Dear KNOS Families,

As we close out our fourth week of school closure and remote learning, I write to you with a heavy heart. As some of you have already heard, we recently lost our beloved assistant principal, Walter Harris of KIPP Central City Academy, due to complications related to COVID-19. This is an incredible loss for the KCCA and KIPP New Orleans Schools communities, and I want to offer my sincerest condolences to his family, as well as all those who worked closely with and loved him.

Having been with us for 6 years, Mr. Harris was a pillar in our community. He was an incredible educator, father, husband and friend. His commitment to education and his support of fellow staff members, students and families was unwavering. He always put others first and showed love through his actions. His impact will echo through our hearts and the halls of KCCA forever. He was a source of wisdom and knowledge and a guide and mentor to all. He is survived by his wife and three children. We ask everyone to support the Harris family and one another as a community with love and understanding.

In the coming days, we will share ways that we will honor and celebrate the life and legacy of Mr. Harris. We are truly grateful for his service and will forever remember his impact.

While it is never easy to cope with a death or the current COVID-19 crisis, there are many free community-based resources available to support the social-emotional needs of you and your family during this time:

- Mercy Family Center’s COPEline: 504-269-2673
- Metropolitan Crisis Response Team: 504-826-2675
- NAMI’s Crisis Lifeline: 800-273-8255 or send text to 741741
- United Way/LA Department of Health COVID line: 211
- SAMHSA’s National Helpline: 800-662-4357
- Disaster Distress Helpline: 800-985-5990

The past few weeks have been challenging for all of us; our hope is you will use this spring break to rest, rejuvenate and focus on the things that matter most to you and your loved ones.

As you know, our extended Spring Break will be from Thursday, April 9th through Tuesday, April 14th. During this break, we have posted optional learning opportunities and assignments for students to complete at the www.kipp.school website. Please also note that our community feeding locations will continue their regular operations. Finally, note that while the KNOS hotline will be closed over break, the resources listed above are available.

Thank you for your partnership. This has been such a trying time, especially with this recent news about the loss of Mr. Harris. I believe in the strength of the KIPP team and of our students and families. Further, I believe in our New Orleans community. We know that this is a trying time for so many; by sticking together and supporting each other, we can overcome this.

Thank you,

Rhonda Kalifey-Aluise
Chief Executive Officer
KIPP New Orleans Schools