Summer 2019 Principal's Message

Whether it’s 100 degrees outside or pouring rain, we are still working hard at IDEA, all summer long!

We are finishing up our successful summer school, attended by 70 scholars who brought motivation and focus to their studies, intent on mastering subjects they struggled with during the school year. Thanks to our dedicated teachers and to our hardworking students for giving it your all this summer. Two members of the class of 2019—Malik Barnes and Anthony Crump—have fulfilled their graduation requirements and will participate in the DC Public Schools Rainbow Graduation ceremony in August.

Our video game design and coding partner TAG Labs led a two-week programming boot camp at IDEA this summer. With a grant from Apple, TAG Labs instructors are teaching scholars Swift, which is Apple’s programming language, so they can collaborate on building an app for Apple’s app competition. Rising 10th grader Zaria Etheridge, who completed TAG Labs introductory game design and coding class last year, is working this summer as an intern for TAG Labs and helping lead the boot camp.

Next Thursday, July 25, we invite rising 9th graders and their families to come to IDEA for a meet and greet with teachers and classmates. We will hold two sessions—8:30am–9:30am and 3pm–4pm—for incoming freshmen to learn about what it means to be a high school student and how to prepare. We will also provide an overview of our summer bridge program for all 9th graders, coming up August 5–9. All families who attend our meet and greet on July 25 will receive free tickets to that night’s Washington Nationals game!

A group of IDEA juniors and seniors will be spending part of their summer learning how to mentor younger scholars as part of our new Peer Group Connection program. This year freshmen will be connected with trained peer mentors in small groups to help them navigate the social, emotional, and academic challenges of high school. Several staff members are also attending Peer Group Connection workshops so we can effectively support our scholar mentors and mentees throughout the school year.

We still have a few spots available for incoming 9th, 10th, and 11th graders for this school year! Now is the time to enroll to secure your seat in the classroom. Current IDEA scholars who refer friends or family members who enroll at IDEA will receive a $250 reward! Contact the main office at 202.399.4750 or visit our website to learn more.

Yours,
Looking back to last September, it is extraordinary to recognize how far we have come. Our scholars have grown academically, socially, and emotionally. In addition to strengthening our core competencies in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies, we have enriched our community and expanded our scholars’ view of the world in a variety of ways. Together we have learned about international diplomacy through Model United Nations; exemplified service through the National Honor Society; learned about urban agriculture, cooking, and nutrition by growing fresh produce; cultivated honey by creating a rooftop beehive; honed carpentry skills while building birdhouses, sheds, bookcases, picnic tables, and doghouses; and so much more!

Today we especially celebrate the class of 2019, as its hardworking and dedicated members receive their diplomas and prepare for the next stage of their journeys. All of our graduates have received college acceptances, and several have military commissions and professional opportunities awaiting them. We are confident that their time at IDEA will help them wherever the future may take them.

This June also marks another goodbye at IDEA. After 20 years of instilling the values and skills of leadership, discipline, and teamwork, our US Army JROTC unit will be disestablished because of decreasing enrollment and limited availability of qualified, committed instructors. Battalion leaders and cadets from IDEA’s JROTC unit have gained confidence, commitment to the community, and a greater understanding of what it means to serve others. Our cadets have supported the Deanwood and Ward 7 communities as well as the entire District of Columbia through community service and ceremonial events. Our Color Guard has won several awards and our unit received a 94% in our 2018 Accreditation inspection. Many of our cadets have gone on to have successful military careers and some have returned to IDEA to inspire current cadets. JROTC was foundational to the growth and development of our school, and we will always honor this history and our connection to the United States military. We will continue to support scholars who are interested in JROTC through partnerships with other DC schools.

In recent years, IDEA has created outstanding avenues to career and technical education, including our popular Academy of Construction and Design, our growing Child Development Associate program, and our new computer programming courses in partnership with TAG Labs. We are committed to meeting the needs of our scholars to encourage their aspirations and help them prepare for a variety of professions.

