Education Chair</td>
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<td>December</td>
<td>10K Meals Challenge – More than $50,000 raised to cover school meal costs for students from families impacted by government shutdown The Durant Center opens – $31 million facility opens in Suitland to guide high school students through graduation State Board of Education presentation and commendations on graduation rate audit improvements New Excellence in Gifted and Talented Education (EGATE) awards – Capitol Heights, Glenarden Woods, Longfield, Montpelier and Vanaslie Elementary Legislative Day in Annapolis – Dr. Goldson met with state legislators to discuss PGcps priorities</td>
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<td>January</td>
<td>Board of Education Approves Proposed Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Employee Code of Conduct released – First of its kind document laying the foundation for the standards all staff will be held</td>
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Over the past year, I frequently met with state lawmakers on behalf of PGCPS to advocate for the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, a proposed $750 million statewide education investment with more than $53 million coming to Prince George’s County. From there, our administration developed the Blueprint for PGCPS — a detailed plan on how this critical funding will be invested across the school system, with a focus on low-performing schools, prekindergarten expansion and increased mental health supports.

In store for the 2019-20 school year:

- **High-Needs Schools**: Schools with high numbers of students living in poverty need additional supports to ensure they reach their highest potential. We will expand our wraparound services at 45 schools to provide additional health care practitioners, social workers, counselors, extended learning programs, transportation and other initiatives based on school needs to improve college and career readiness.

- **Pre-K Expansion**: More families deserve the opportunity to give their young learners a strong foundation. By expanding access to full-day prekindergarten at nine schools and launching a universal pre-K pilot at 17 schools, we will continue our push to make high-quality prekindergarten more accessible.

- **Mental Health Services**: Too many students are distracted and overwhelmed by personal and family issues. We are providing additional funding to 45 high-needs schools for certified mental health therapists. The PGCPS Mental Health Coordinator will guide staff through mental health first aid training so anyone trusted with caring for a child can do so effectively.

- **Employee Compensation**: While working through the economic downturn, numerous cost-savings strategies were used to limit the impact on students and schools, including a “freeze” on employee salary increases from 2009 to 2012. In recognition of staff sacrifices, we are offering a restorative salary increase to all employees who lost steps during the downturn, yet remained with the school system. This action is a step forward in recruiting and retaining the best employees.

- **Supporting Students with Individualized Educational Programs**: In some cases, students with disabilities require individualized instruction to prepare them for college, the workplace, community and beyond. We will make new investments in programs that support these students, with a focus on the full implementation of individualized educational programs (IEPs) and 504 plans in addition to system-wide training for teachers on compliance and student supports.

- **Support for Students Struggling with Reading**: Students who are not reading at grade level often fall behind in other subjects. Our new digital literacy program focuses on evidence-based strategies, including one-on-one tutoring, peer tutoring, screening and addressing literacy deficits, and new technology for kindergarten through third grade students at more than 50 schools.