



# Transparency for Trust

## A Common Sense Approach

*Dr. Scott V. Nicol, Superintendent of Schools*  
*August 2022*

I believe parents should tell their children that they love them. They should do this often with intention and substance. Implying love isn't enough to ensure a bond of trust.

Abraham Lincoln once stated, *"The people when rightly and fully trusted will return the trust."* Without the trust of parents, the Ellington Public Schools would only exist in name. This public institution would cease to effectively serve the children and their families of Ellington. In other words, there wouldn't be an Ellington Family.

Yet, the Ellington Family does exist and in fact, thrives. Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, the Ellington Board of Education and staff took a common sense approach thereby strengthening the collective trust of our family. Instead of leading with fear, like some institutions across our great country, we led with hope, optimism, thoughtfulness, love and yes, transparency.

In the winter of 2021 I wrote to you a message entitled, [In like a Lion, Out Like a Lamb](#). The message may be summarized with the following quote:

*The Ellington Family is highly imperfect—at times, messy—but that, as humans, is what makes us so perfect. Our family celebrates progress valuing the perspective and experiences of all, even when we are uncomfortable and might not fully understand. The Ellington Family honors free will, recognizing that an individual's free will shall not infringe upon the rights of others. Progress at the expense of one over another isn't progress at all.*

Ellington's common sense approach is predicated by honoring the voices of all. Do you remember the [August 2021 Board of Education meeting](#)? I vividly remember the tension and fear in the room and am proud of all who attended, especially those parents who spoke during public comment regardless of their position on the issues. How have the voices of those who spoke at that meeting aged, whether it be today or ten years from now? This is for each individual of the Ellington Family to decide. The opening of a transparent window of opportunity, supported by the [Seeds of Civility](#), for each other to understand, consider, and partner with trust is the foundation of our approach. It was a moment in time for common sense—despite the fear—for members of the Ellington Family to exercise their free will while honoring their neighbors.

*Transparency for Trust: A Common Sense Approach* will continue as messaged in this [WFSB Channel 3 back to school interview](#). No doubt, for the 2022-2023 school year, the Ellington Family will be more explicit in our endeavors because implying love isn't enough to ensure a bond of trust.

### **A Return to School - Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup>**

As the school year begins, we remind parents and staff of the feedback you provided last Spring. This feedback is very encouraging as to the experiences parents and their children are having at EPS. To increase transparency, we have developed a web page where all survey questions and results will be archived starting with the Spring 2022 survey.

### **Biannual Survey Results - Spring 2022**

EPS has developed a web page regarding our emotional intelligence initiative. Being piloted at Windermere Elementary for the 2022-2023 school year, our goal is to ensure a school culture that challenges and inspires students, sets high standards for academic rigor, and supports students in reaching their full potential. In order for students to succeed academically we need to help them learn strategies, in alignment to those modeled by their parents, to respond to both emotional and social school-based situations.

The web page will evolve as the school year progresses and will include resources utilized by teachers, presentations to the Board of Education, and various communications to ensure parents have access to their childrens' education.

### **To Focus on Academics: Emotions Matter**

### **New Members of the Ellington Family: 2022-2023**

We welcome our newly hired Ellington Public Schools Director of Athletics and Wellness, Anderson Rawlings. Of note, this will be the first school year that the district will have a dedicated full-time athletic director. In past years, this position has been part-time.

### **Press Release - Mr. Anderson Rawlings, Director of Athletics and Wellness**

As the Ellington Public Schools average approximately twenty new teacher hires annually, this is an outlier year aligning with state-wide trends in which EPS is welcoming twenty-nine new teachers. They range from being highly experienced to just starting out in their careers, yet they are all on a mission to enrich the lives of Ellington children.

We also welcome all of our new paraprofessionals and other support staff throughout the school district. Their service is invaluable.

### **Biographies of Newly Hired Teachers**

As we lift each other up, with sincere peace and love to you all, may the 2022-2023 school year be filled with common sense, transparency and trust.