In the meantime, IDEA will continue to refine our practices over the summer. We look forward to engaging our teachers and staff in targeted workshops geared toward improving teaching
techniques and strengthening our school’s systems and processes. We will be holding summer school for credit recovery and we will welcome incoming ninth graders for a week in August for our summer bridge program to help them acclimate to the culture and demands of high school. At IDEA as scholars and staff we are constantly learning, growing, and improving together.

We are grateful for the support of our families, neighbors, volunteers, and community members whose time and energy are vital to our success. While we are already planning another amazing school year, we hope everyone will have a chance to relax and recharge and enjoy the summer.

Thank you again for your support of IDEA.

Yours,
Nicole McCrae
Principal

May 2019 Principal's Message

It’s hard to believe the end of the school year is already so close at hand! While graduation is on the horizon, we are not slowing down yet. The final few weeks of school are just as important as the first few.

This month many of our scholars have completed PARCC standardized tests, with other scholars still to take them. All of our scholars will be taking MAP assessments by the end of the month, and we look forward to sharing great news about our scholars’ growth in English and Math by the end of the school year.

We still have three more Saturday school sessions available for scholars to receive extra help. Those who attend 10 Saturday school sessions by the end of the year will receive IDEA swag, and those who attend 20 sessions will be eligible for a fun trip.

We are proud of our scholars who have rededicated themselves to on-time attendance every day. Excellent attendance gives scholars the best possible chance of success, and every day of school matters. Scholars are learning from the first to last day of school, and all of us are committed to making every day count.

Our class of 2019 is almost ready to graduate! Here are some key dates for seniors:

May 20-24 | Final exams for seniors, 8:30am-noon
May 29 | Senior clearance, 9am-11am. Scholars collect staff signatures indicating they have returned all IDEA instructional materials and uniforms and paid their final dues.
May 29 | Senior cookout (scholars may attend after successful clearance)
May 29-June 4 | Senior extended school year intensive session for seniors not passing classes required for graduation
June 14 | Commencement ceremony for the class of 2019 at 10am on IDEA’s field

Key dates for 9th-11th grade scholars and families

May 28 | Parent-teacher conferences. There’s no school for scholars that day. This is an important opportunity for families of 9th, 10th, and 11th graders to understand what their children have learned this year and whether they’re on track to graduate or will need a little boost to get back on track.
June 4-7 | Final exams
June 10-12 | Portfolio presentations
June 14 | Last day of school

Summer School

Scholars who failed courses this school year will be asked to attend summer school from June 24 through July 26. Vice Principal Shomari Jennings will oversee summer school. Please contact him with questions at sjennings@ideapcs.org or 202-399-4750.

Extended School Year

We recognize that some scholars do best when they work at their own pace, so we are offering an extended school year for scholars with learning differences. Scholars enrolled in special education who are recommended for this program have been notified, but families are welcome to contact me with any questions.

Even though we’re still wrapping up this school year, we’ve already created the calendar for school year 2019-2020 for your convenience. You can check it out here.

Yours,
Nicole McCrae
Principal

April 2019 Principal's Message

With our powerful Women's Day assembly, our upcoming poetry presentation by scholars
and staff, enrollment season, and special events for seniors, spring at IDEA is packed with excitement, opportunity, and learning!

