

January 18, 2021

Dear San Diego Unified Families,

This week, our nation will celebrate a new beginning, as we witness the inauguration of President-Elect Joseph Biden and Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris. It will be, in the words of another great president, “not a victory of party, but a celebration of freedom -- symbolizing an end as well as a beginning -- signifying renewal as well as change.” I am honored to share with you that President-Elect Biden has invited me to be a part of that change as his nominee to be the next United States Deputy Secretary of Education. Therefore, I will be leaving my post as your Superintendent, following confirmation by the United States Senate.

I have already spoken with Secretary-designate Miguel Cardona, and I have never been more optimistic about the future of the American education system. I have also spoken with the San Diego Unified Board of Education to ensure a seamless transition. Everyone remains focused on providing our students with a full recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic.

I grew up in San Diego Unified, attended Hardy Elementary and Mann Middle schools, served as principal at Central Elementary and as your Superintendent since 2013. I have had the joy of watching some of our students learn to read for the first time; I’ve seen others become the first in their families to graduate from college. I had the privilege of seeing the middle school I attended be replaced by a brand new state-of-the-art building as part of an \$8 billion bond program. It is the love and support of my hometown that has made all of this possible, and I am deeply grateful for having been entrusted with the sacred responsibility of educating your children.

Most of all, I am grateful for our students, who continue to inspire me with their determination and joy, from the youngest learners to the oldest. In order to spark resiliency in our students, we have focused on social and emotional learning, teaching the whole child and always offering access to the arts. In return, San Diego Unified students achieved the [highest graduation rate](#) among big-city districts in California and the [fastest reading growth](#) of large urban districts nationwide in 2019. Simply put, every time we have challenged our students to accomplish more and given them the resources to do so, they have not only met the challenge - they have exceeded it.

Thank you to our students, parents, professional educators, support staff, administrators, board members and everyone who has allowed me to be part of your own incredible life journey. I would like to leave you with excerpts from a poem that I have turned to many times during the current crisis for inspiration. It is from the incomparable Maya Angelou, and it is called, “[Continue](#).” I encourage you to read the whole poem with your family, especially today, of all days, as we remember the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Thank you once again for all we have done together, and I know our work will continue.

Sincerely,



Cindy Marten
Superintendent of Public Education

Continue

Into a world which needed you
My wish for you
Is that you continue

Continue

To be who and how you are
To astonish a mean world
With your acts of kindness

Continue

To allow humor to lighten the burden
of your tender heart

Continue

To let your eloquence
Elevate the people to heights
They had only imagined ...

Continue

To dare to love deeply
And risk everything
For the good thing

Continue

And by doing so
You and your work
Will be able to continue
Eternally

(poem written by Maya Angelou in 2016 for Oprah)