

For nothing is fixed, forever and forever and forever, it is not fixed; the earth is always shifting, the light is always changing, the sea does not cease to grind down rock. Generations do not cease to be born, and we are responsible to them because we are the only witnesses they have. The sea rises, the light fails, lovers cling to each other, and children cling to us. The moment we cease to hold each other, the sea engulfs us and the light goes out.

By James Baldwin

Welcome University Prep Science & Math (UPSM) Families!

I'm Margaret Trimer-Hartley, your superintendent. I come to you with many years of experience in education, but in some very different roles.

The first decade of my career I worked as an education reporter for The Detroit Free Press; the second decade I worked as the Director of Communications for the Michigan Education Association (MEA) advocating for teachers and students.

Now I've entered what I believe will be the richest experience of my professional life—leading the creation of the UPSM system of schools in Detroit. I cannot wait to get to know the parents and students who will make up our school family.

It's about community

Powerful relationships are the heart of what will make UPSM a great learning community. Indeed, community is the heart that will pump life into our school.

I believe the strength of our interactions and decisions as a school family will come from our commitment to build a community in which we trust one another, share openly what is important to us, what motivates us, what challenges us.

In an effort to set a tone for UPSM that is open, honest, rich and challenging, I offer the following personal reflection about who I am as your superintendent and what my hopes and dreams are for our learning community.

Activist and advocate

Every job I have taken has been in an effort to change the world—and myself—to make it better for our children and through our children.

That passion is precisely what motivated me to join the University Prep family of innovative schools in January 2007.

I see very clearly that the global economy has little to offer those without a great education—and a lot of it. If you're not convinced read, "The World is Flat," by Thomas Friedman. That book awakened me to the reality of the economic revolution we are experiencing and the urgency of preparing our children—and ourselves—to thrive in this rapidly changing new world.

Great schools—courage, trust, commitment

I believe that the schools must respond in revolutionary ways to the forces of change. They must become safer, smaller and smarter.

The dedicated and passionate team of educators I have the privilege to work with are building from scratch a school that is responsive to the market and to its clientele—students and parents. It is a school that is of the community, by the community and for the community. By that we mean that UPSM is responding to the needs of the community, seeking input and partners from the community and giving back to the community in the form of service, volunteering and sharing.

Forging a new path in education is exhilarating. I plan to use that energy and the thrill that comes with making powerful change to make sure that we don't let tradition or comfort with the familiar compel us into complacency, talk us out of innovating or convince of us the wisdom of the status quo.

My greatest hope in opening UPSM is that we will follow the best research available about how young people learn, and that we will trust our hearts, our souls and our gut instincts about what UPSM children and families need.