Our enrollment period for new scholars and re-enrollment for current IDEA scholars for the 2019-2020 school year began recently. New families who enroll by April 19 will receive a $100 voucher good for the purchase of school uniforms. May 1 is the deadline for new scholars to enroll. Current scholars who re-enroll by April 29 will be eligible to go on a FREE trip to Hershey Park. May 8 is the deadline for current scholars to re-enroll. We have plenty of opportunities for families to submit their enrollment paperwork. For more details, visit https://www.ideapcs.org/apps/pages/admissions

Our theme for the fourth quarter is growth, where we showcase our performance in all academic areas ranging in PARCC testing, MAP end of year assessments, Senior Capstone projects, and quarterly exams. We know that we do better when we all work together, and this includes families. We rely on parents and guardians to encourage their scholars to finish the school year strong, whether it includes extra test prep, attending tutoring or Saturday School, participating in parent booster events, or supporting community service project initiatives. This is the time of year when many decisions for the next school year are made, and we value parent input in that process. IDEA is your school too—we want to hear from you! We hope that you will attend our next Parent Booster session on May 2 at 5:30 pm. Please call to RSVP today!

In a week, our ninth graders will begin showing what they know on the PARCC tests in English I and Algebra, beginning April 23. Parents of freshmen, please make sure your scholars get good sleep and arrive at school on time so they can do their best on the test!

We are so proud of our scholars who have demonstrated exceptional growth throughout the school year, showing us that hard work, targeted intervention, and perseverance pay off. We are confident that this trend will continue, and open up new paths and opportunities for our scholars.

April 15-19 is spring break! We hope you will find this time refreshing and rejuvenating so when we return to school on April 22 we can rededicate ourselves to finishing the school year strong! We are offering a spring break boot camp for scholars who need an extra boost to help them succeed on their upcoming tests and assignments in the fourth quarter.

My door is always open and I appreciate hearing from you.

Yours,

Nicole McCrae
Principal
March 2019 Principal's Message

Spring is in the air! I hope you are enjoying the sunshine and warmer weather as much as we are. With Spring on its way, that also means that we have just over a quarter of the school year left and we aim to finish strong!

This is the beginning of testing season, where our scholars have the opportunity to demonstrate what they’ve been learning all year long. Our English language learners just completed Access testing to show their improvement in English proficiency. Schoolwide exams to wrap up quarter three will take place the last week of March. Our juniors took the SAT this month to help them prepare for early college admissions. Our DC Science PARCC testing is coming soon. All of our scholars are brushing up on their test-taking strategies, and we encourage families to help scholars get rejuvenated to showcase their best efforts on the exams.

Yesterday, we celebrated Pi Day (3.14 are the first three digits of the number Pi) with exciting activities throughout the school. Scholars recited dozens of digits of Pi—which required impressive memorization--played games, made art, and more to engage their math skills.

Additionally, we are proud to announce that 100% of our seniors have been accepted to at least one college for next year! Acceptance letters and scholarship offers are still coming in, and we are excited to see where the futures of our hardworking seniors will take them. Let’s keep our seniors motivated to walk that final lap in Quarter 4.

Attendance has improved at all grade levels thanks to attendance incentives and diligence from our scholars and families. However, we are still asking for more support from families to ensure that every scholar is at school every day unless they are seriously sick or injured. To make sure scholars are learning everything they need to know to master subjects and pass their classes, they need to be in school consistently. If you have concerns about your scholar’s attendance and would like help from the school, please contact me or your child’s dean. Our key priorities for the fourth quarter are scholar growth in attendance and academics.

While we are still focusing on daily lessons in the classroom, we are also beginning to plan for this summer and fall. Scholars who will need to attend summer school should have received letters in the mail. We will provide more details about summer school in April. Ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-grade scholars have selected their courses for the 2019-2020 school year, in consultation with administrators, to determine the next steps on their educational paths.

We have made a lot of progress this school year, but there is always room for improvement, and our team is working diligently to support and encourage all of our scholars to succeed. We rely on our families and community to join us in these efforts. For this reason, we
encourage you to attend our next Parent Booster gathering on Thursday, April 4 at 5:30pm. Hope to see you there!

As always, if you have any questions, my door is always open.

