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Dear NOLA-PS Staff,

I love New Orleans. I love teaching. I love our amazing students, our wonderful public schools, our dedicated teachers and school leaders, and our city's one-of-a-kind, resilient spirit. I have been working in public education for 25 years and it has been an honor to have spent nearly half of that time serving the students and families of Orleans Parish.

Throughout my journey in this great city, I have been blessed with opportunities to lead. First, teaching and leading schools for six years with the Algiers Charter Schools Association, then stepping in as Superintendent at a critical moment in our City's history. When I took the helm in March 2015, there was work to be done to return our schools to local control. For over a decade, decisions were made too far from home.

It took bold leadership from our School Board and the work of our entire community to come together to map out the next chapter for public schools in New Orleans. Some doubted if it could be done. But we did it, and I could not have been more proud of the way our schools, community and district leadership came together to create a unified system striving to ensure every child thrives, academically, socially, emotionally – no matter their race, gender, creed, or economic circumstance.

In my six years as superintendent, we returned our schools to local control. We built frameworks that hold schools to high standards of quality education while also delivering districtwide support to our students most in need. And in these last 15 months, we successfully navigated an unprecedented pandemic, keeping our schools safe, open, and our children engaged with learning during a year like no other.

I am proud of these accomplishments. And I am proud of NOLA Public Schools. I am proud of our staff, our teachers, our school leaders and most of all, our students and families.

And with all journeys, there comes times for new direction and new leadership. I believe now is the time now for new voices, new dreams, and new visionaries to carry NOLA Public Schools into the future. Therefore, I am writing to let you know I will not seek to renew my contract for another term as Superintendent. Instead, I will focus my remaining time here to leave my successor with a firm foundation upon which to build for the next generation of students to walk through the halls of our public schools.

I could not have done this without the dedication to service that you have shown our students and families as we worked together at NOLA-PS. You have inspired me to lead every day and I trust you will continue your great work with our next Superintendent.

In service,

Henderson Lewis, Jr., Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools