

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Tina Certain  
Robert P. Hyatt  
Diyonne McGraw  
Leannetta McNealy, Ph.D.  
Gunnar F. Paulson, Ed.D.

**SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Carlee Simon, Ph.D.



District Office  
620 East University Avenue  
Gainesville, Florida  
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www.sbac.edu  
(352) 955-7300

*Mission Statement: We are committed to the success of every student!*

December 17, 2020

Dear Alachua County Public School students:

As a proud graduate of Alachua County Public Schools, I'd like to tell you that I know what it's like to be a student in this district. But COVID has changed things.

Your education and your lives have been turned upside down because of this pandemic. Whether you're attending in person or online, school is a lot different than it was just a year ago. It's definitely harder for you, your families and your teachers. I see it with my own three kids, who are all students here. But I want you to know that everyone in our school district has been working very hard to support you.

I know you've missed out on a lot of things you really enjoy doing, like hanging out with your friends, going to games, concerts or movies, or even spending time with your extended family. I also know that COVID has hurt many families in some way.

Now that a vaccine is on the way, I think we can look forward to a brighter 2021. But we all need to keep doing what we can to protect ourselves, our friends and our families, like wearing masks, social distancing and washing our hands often. That way we'll all have a chance to celebrate together when life finally gets back to normal.

As the new Superintendent for our district (that's the person in charge of schools), it will be my job to do whatever I can to keep you, your teachers and everyone in our schools safe and healthy. It will also be my job to make sure our schools have what they need to give you a great education and prepare you for success.

The education I got here in Alachua County has made a big difference in my life. It's helped me achieve my goals and reach for new ones. I want the same for you.

So keep working hard inside and outside the classroom, and keep your eyes on the future--not just the end of the school year, or the end of COVID, but on the future you want for yourself after you graduate, whether that happens this school year or thirteen years from now.

You've had a tough year, but things will get better. In the meantime, I hope you and your families have a safe and happy Winter Break!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carlee Simon, Ph.D." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Carlee Simon, Ph.D.

Superintendent

Alachua County Public Schools

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Dear Alachua County Public School families:

As a parent of three school-aged children, I know that your time is precious, particularly during these stressful times. That's why I'm going to be very brief in introducing myself. My name is Dr. Carlee Simon, and I'm the new Superintendent for Alachua County Public Schools.

I have a 20-year background in education. I've been a K-12 teacher, and my parents were both teachers in this district. I've taught hundreds of principals, district administrators and other educators about educational leadership, school finance, and other school-related issues. I've run a national education organization, written many published articles and made many presentations to national, even international groups.

That background will certainly help me lead the district day-to-day. But I believe my passion for education, my commitment to the success of all children and my experience collaborating with diverse groups to achieve common goals will be just as important.

We are facing enormous challenges in the next few months, including the pandemic, a potential budget crisis and a stubborn achievement gap. We will need the voices, ideas and efforts of families, as well as students, employees and the broader community, to come through those challenges and to establish a solid foundation for an even brighter future for our children.

This is only the first message in what I expect to be a vital and ongoing dialogue between the district, our families and all of Alachua County about a shared vision for our public schools. I'm looking forward to it!

My very best wishes to you and your family for a safe and happy winter break!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carlee Simon, Ph.D." in a cursive script.

Carlee Simon, Ph.D.

Superintendent

Alachua County Public Schools