



June 9, 2011

Dear MPS Families,

Our last day of classes for most schools is Wednesday, June 15, and for year-round schools, it is June 21. Before we hear the final bells of the school year, I wanted to share a few thoughts with you, and suggest some resources too.

Thank you for entrusting your child to MPS. We worked hard this year on reading skills. In your child's school, that most likely meant whole blocks of reading time along with small group instruction. I hope your son or daughter told you about this, or at the very least, has begun reading more at home. Next school year, we will add a similar focus on mathematics and science. We also spent a lot of time this school year building positive environments in our schools through our PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) program. This summer, it will be great to see our children using what they learned in school about respect, sharing and making good choices in daily life. I ask you to hold your children accountable for their behaviors. After all, you are their most important role model.

Our School Board has now passed a budget for next school year. The state cuts to funding for public education forced us to make some drastic choices, including the elimination of almost 1,000 staff positions. It is likely that some of the teachers your child knows by name will not be with MPS next school year. I am sorry to have to say that. But, at the same time I promise you we will be ready to open the school doors again in just a couple of short months.

The battle for funding for schools is not over. There will be more challenges next year. We need you to speak out, if you can. I get the feeling that some families may have decided that this is not their issue, or that decisions have already been made. But there is a real threat to the continuation of public schools as we know them. Remember the words of education advocate Marian Wright Edelman, who said, "A lot of people are waiting for Martin Luther King or Mahatma Gandhi to come back - but they are gone. We are it. It is up to us. It is up to you."

I hope you have a great summer with your family. Stay safe, be active, read with the kids and enjoy all this city has to offer. Please visit our web site at www.milwaukee.k12.wi.us for recommended reading lists, the school supply list, school calendars and bell schedules for the coming year. Please follow us on Twitter [@MilwaukeeMPS](https://twitter.com/MilwaukeeMPS) and look for our fan page on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/MilwaukeeMPS). I am always looking for new ways to better communicate with all of our families. If you have not already done so, please update your school contact information to include your text number and email address. It is vital that we have ways to keep you in the loop with school information.

We will be here, getting schools ready for your children's return. On behalf of the Board of School Directors, MPS Administration and *all* the professionals who make up MPS, I assure you that we will be ready to welcome your children when they come back to us for a new school year. Please stay safe! Traditional calendar schools reopen September 1; year-round schools are back in session August 1, and the IB schools start on August 17.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Thornton".

Gregory E. Thornton, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools