



August 24, 2023

Dear JPS High School Parents and Guardians,

IT TAKES A VILLAGE. Our beloved city is known for its resilience, southern hospitality, and some of our schools, which we love so dearly, have become labeled due to disturbing acts of crime and violence by a few scholars. The overwhelming 99 percent of Jackson Public Schools scholars are getting it right and making us all very proud. Our teachers give it their all daily to ensure quality instruction despite HVAC issues, low to no water pressure, and the past COVID-19 pandemic. Students are in class, engaged in learning, and on task. Learning is happening, and our District is on a path to higher academic success.

Still, social media timelines and media reports paint a grim story of the 1 percent. While we cannot deny that there has been an uptick in violence in our community, schools continue to be a safe haven. Our schools must be a place to run to and not run from. We have comprehensive supports to keep reaching the challenged 1 percent, but we cannot do it alone. IT TAKES A VILLAGE.

Before children can learn, they must first feel SAFE. Since returning to in-person learning a few years ago following the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a NATIONWIDE increase in school violence. More fights. More bullying. More threats. More guns. Tensions are high, and consequences are an afterthought. IT TAKES A VILLAGE.

We are ramping up our resources to keep our schools safe and are offering more mental health and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) services. Yet, violence continues to spill into our

In addition to providing a new districtwide SEL curriculum, ReThink Ed, invested in other supports for our scholars, such as increased access to professional mental health counseling, implemented a TAP Program in all seven high schools aimed at restorative justice practices, included an



school scholars. These are just a few ways to keep our students engaged. IT TAKES A VILLAGE.

This work is personal, and I wholeheartedly believe in our educators and children. We all love and want what is best for the children of Jackson Public School. Support is always available. If you have questions or would like to volunteer,

I appreciate you and thank you for your steadfast support. We are One District, moving in One Direction, Marching Towards EXCELLENCE. WE ARE THE VILLAGE.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laketia Marshall-Thomas', with a horizontal line underneath.

Laketia Marshall-Thomas, Ed.S.  
Assistant Superintendent, High Schools