



## SDUC Friday updates and reflections

1 message

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*Health of a Lion*

**THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
UNIVERSITY CITY**  
Transform the Life of Every Student Every Day!

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Dear University City Schools Families:

This has been a hard week for many of our families regarding events in Minnesota, Florida and Indianapolis. All of us persevere despite repeated incidents that show us life is not equitable as we go about our daily routines and that violent rage undermines our country. This environment impacts everyone's wellness. Right now, I am weary from these events and plan to take some time to take care of myself and my family this weekend and reflect. I hope you do the same. I continue with my resolve to humanize our families and ensure that equity is always the lens for our work with our beautiful students.

The week was also difficult from a COVID-19 standpoint. Even as more teachers and adults are vaccinated, we are experiencing active cases in our schools. We decided this week to take a small break from in-person instruction at Brittany Woods due to quarantines and staffing issues. On Monday, April 19, many staff and students will be cleared to come back to the school and in-person instruction at Brittany Woods will resume on its regular schedule.

### **An important partnership regarding COVID-19**

We know that COVID-19 will be with us for quite some time. I'm excited to let you know that U City Schools is one of five districts partnering with Washington University and the National Institutes of Health on a year-long research project regarding the transmission of COVID-19 in schools and families. As part of this partnership, every district family or staff member with symptoms of COVID-19 will have free and fast access to COVID-19 saliva testing starting today through the 2021-22 school year. If you or your child have symptoms, let your school nurse know, and you will be contacted directly by WashU to begin the testing process. There may be more important services for our District middle and high school communities from this partnership, and I will keep you posted if that occurs.

## High school COVID vaccine survey

High school families, I've extended the deadline to this Monday, April 19 for you to complete the survey on whether you are interested in a high school-based vaccine clinic for your teens 16 and older. This is important information will help us effectively organize such an event. [Register here](#).

## New SSD director for the District

I extend a warm welcome to [Artondria Bentley, Ed.D.](#), who will join the District July 1 as our new SSD director. Artondria is coming home. She attended Pershing and Brittany Woods and graduated from University City High School. She comes to us from Parkway Schools and brings nearly 19 years of expertise in special education to our district. I thank DeAndria Player for her six years of service with our students and families. DeAndria is moving on to be the full-time SSD director at Normandy Schools Collaborative.

## Camp U update

We are so excited by the parent and student interest in [Camp U](#), our free, hands-on summer learning program. Slots are almost full for grades 1-5 camps at Jackson Park this summer. We will be forming a waiting list. I encourage you to still register, as there will likely be spots that do open up between now and the start of Camp U on June 7. There are still many great Camp U opportunities for students entering grades 6-8 at Brittany Woods this summer. Please take some time to look over [this brochure](#) with your middle schooler and sign up now!

## Board of Education updates

The Board reorganized last night in preparation for its new term. Members elected Matt Bellows as president, Lisa Brenner as vice president and Traci Moore as the treasurer. Monica Simpson was sworn in for a new three year term, and Joanne Soudah was sworn in for a third year term as Board director. The Board extended a warm thank you to Kristine Hendrix who exited the board. Thank you, Kristine for your service to our District!

## Signature events

- [There is still time to order](#) free veggie seedlings and gardening supplies through our student-run **UCity Schools Food Garden Network**. The deadline to sign up and order your goodies (tomatoes, peppers, okra, kale, herbs, mustard greens and more!) is this Sunday, April 18. There are numerous ways you can participate in the Network, so check out its [website](#).
- On Saturday, May, 1 the District and many partners will host **Growing Together**, a free, family-fun event to celebrate our strength and resilience during COVID-19. The event will be held outside Brittany Woods Middle School from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and will feature all sorts of entertainment. Food Garden Network members will also be able to pick up their seedlings and gardening supplies at this time. Rumor has it, there will be a dunk tank with some of your favorite teachers and staff as well as a jumbo art project everyone can participate in creating. Learn more [here](#).
- I am hosting three sessions of a **Parent Town Hall** to discuss plans for the 2021-22 school year on Tuesday May 4 virtually at 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. and in-

## JGEC Celebrates Week of the Young Child



Welcome  
Dr. Bentley  
New SSD Director



person at 6:30 p.m. [Registration is required](#) and all parents are encouraged to attend one of the sessions.

- **The Class of 2021 UCHS Graduation** takes place in the University City High School stadium on May 24 at 6:30 p.m. Early next week, Principal Peoples will be sending a detailed letter on graduation and events leading up to it to all senior parents.

### Key upcoming dates

- **Sunday, April 18** - Deadline [to order seedlings](#) and gardening supplies through Growing Together: The UCity Schools Food Garden Network.
- **Friday, April 23** - Early release day.
- **Wednesday, April 28**, noon-3 - Senior cap & gown pick-up in front of the high school.
- **Wednesday, April 28**, 6-7:30 p.m. - UCHS Early College Experience Signing Day at University City High School.
- **Saturday, May 1**, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. - [Growing Together SDUC celebration](#) in front of Brittany Woods Middle School.

I am always available to answer your questions or hear your concerns at [shardin@ucityschools.org](mailto:shardin@ucityschools.org) or on my cell phone at 314-399-0941.

In Service of Our Children

Sharonica Hardin-Bartley, PhD, PHR  
Superintendent

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