Yours,

Nicole McCrae
Principal

**February 2019 Principal's Message**

While DC public and public charter schools observe the new February break next week, IDEA will be offering a special three-day intensive opportunity for selected scholars to strengthen their understanding and capabilities in the core subjects of English, math, science, and social studies. From Tuesday, February 19 through Thursday, February 21, from 9am-noon, participating 9th and 10th grade scholars will engage in rigorous, targeted instruction. Scholars will receive catered breakfast and a snack each day, and those who demonstrate IDEA’s Five Guiding Principles each day will earn $20 at the end of the last session. Proficiency in core subjects, particularly reading and math, is essential for success not only in high school but is absolutely necessary to prepare scholars for college and career and truthfully for life. In the short-term, however, fundamental abilities in reading and math are critical for ninth-graders to advance to 10th grade and stay on track for graduation. All of us at IDEA want to give our scholars every possible chance for success, and this program is our newest example of that.

For all other scholars, we encourage you to take advantage of the time off school to do community service activities. [https://www.ideapcs.org/apps/pages/communityservice](https://www.ideapcs.org/apps/pages/communityservice). You can look for volunteer opportunities on one of these sites:  
[https://www.volunteermatch.org](https://www.volunteermatch.org)  
[https://serve.dc.gov/service/neighborgood](https://serve.dc.gov/service/neighborgood)

Recently we celebrated our scholars who demonstrated growth and excellence in the second quarter. Our quarter two awards assembly recognized honor roll and principal’s honor roll scholars, scholars who have consistently attended Saturday School, scholars of the quarter in each grade, scholars who had perfect attendance, and those with high Lexile and IXL scores. Lexile and IXL scores are part of our Achieve 3000 online program that enables scholars to continually improve their reading and math skills. Every time a scholar reads three articles in Achieve 3000 and correctly answers questions about them, their Lexile score improves. Parents should note that scholars’ Lexile scores are included on their report cards, so it’s easy to see how a scholar’s performance measures up. Click here to find out more: [https://lexile.com/parents-students/measuring-growth-lexile-measures/evaluating-performance-by-grade/](https://lexile.com/parents-students/measuring-growth-lexile-measures/evaluating-performance-by-grade/)
Finally, our 11th and 12th grade scholars took an SAT practice test this week in preparation for the SAT test for juniors on March 6 and for seniors on March 9. Results from the practice test will enable scholars to focus on shoring up their weak areas before the test, with the assistance of IDEA teachers and staff and the SAT instructors from IDEA partner Transcend, who work with our scholars each week to help them ace the SATs.

Although we’re still in the middle of this school year, we’re already looking forward to our next class of incoming scholars. Our next open house will be Saturday, March 2 at 9am. Please tell your family, friends, and neighbors about IDEA and invite them to visit us in person then!

Yours,
Nicole McCrae
Principal

January 2019 Principal's Message

Next time you’re visiting IDEA, be sure to look closely at the walls! On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, IDEA hosted 150 volunteers, coordinated by City Year DC, to help add inspiration and spirit to our building. We are grateful to everyone who came out to paint! We now have a Timberwolves mural in our gym and inspirational quotes in every hallway to help promote school pride. We are especially thankful to parents who came out to support our project. This day of service was part of an initiative between DC Public Schools and the DC Public Charter School Board to promote more collaboration among public and charter schools. At the opening ceremony for the day, we heard from DC Public Schools Chancellor Dr. Lewis Ferebee and Ward 7 Councilmember Vincent Gray. IDEA is proud to serve the Ward 7 community and beyond.

Just as we’re improving our facility, we’re also working to strengthen our scholars’ and families’ commitment to being in school, on time, every day. We are teaching lessons about the importance of coming to class consistently and promptly, and providing parents with timely updates around their scholar’s attendance. This week we implemented a new daily bell schedule, making advisory at the start of our day. The school day still begins at 8:25, with students expected to arrive by 8:15 in order to be seated in advisory when the bell rings. Advisory period is just as critical to your child’s education as any other class. Advisory is when students receive targeted intervention to make sure they are working at grade level, and when juniors and seniors take free SAT preparation classes. All of us at IDEA are working hard to instill a love of learning and the value of education in our scholars, but we need our scholars, their families, and our community to come together to make this happen.

