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Dr. Phyllis A. Edwards
Superintendent

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District 5

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Dothan City Schools mission is to prepare all students for the choices and challenges of the 21st Century (the future). Our goal is to prepare all students to participate productively and responsibly in a rapidly changing society.

February 3, 2020

Dear Dothan City School Board and Employees:

We are very proud of the Head Start Program under the auspicious of the Dothan City Schools. The Head Start Program is in the last year of a five-year grant cycle.

Head Start begins and provides a quality educational program and many additional services for 324 young children from the Dothan City area and Houston County.

Since we found out last year that the system would need to make a new application to operate the program, Mrs. Vincent and her staff have been working with a professional grant writer to submit the grant application on a timely basis with the federal Head Start grantees.

To date, the Head Start Program operates on annual grant funding of 2.4 million dollars and the Dothan City School System provides in kind and financial partnership of 20% or \$605,055 annually.

Mrs. Vincent has been tracking the Dothan City Schools transmission and it was submitted on time and passed several key requirements. The system provided a portion of the \$27,000 cost to hire a professional grant writer because the program is a significant part of the system and a life-changing key component for students and families.

We are now in the waiting phase. It is our understanding that we will not be notified of approval until at least June 30, 2020 and most likely it will be July 2020.

There are 55 employees who are working in the Head Start Program and their salary is funded by the federal grant. While we are more than hopeful that we will receive the grant for the next 5-year cycle; as just stated, we will not receive any formal approval until the summer.

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I feel it is our duty to make sure that all employees currently working in Head Start are aware of where we are in the process and understand that if we don't receive the federal funding, the program will come to a close.

Naturally, the system cannot afford nor attempt to continue a Head Start Program until the federal program administrators make a determination on the award of the grant.

Mrs. Vincent has kept her staff apprised and will continue to have meetings to talk through and explain the information. As this is usually the period to enroll children for next year, the DCS Head Start staff will register children but will clearly post the notice on the registration forms and notify parents, that we will not know if we can operate the program until July 2020. The timing is unfortunate but we have no control over the federal timelines.

Mrs. Vincent will provide a notice to all of her employees. Naturally, some employees may wish to seek employment elsewhere. It is a difficult timeline for the employees and the students.

The Dothan City School System will provide notices and information as we are made aware of any changes or decisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Phyllis Edwards".

Dr. Phyllis Edwards
Superintendent