August 2014

Dear Katherine Smith families,

It is a great honor and pleasure to continue to serve you as principal of Katherine Smith Elementary School. Over the past two years we have been on an incredible reinvention journey creating the most engaging and excellent education for our children — an education to serve them in the 21st Century where we all need to communicate, think critically, collaborate, and be innovative.

Our work began just two years ago with the intentional transformation of our school’s culture. We made a place where students love learning. We courageously stepped towards the new demands of the Common Core Standards and created opportunities for deep learning where students think, learn, work, communicate, collaborate, and contribute. Students gain hands-on experiences, solve complex problems, and connect learning to future college and careers goals.

Over the past few years, our work has brought praise and validation from organizations and visitors from across the globe. The ambitious and creative work of our students has kept us at the forefront of innovation. Using project-based learning, teachers will continue to design and refine comprehensive and challenging learning experiences for students. With the input of students, parents, and staff, we will start the 2014-2015 school year with even greater focused goals:

• Create resilient, empathetic, self-directed learners
• Embed 21st Century competencies within authentic learning experiences
• Develop academically literate, college and career ready students
• Empower all students, parents, and staff through leadership opportunities
• Communicate and celebrate growth

In order to do this, our dedicated staff has used the summer to expand their knowledge. The teachers have spent countless hours further refining our strategic goals and participating in multiple training events. The K. Smith teachers are prepared, focused, and excited to begin.

As we return, we are fortunate to add a few new faces. Suzy Woodley, STEM teacher (science, technology, engineering, and math), and Hye Han, resource teacher, will join our team. I have had the pleasure of working with both of these amazing educators and know their passion and dedication will serve us well. I would also like to welcome back Sarah Schas. After a year on a special assignment, Ms. Schas will return as a transitional kindergarten teacher. It’s a true pleasure to welcome all three to the K. Smith family.

School opens **August 20 at 8:00 a.m.** for a promising and transformative year. Mark your calendar for the Welcome Back Family barbecue on **Tuesday, August 19 at 4:00 p.m.** Meet your new teacher and connect with our community. We can’t wait to see you.

I look forward to another incredible year — imagine what we will do next.

Sincerely Yours,

Aaron Brengard, Principal