Not only do we demand excellence from our scholars, but we also require our teachers and staff to do their best to grow as educators. To this end, we recently completed our mid-year teacher portfolio presentations--just like we did with scholar portfolios. Teachers and school
leaders went through the process of reflecting on their commitment to IDEA’s instructional principles and on their contributions to the school community. The school wide portfolio process motivates staff and scholars to take initiative and strive for continued growth. Teachers understand what it means to be an innovative teacher and we help them access the tools they need to succeed. I am proud of our staff and our scholars on their thoughtful self-reflection during this process!

We also invited the Danielson Group--an educational consulting firm--to spend time in every IDEA classroom observing the quality of teaching and learning. While we are awaiting their official report, evaluators told us that our staff is dedicated and our scholars are engaged. We look forward to receiving their detailed recommendations so we can continue to improve as a school community.

Engaged families are also essential to the growth and development of our community. We are thrilled to be seeing so many parents attend our parent boosters and parent engagement events, coordinated by our clinical staff. We had a great turnout at our January dinner and have scheduled several more events this school year. We are also conducting a parent survey to learn more about the needs of IDEA families. Please complete the survey here: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HYZLS2](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HYZLS2)

As always, we welcome your suggestions for improvement and appreciate your willingness to support what we do at IDEA.

Yours,

Nicole McCrae
Principal

**December 2018 Principal’s Message**

As we approach this winter holiday, IDEA scholars, staff, and families are eager for time to relax and spend time with family and friends. We welcome the opportunity to renew our spirits, celebrate the accomplishments of 2018, and come back to school refreshed in January!

Our Parent Boosters organization, led by our school counselor Ms. Casey and our parent representative Mr. Townsend, continues to gain momentum in the area of parent involvement. Parent Boosters invites all families to our Parent Engagement Dinner the first Friday of January. We can always use more family presence and participation in our scholars’ lives, both in and out of the classroom! Our scholars will flourish when they know that teachers, staff, parents, and grandparents are all on the same page about their
education, behavior, and social development. IDEA depends on families to reinforce our high expectations for scholars to help them succeed.

For example, attendance is always critically important, no matter what time of year it is. We ask that scholars miss no more than two days of school per quarter to ensure they have every opportunity to learn and stay on track. As a reward for scholars who have had perfect attendance for the past two weeks of school, we will hold a Winter Ball on Friday, December 21 from 2:30-5:30. Scholars and parents should note that IDEA provides perfect attendance incentives throughout the year.

It’s hard to believe it, but the halfway point of the school year is coming up January 18, when the second quarter and first semester come to a close. Scholars who need a little extra help to improve their grades or pass their classes are invited to our last two sessions of Saturday School for the semester, on January 5 and January 12. As always, free hot breakfast is provided!

Starting next semester, our test preparation partner Transcend will be back at IDEA to support scholars who are planning to take the PSAT or SAT this spring. We are proud of 11 IDEA juniors who earned 860 or higher on the PSAT. Juniors will take the SAT in school on March 6. Any seniors who did not earn 890 or higher on the October SAT will have the opportunity to take SAT prep in order to try to improve their scores during the next test on March 9, held at other DC locations.

We are delighted that American Sign Language is back at IDEA, being taught by visiting instructor Ms. Whittaker. Scholars learning sign language recently took a field trip to a local nursing home to sing and sign Christmas Carols for the residents. Sign language provides scholars of varying abilities with an excellent opportunity to learn a new, hands-on way to communicate and express themselves.

Mark your calendars now to celebrate the Martin Luther King Jr. day of service with IDEA as we welcome volunteers from City Year to help us beautify our hallways with colorful murals and positive messages. Stay tuned for details!

From the entire IDEA family, happy holidays to you and your family! We look forward to seeing you in 2019.

