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SBEZone.org

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The City of South Bend is the home of many greats in our community. Several stars have emerged from South Bend. These include William Tyrel Nicks (AKA Billy “Stix” Nicks), a self-taught musician who has been honored for his contributions to the arts in the South Bend region; Vivica A. Fox, an award-winning actress, producer, and television host who has starred in multiple movies, including Soul Food and Independence Day; Skylar Diggins-Smith, a WNBA superstar and former student of our very own Wilson Elementary School who has returned to our city and the Empowerment Zone to pour into our children, and, most recently, Blake Wesley and Jaden Ivey, South Bend natives who realized their life-long dream when they were drafted into the NBA just this year.

While we celebrate our city’s rich contribution to the history and culture of our community, we can’t overlook the issues that have challenged our community which have made the road to success more difficult for our young people.

The Empowerment Zone is an innovative and promising solution to this dilemma, and I am so proud to serve as your next Chief. Together, with my leadership team, we commit to providing a safe and healthy learning environment where great teaching and learning take center stage. We commit to planting and nurturing seeds of hope that inspire young people to reach their full and highest potential. We commit to striving towards progress so that today is better than yesterday, and tomorrow is better than today. We commit to being catalysts for change and a stabilizing force for our city. We commit to ensuring all members of our community feel valued and have a deep sense of belongingness.

As such, I am grateful to you, our students and families. I am thankful for your commitment to learning and growing. I am thankful for your hard work and persistence in persevering. I’m incredibly excited about this school year and the things we will accomplish together.

Cultivate the  **mind.** Inspire the **change.**





The work ahead of us requires that we build a strong and robust educational ecosystem that is grounded in collaboration, shared ownership, and collective achievement. To that end, the Empowerment Zone must serve as a gathering place for the Westside community. It must serve as the epicenter for programs and activities that celebrate our diversity and bridge divisions, foster ethnic pride and community involvement, promote holistic academic and social programs, and provide authentic community experiences for our students, families, staff, partners, and supporters.

Thank you for your dedication to our schools and community. Thank you for working hard and never giving up.

Thank you for believing in yourselves and believing in us.

Welcome to a new school year!

Dr. Davion R. Lewis

Chief of the South Bend Empowerment Zone