



# *Pearl River School District*

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**Marco F. Pochintesta**  
Superintendent of Schools

September 6, 2016

Dear Pearl River Parents and Families,

On behalf of the school district, I welcome you to the 2016-17 school year. This morning, I visited each of the school buildings and many classrooms to welcome your children for the first day of school. I am pleased to report that there were many happy faces all around. This does not surprise me as our buildings, administrators, faculty and staff were well prepared to welcome your children to school.

While our summer break was approximately ten weeks long, much was accomplished in preparation for the start of the school year. Numerous faculty and staff were hired to fill positions throughout the district. I would like to thank the faculty, staff and parents who volunteered their time to provide important feedback to our administrators on interview committees. I would also like to thank the students who came in during the summer to participate in demo lessons from prospective teachers.

In addition to the normal summer cleaning of all of our classrooms and offices, we had several projects occurring at the schools. At the Middle School and Lincoln Ave, the hallways and many classrooms have a fresh new look with new color schemes. Our grounds at all school buildings and Central Avenue Field have been revitalized with new shrubbery and flower beds in many areas, clean up of brush, and pruning of bushes and trees. New floors were installed in several classrooms at Franklin Ave and Evans Park. New water bottle filling stations have been installed at each of the schools to allow students and staff to access filtered water. The special water fountains remind students of the important environmental good achieved by refilling water bottles. A small electronic message on the fountain lets users know how many plastic bottles have been prevented from going into landfills.

Our capital project at the High School, stairs and walkways by the flagpole, began as soon as school was out in June. With the exception of one section of railing that is being installed shortly, the project was finished in time for bus arrival this morning. The installation of a new generator at the HS will ensure full functionality in the event of a loss of power. Rounding out summer work is the installation of new speed bumps at the HS and new striping in the HS and Franklin Avenue parking lots.

This summer, our faculty participated in over 300 hours of summer curriculum work and new staff participated in two days of staff development in preparation for the new school year. We begin this year with new electives at the HS, two new Technology Integration Coaches, an expansion of our orchestra program at the middle and high school levels, and the restoration of a part-time library media specialist at the elementary level.

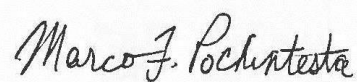
Our technology department replaced and upgraded 100 computers, 32 laptops and 120 Chromebooks. Three network switches were also upgraded in the district. Eight new LED Smart Boards were installed this summer with more scheduled to be installed over the next few months. Other key changes that our technology department worked on this summer was the upgrade of our Windows operating system to 64-bit to better support programs such as AutoCad and Adobe Creative Cloud.

To accomplish this much during the summer is a testament to the leadership of our administrators, and the skill and dedication of all of the staff in all departments, custodial, facilities and grounds, clerical, and technology.

Our Superintendent's Conference Day was held last Thursday to celebrate the accomplishments of the past, reflect on and reaffirm our commitment to the District's mission that *All Students Can and Will Learn*. We've begun this year refreshed and energized, and a sharpened focus on critical thinking and creative problem solving supports our objective to offer an educational experience to all students that is rich in 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning.

I hope that your children return home from their first day of school sharing their excitement and showing that their passions for learning have been sparked.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marco J. Pochintesta". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned on a light gray rectangular background.