Yours,

Nicole McCrae
Principal

November Principal's Message
While the excitement of the season is upon us, and there are only a few weeks left until Winter break, every single hour spent in the classroom is still essential to our scholars’ success. We are so proud of scholars who are putting in the extra effort by attending Saturday school. We average more than 50 scholars each session, and a record number of teachers are assisting, alongside volunteers from Peace Fellowship Church who are coming to tutor.

Earlier this month we celebrated 61 scholars who earned a place on the Honor Roll with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and Principal’s Honor Roll with a GPA of 3.5 or higher. More scholars are making the honor roll than ever before! Our seniors received their results from the October SAT test, and 17 scored higher than 890. Five seniors--Faith Brooks, Kyeon Ford, Malaysia Johnson, Markese Stephens, and Kaziah White--scored more than 1000! Sometimes you need a second try to get the score you want, so 13 of our seniors will be retaking the test to improve their scores. We commend our scholars on their hard work and perseverance.

Reaching this level of achievement requires an early start and consistent attendance and dedication. Our teachers have noticed a slide in attendance in recent weeks, and we ask scholars and families to reverse this trend! Important teaching and learning happen every single day, and scholars can easily fall behind if they miss several days. Our goal is for scholars to be absent no more than two days each quarter to ensure that they are keeping up with their work and taking advantage of the educational opportunities offered to them.

It is especially important that families of ninth graders check to make sure their scholars are on track for graduation within four years. Even though graduation sounds far away now, if a scholar fails several classes for the first two quarters of high school, he will likely be required to repeat ninth grade. How can ninth grade scholars and their families make sure they’re on the right track? Parents should ask their children what their homework is each day and whether they’ve completed it. Offer to help or encourage scholars to attend tutoring or Saturday School if necessary. We are always willing to help scholars who are struggling, as long as they’re making a good faith effort to improve. Log in to PowerSchool to monitor your children’s progress. Call the main office if you need help logging in. Scholars can download the PowerSchool app on their phones so they will have 24/7 access to assignments and grades. Scholars can use online tools--also available on their phones--such as IXL for math and Achieve 3000 for reading to improve their skills even when they’re not in school.

Teachers and staff at IDEA have high expectations of our scholars intellectually, socially, and behaviorally. We strive to promote a positive learning culture in and out of the classroom. Our current instructional emphasis is academic discourse--encouraging scholars to engage in high-level conversations about what they’re learning. We want scholars to be engaging with
the material they’re learning, their teachers, and their peers to help create a vibrant academic community.

I am thankful for our scholars, families, staff, and community, and I appreciate the privilege of serving as IDEA’s principal. My door is always open if you have questions or concerns.

Yours,

Nicole McCrae
Principal

October Principal’s Message

Outside it finally feels like fall; our scholars have been building, digging, planting, reenacting, volunteering, singing, and so much more; and we’re closing in on the end of the first quarter of the school year!

We are proud that on October 10th, IDEA hosted our first ever schoolwide PSAT/SAT day, during which nearly all of our scholars completed this important college admission test, through a partnership with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and the College Board. The test was given to scholars for free, and scholars were able to request that their results be sent directly to colleges and universities they may be interested in attending. By giving scholars the opportunity to take these tests during the school day at no cost to families, IDEA is eliminating a possible barrier to college, to clear the path for our scholars to succeed.

Nearly every day we receive good news in the mail as college acceptances for our seniors come rolling in. As of mid-October, nearly half of our seniors have been admitted to at least one college or university. While we recognize that not every scholar will pursue the same post-secondary path, it is our responsibility to ensure that our graduates have options.

To help our scholars envision their futures, our Workforce Friday program is going strong, with several local organizations meeting with scholars each month. This Friday we welcome the Metropolitan Police Department introducing its MPD Cadet Program, DC Fire & EMS introducing its EMS Cadet Program, Bank of America providing financial literacy tips, the DC Department of Employment Services’ Office of Youth Programs, and SchoolTalk to introduce its Youth Leadership Network and Music Production & Career program.

