Hello University City Schools Parents and Caregivers,

It was a difficult day for us as we, again, were dealing with nationwide social media rumors of violence in schools. Our teachers, staff and resource officers were put on alert and were asked to check in with our students throughout today. It is sad that we must respond to these activities from afar that try to damage our faith in schools and in our children to do the right thing. Remember, we cherish your children and make it a top priority to keep them safe and well. We are a community; parents, thank you for reinforcing the importance of safe social media usage and proper citizenship. We all play a vital role in keeping our school community safe.

Now, we are on the cusp of Winter Break! I wish you all rest and joy in the two weeks ahead. Please view my Winter Break Video for more thoughts about the season.

Growing racial equity for our students in higher education
We had some wonderful news recently. The District is being honored tonight by St. Louis Community College (STLCC) for its partnership in creating affordable higher education opportunities for our high school students. We were recognized with two honors of distinction. The first was for saving our UCHS students just shy of $500,000 in college tuition through our Early College Experience and dual credit programs with STLCC. The second honors the broad array of dual credit course offerings for our high school students. These programs speak to the heart of racial equity by offering affordable higher education and learning opportunities for students who might not normally be able to afford college. We are so proud of our hard-working students in these programs who often earn Associate’s Degrees upon graduation and also lucrative scholarships to
continue their education at 4-year colleges. We are now in our fifth cohort of the Early College Experience students, and the impact has been profound.

**Washington University drive-through saliva testing**
Medical staff at WashU will offer COVID-19 drive-through saliva testing for our community over Winter Break, but on a revised schedule. This is such an amazing asset for our community, so I encourage you to keep the schedule on-hand if you need to utilize services over the break. Here’s the schedule:

- Dec. 20, 3 to 5 p.m. at Brittany Woods
- Dec. 21, 3 to 5 p.m. at Jennings Junior High School
- Dec. 22 through Dec. 27, no testing
- Dec. 28, 3 to 5 p.m., Jennings Junior High School
- Jan. 3, normal testing schedule resumes, 3-5 p.m. at Brittany Woods

Another successful Winter Appeal
Finally, a shout out to our social workers who organized yet another Winter Appeal that helped 272 students in 89 families. We had 96 individuals, churches and businesses donate to our appeal with gift cards, toys and household essentials. This is truly the spirit of our District, and I salute them and our donors for this incredible project.

**Key dates**

- **Dec. 20 - Dec. 31**, Winter Break, district closed
- **Jan. 3**, No classes, Teacher Work Day
- **Jan. 4**, Classes resume
- **Jan. 14**, Early Release Day, last day of First Semester
- **Jan. 17**, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, district closed

Again, please take some time to view my Winter Break Video. I can always be reached at shardin@ucityschools.org or 314-399-0941 with questions or concerns. I wish you peace.

In Service of Our Children,

Sharonica Hardin-Bartley, Ph.D., PHR
Superintendent

[Click here to see my Winter Break Video](#)
SchoolMessenger is a notification service used by the nation's leading school systems to connect with parents, students and staff through voice, SMS text, email, and social media.