



June 17, 2019

Dear KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy Families,

I am so excited to join KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy as your Principal! I have been working hard over the last few days to learn more about KIPP, and while I'm sure that learning will extend well throughout the school year, I look forward to working with the KSPA team working this summer and the entire KSPA community when school is back in session in order to become even more grounded in the work.

A bit of background on me - I grew up in the Midwest and originally was a Colorado transplant in 1997. I married my wife, Brie, in the summer of 2000. I enjoy hiking, camping, swimming, Star Wars, dystopian fiction, office pranks, dark humor, Stephen King, movies, jam bands, and home improvement projects that ultimately make me realize that I am over my head. I started my education career teaching Language Arts in the Academy of Charter Schools in Adams 12, and then when housing prices rose, we moved to Tucson, Arizona where it was cheaper to live. During our seven years there, we had three children and ultimately chose to move to Indiana, where my wife's entire family had roots. I spent four years there as a high school assistant principal before we realized that this was not where we wanted our kids to learn their life lessons, and I became principal at Morey Middle School in Denver Public Schools.

Before I took over, Morey was languishing near the bottom of the performance pile in DPS, and was on the brink of closure. I built a new leadership team and set about to build systems and structures that would support a positive and academically challenging school culture, including a mindfulness program and strong therapeutic social-emotional supports. Additionally, we worked hard to overcome a culture where the students labeled as gifted & talented at the school were often treated differently than the school's traditional population, thus creating a school of "us vs them." I directed my staff to engage in schoolwide empathy work, and together we worked with parents to determine how to build a better way to personalized education for every student. Morey came back from the brink, and has now been rated "Green" under the DPS School Performance Framework for the last three years. I then moved to Challenge School in Cherry Creek last year because it was closer to my home in Aurora; however, I learned the hard way that while my commute was shorter, my values were not in sync with those of Cherry Creek, and thus I have chosen to move on to KIPP.

Have a great summer, and I look forward to meeting you soon. At registration in July there will information about opportunities for families to meet with me at times that are convenient for you. If you need to reach me sooner than that, I can be reached at [ntonk@kippcolorado.org](mailto:ntonk@kippcolorado.org) after June 19. As I said above, I have three children of my own, and I recognize that as parents, we have our own needs, desires, hopes, and dreams for our kids. I can't wait to hear yours for your KIPPsters!

Noah Tonk

Principal  
KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy