

# Update from JCPS superintendent Donna Hargens | Schools develop students' skills

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Donna Hargens is the superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools.

Critical thinking, creativity and collaboration skills are the keys to success for today's students. These are the skills that colleges and companies want — the skills that help communities prosper.

Of course, excellent reading and writing skills are essential too.

Literacy is the bedrock on which students build solid foundations in math, science, social studies and most other subjects.

As students lay these foundations, critical thinking helps them analyze problems. Creativity helps them find the best solutions. Collaboration helps them learn to evaluate ideas and work toward a common understanding.

As the new superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools, my primary goal is to make sure students develop the full array of skills they need for academic success now and for the challenges and opportunities in their future.

I'm honored the Jefferson County Board of Education has offered me this opportunity to help all students become critical thinkers and lifelong learners.

Raising student achievement is the board's top goal and my No. 1 priority. I will:

Focus on effective teaching strategies that meet individual student needs.

Advance a clear, consistent curriculum based on core academic standards.

Align instruction, programs, tests and professional development with the objectives in the standards.

Implement effective district planning and resource allocation to create conditions for success.

Use data on student performance to identify areas for improvement and inform decisions.

Continuous improvement in our schools doesn't *just happen*. It requires the commitment of high-performing teams of educators who will regularly assess and re-evaluate progress toward students' learning goals, revamping processes along the way.

Continuous improvement also requires the full engagement and support of all of the district's stakeholders.

I'm grateful to the many parents and teachers as well as the companies, organizations and individuals who have generously offered their support and invested in the success of the students and, ultimately, the success of the Louisville community.

All of us — the entire community, combining our critical thinking, creativity and collaboration skills — can build on the district's legacy in order to realize Jefferson County's potential and lay the foundation for a tremendous future. I'm thrilled I'm going to be a part of it.

Source: <http://www.citizen-times.com/article/B2/20110803/NEWS010202/308030021/Update-from-JCPS-superintendent-Donna-Hargens-Schools-develop-students-skills?odyssey=nav%7Chead>