Greetings G. James Gholson Middle School Parents, Families, and Community!

I am excited to welcome you to a new school year at G. James Gholson Middle School (GJGMS). Who would have ever thought that we would have ended the 2019-2020 school year the way we did--and would be starting the 2020-2021 school year virtually?!?!

Although we will start the school year non-traditionally, our focus and expectation for teaching and learning will remain the same. This school year, we plan to continue to focus on instituting a culture of "High Quality" for student success. The three factors of high quality that we will focus on are: Belief, Instruction, and Performance. A high quality of belief will allow for us to develop a culture where we will consistently exhibit a belief in our scholars and their ability to exceed the expectations as it relates to instructional and academic performance; high quality instruction will not only be a daily expectation for all instructors to deliver to our scholars, but a promise provided by ALL to ensure that our students are given the best instructional opportunities to learn; and a focus on high quality performance, where the result of high quality belief and instruction will yield high quality performance from our students as it relates to their academic performance.

Alongside our focus mentioned above I look forward to continuing to partner with you to provide our students with a safe, rigorous, and engaging education throughout their middle school experience. I recognize that in order to be successful, our children need support from both the home and school. I know that a strong partnership with you will make a great difference in your child's education. As partners, we share the responsibility for our children's success and want you to know that we will do our very best to carry out our responsibilities.

I am looking forward to the school year and all the great things that will occur. Further, over the next few weeks, I will be soliciting your involvement on various committees to support Distance Learning, Social-Emotional Health for students and their families, school branding, and various ways to enhance our school. Please know that I have an open-door policy and welcome any opportunity to meet with you [virtually].

In preparation for the school year, there are a few important dates to remember. Please take note of the following:

- **CHROMEBOOK & MATERIALS DISTRIBUTION** - The school will distribute Chromebooks to those students who did not receive one during last school year's Chromebook Distribution. Also, content specific materials for all students to assist with Distance Learning. Distribution of materials will occur by grade level from 10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. on the following dates:
  - 6th grade- August 24, 2020*
  - 7th grade- August 25, 2020*
  - 8th grade- August 26, 2020*
  - Make-up Day- August 27, 2020*
Please ensure that you come on your assigned grade-level day in order for all students to be served and allow for a smooth distribution of materials.

- **SCHOOL BEGINS** Monday, August 31, 2020. All students must be logged into their assigned Google Classroom on this day. More information on the students’ Google Classrooms and logging in will be sent via Blackboard to all parents/guardians as well as via students’ assigned PGCPS emails within the next two weeks.

- **SCHOOL HOURS** are from 9:30 a.m. until 4:10 p.m. Students who are not logged into class by 9:30 a.m. are considered tardy.

- **SCHOOL SUPPLIES** are listed on our website. Please visit the school website at [www1.pgcps.org/gjamesgholson](http://www1.pgcps.org/gjamesgholson) for a complete list of materials. Also, please note that other [optional] materials may be required by teacher’s request.

- **NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION** will be held Friday, August 28, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

- **BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT** will be held on Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

- Our **FIRST PTSA NIGHT** will also be held Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. Further meeting information is forthcoming and will be provided by our PTSA.

- Gholson is a **MANDATORY UNIFORM SCHOOL**, but uniforms are NOT mandated while we are on Distance Learning. Students must be dressed appropriately when attending their classes online. Further information will be presented to students during their grade level assemblies, which will occur the first week of school. When we return to the school building, updates on uniforms will be posted on our website.

Finally, we will implement a 6 period schedule this school year, this allows for an Academic Intervention period to be built into the schedule to help students improve their academic performance. Also, schoolwide AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) strategies will be incorporated in all contents in order to better prepare students to be college and career ready. Additionally, we will also implement a PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) Plan with the goal of increasing student online attendance, performance and promoting a positive school culture. More information regarding the PBIS program will be forthcoming.

Please be sure to check our school website as information will be updated on a regular basis. I truly look forward to serving our students and working with you this school year as we embark upon this new endeavor! If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 301.883.8390 or kevin3.thompson@pgcps.org.

Sincerely,

Kevin Thompson
Proud Principal of GJGMS