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Director of Schools

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Dear Cleveland Residents,

The city of Cleveland is no longer a hidden gem. It is still a gem of a city, but hidden isn't the term I would use. I have had the distinct pleasure of serving as Director of Schools for the Cleveland City Board of Education since July 2011. In the past 3½ years, our city has grown exponentially.

The student population in Cleveland City Schools has increased by 457 students since I started in July 2011.

- 2010-2011 - 4,875 students
- 2011-2012 - 5,076 students (201 gain)
- 2012-2013 - 5,138 students (62 gain)
- 2013/2014 - 5,157 students (19 gain)
- 2014-2015 - current population 5,332 students (175 gain to date)

Our county and city continue to grow at a staggering rate.

- 1,698 residential building permits totaling \$161,294,448 (2010-2014)
- 499 commercial building permits totaling \$606,968,771 (2010-2014)
- 2,214 new business licenses (July 1, 2011 to present)
- New townhome complexes at the Retreat at Spring Creek, Brooks Edge Apartments, and other places within the city limits
- New complexes discussed at the corner of Villa and Georgetown Road and off North Lee Highway.

Obviously my concern is education. People enjoy moving to an area that has a successful school system. Cleveland City Schools is proud to offer a public education system that the citizens of Cleveland are proud of every year. Realtors will tell you that the first question asked about a house is what school zone is it located. The educational school system matters to everyone in Cleveland, not just parents of school age children. Our success as a school system directly impacts the value of your house. Our school system success helps bring businesses and people to the city of Cleveland.

This type of fast growth is having an adverse effect on classroom availability at the elementary school level. Although our student growth is being realized in every grade level (elementary, middle, and high), we feel the immediate effects in the elementary level.

Cleveland City Schools built a new middle school and expanded Cleveland High School twice (addition of old Cleveland Junior and the Max Carroll Science Wing) in response to growth. Now we are in dire need of an elementary school to relieve the other six overpopulated elementary schools in our city.

With the backing of the Cleveland City Council and the expenditure of the school system's portion of the sales tax money for capital expenditures, the Cleveland City Board of Education purchased land off Georgetown Road for the location of our seventh elementary school. We have preliminary plans drawn up for a 550 student elementary school that we believe will suffice our student population for years to come.

Cleveland is growing quickly. Just drive down Keith Street or Paul Huff Parkway to notice the increase in traffic. Look at the data presented in the beginning of this article: 457 new students, over 2,000 building permits, over 2,200 business licenses, two major townhome/apartment complexes with more to come....

I am proud of Cleveland for being proactive in growth. I am asking for support for our Cleveland City Council and Cleveland City Board of Education as they will have some really tough decisions to make as we move forward. One thing is for sure however; the time is now to see the realization of our seventh elementary school. Let's continue to make the city of Cleveland an attractive place to live and work by strengthening the school system for years to come. Cleveland City Schools is here to serve every citizen, and we take great pride in representing you to the best of our abilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MR', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Martin Ringstaff, Ed.D.
Director of Schools