This month the DC Public Charter School Board will send a team of reviewers to our campus to conduct a Qualitative Site Review. This process supports our application to renew our charter, required every five years, since we are now in our 20th year of operations. Visitors
will be making classroom observations and will report back to our administrative team and
the DCPCSB to provide insights into what’s working well at IDEA and areas where we can
improve.

Finally, next time you stop by the school, please take the time to visit our new garden, which
scholars, staff, and community partners worked hard down in the dirt to build and plant. The
garden is part of our RiverSmart Schools grant from the DC Department of Energy and the
Environment, and will improve the health of the Anacostia River by reducing storm runoff,
provide a new destination for pollinators which benefits our food supply, and serve as a living
classroom for our scholars. Creating the garden was truly a collaborative effort, and we
especially thank Trinh Doan of DCDEE, Lauren Wheeler of Natural Resources Design, Lauren
Meyer of Casey Trees, and our own ACAD instructor Ian Milne for their leadership.

Parents are an essential part of our support system for scholars, and we welcome and
encourage parent involvement at IDEA! Please plan to attend our next Parent
Boosters meeting on Thursday, November 8 at 5:30pm in room 100. We have a wide
variety of areas where we would love help from parents and appreciate any assistance you
can offer.

My door is always open and I love to hear from our families and community supporters.

Yours,
Nicole McCrae
Principal

September Principal’s Message

Welcome back to IDEA! Our 2018-2019 school year has gotten off to a fantastic start, with 319
scholars enrolled, supported by 67 faculty and staff members. Our focus this year is Engaging
Scholars through Academic Rigor. Every teacher and staff member will be working to
challenge our scholars, demonstrate high expectations, and do whatever it takes to motivate
and inspire scholars to do their best.

We’ve expanded our teaching staff in English and math to ensure small class sizes. Our
teacher-scholar ratio for 9th and 10th grades is 1 to 18. Many scholars arrive at IDEA with
significant gaps in their education, and it’s up to IDEA to not only fill those gaps but extend
their learning to new heights to prepare them for college and careers. Across the District of
Columbia, scholars are most at risk of failing or dropping out of school in 9th grade, and one
of our primary goals is to provide every scholar in our freshman class with the support they
need to succeed and stay on track for graduation in 2022.
Scholars are learning that excellent attendance is essential to academic progress. Our goal this year is that scholars are absent no more than two days per quarter to ensure that they miss as little instructional time as possible. The more they’re in school, the more they will learn and the greater chances they will have of future success.

IDEA has also expanded our clinical team to meet the needs of the whole scholar and support their families. Our team now includes Director of Student Support Services Melody Washington, School Counselors Yvette Brown and Tiffany Casey, and School Psychologist Jennifer Smith.

This year four grade-level deans will serve as the direct line for scholar support, to engage with scholars, support families, help with grade-level events, and communicate academic progress. We encourage scholars and families to cultivate relationships with their deans: Germaine Jenkins—9th grade, Morrell Miles—10th grade, Ulises Bengoechoa—11th grade, and Lori Briscoe—12th grade.

Our early childhood education program has expanded to a graded course taught by professional educators from OSSE. Scholars will have the opportunity to earn valuable career certification and gain hands-on experience working with young children in child care settings in addition to their classroom learning. In collaboration with Dexterity Driving School, we will be offering driver’s education as a graded course where scholars can work toward earning their learner’s permit or driver’s license.

More opportunities for our scholars will be created and unveiled throughout the school year, and we are looking forward to sharing them with you. We appreciate your support and enthusiasm as we begin this year of learning together.

If you have any questions or concerns about your scholar’s educational experience or any of our programs at IDEA, please contact me or any member of our team.

Yours,

Nicole McCrae
Principal