



July 21, 2020

Peace Campus International Community -

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Nineteen years ago I left Ohio for the first time, beginning a journey that has generously given me the opportunity to serve communities in six other states and some of our country's biggest and most vibrant cities. But it has truly been the honor *of my lifetime* to strive alongside the community in which I was raised for the last three years as a principal in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

It is therefore with the deepest heartbreak that I announce my departure from this wonderful place that I will always call home and that my daughters will always claim as their birthplace.

I penned this farewell over a month ago, so for those of you to whom this is not news, I understand if you are irreparably disappointed at the timing. I can only ask your forgiveness and understanding as we have sought to ensure that the official announcement of this transition (coming from the district) was also accompanied by the announcement of a capable interim leader and a resolute commitment to the continuation of the unique and praiseworthy program that we have built at CIHS as the district seeks a permanent replacement at principal. I can say that Ms. Karen Byron-Johnson, who steps in as the interim principal at Campus International High School, is a true representative of the best ideals of IB in that she is not simply someone for whom I have a deep professional respect, but someone who I truly admire as a person. Ms. Byron-Johnson comes to CIHS after leading the perennially successful Whitney Young School, where she has established herself as a strong support for her teachers and a caring and generous advocate for a generation of students.

There is no way that I can ever repay the debt I owe to this city for the way it has shaped me into who I am today and always, and I pray every day that both my work and the way I live my life make our community proud and continue the legacy of Clevelanders who have fought for decades for justice and equality and celebrated the joy, humanity, and expressiveness of our brothers, sisters, neighbors, and friends.

My family and I will return to Los Angeles in this time of global crisis both to be a support to and to have the support of our family and community there. And I will return to the indomitable and glorious neighborhood of Watts to once again join a community not unlike our own here in Cleveland, where generations of strong and caring people, innovative and thoughtful ideas, and a relentless and persistent spirit make a neighborhood where every citizen is a community leader.

I hope that my colleagues, friends, partners, and most of all, my students and their families here in Cleveland and especially at the magical place we call Campus International, continue to see me as a friend and ally, albeit from a distance, as you surge forth with the unstoppable momentum that our thriving city has gained in the last decade and a half. I am with you and will always support your work.

To my students, thank you for inspiring me every day with your enthusiasm and resilience, your intrepid willingness to be pioneers and your grace and sense of humor amidst the challenges of building a program from scratch. Keep your eyes on the prize and remember that your work truly begins when you are holding that college diploma.

I am proud to be continuing to support students in reaching that dream as the new Site Director at College Track – Watts, a partner to the tenacious bulldogs of David Starr Jordan High School. Please stay in touch—by email ([aclmallawany@collegetrack.org](mailto:aclmallawany@collegetrack.org)), by phone (213.608.6135), or on Instagram (@collegetrackameer).

Peace.Strength.Respect.

Ameer Kim El-Mallawany

