January 20, 2022

To the STRIDE Board of Directors:

Five years ago, STRIDE Academy’s authorizer Friends of Education (FOE) began the process of permanently closing the school. In June 2017 (after numerous requests to FOE to reconsider its decision) FOE offered STRIDE one additional school year to demonstrate that the School was taking the significant steps to improve its operations, governance and academic achievement. If satisfied with the progress the school could avoid permanent closure. The STRIDE Board, Administration, Staff, were committed to the task of doing whatever it would take to keep the school open and continue serving its families. Although it was extremely stressful to work in an environment with the school’s survival at stake, there was an increased level of comradery and commitment to the effort among the school’s students, staff and community.

In early 2018, the school was informed that it had successfully delivered on the metrics that Friends of Education set forth for the school. Additionally, STRIDE requested and was given the opportunity to pursue a different Authorizer. STRIDE’s Administration and Board believed that Pillsbury United Communities (PUC) was an authorizer that was committed to eliminating educational disparities and social change. This aligned with STRIDE’s newly adopted Strategic Plan. STRIDE’s Board approved the decision to pursue PUC. Pillsbury’s Board approved to authorize STRIDE Academy for three years.

In May 2020, STRIDE Academy received an offer from PUC that the school’s overall progress was satisfactory and agreed to authorize the school for an additional four years.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have been able to work with such a talented and committed staff through these four and a half years. I especially want to thank STRIDE’s Board Chair, Sara Fromm for her trust and confidence in me to serve in this capacity.

With that said, I believe it is time for the next leader to “take the helm”. I am therefore asking the Board to consider and approve an Extended Leave of Absence commencing July 1st, 2022. I have met with the board chair and have discussed a strategy that will ensure a smooth transition for STRIDE’s next leader.

Respectfully submitted,

*Eric Williams*

Eric Williams, Executive Director