

EAST FELICITATIONS

A Weekly Celebration of the Ways We're #ThrivingWithPurposeTogether
in East Feliciana Public Schools



A Legacy of Progress

PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR
MRS. ELLA MIMS-PHILSON



From entering East Feliciana Public Schools as a student at Norwood Elementary School to her current role serving as principal of East Feliciana Enrichment Academy in Clinton, Mrs. Ella Mims-Philson's journey has taken her to every corner of East Feliciana Parish and through a living history of progress.

"Progress is embedded in the fabric of East Feliciana Public Schools," notes Philson. "I have witnessed the progress made from using very pre-owned textbooks at Norwood Elementary School to each student being in possession of a Chromebook; from a dual race-based system to a race-inclusive system; from a male-dominated system to a system where Louisiana's first Black female superintendent hired me as a principal and five district school are being led by females. Now I am witnessing the first superintendent to be confronted with leading a school district, a workforce, and a community through a pandemic. This is historical in my 45 years in education."

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A Look Ahead

Black History Month
February

Mardi Gras Holiday
NO SCHOOL
Monday, February 15 -
Wednesday, February 17

No 21st CCLC Afterschool
Activities
Monday, February 15 -
Thursday, February 18
Programming will resume on
Monday, February 22.

Pre-K Registration
Mar. 8-Mar. 31
May 10-May 14
Get more information and
register online at
[efschools.net!](http://efschools.net)

45 Years of Servant Leadership

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In recognition of her integral contributions to this progress, East Feliciana Public Schools recently recognized Philson as District Principal of the Year.

"Leadership calls for visionaries, forward thinkers, and strong-willed individuals who are willing to make decisions in sometimes uncomfortable situations," explains Superintendent Keisha L. Netterville, "Mrs. Philson is living proof that it can be done with grace, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to one's calling."

A career in education was not Philson's original plan.

"Teaching was not my first career choice. I wanted to be an interior decorator, but was told by my family that I would never earn a living doing that because there were no Black interior decorators and according to them, I had never decorated even a birdhouse," says Philson. "After weighing the options, my mom decided that a good career for me would be teaching English because that's what she would do if opportunity was given."

However, Philson soon found purpose in her work.

"Serving children grew from being a job into a being a passion that remains as current and as fresh for me as if I had just begun," explains Philson, "Teaching is about having a great love for the faces of children: the faces that haunt long after the day ends, or the faces that make you smile on the drive home. It is seeing a child change right before my eyes or waiting patiently for change to slowly come. Teaching carries a different love that exists for the youngest to the oldest of every child I meet."

In the same way that an interior designer must recognize the singular character of each house, Philson notes that master educators must understand the special character of each individual child.

"The love of teaching is multi-faceted for me because it is different for each child that crosses my path. My classrooms and my offices carry a different character for each of my children," she explains. "No matter the form or hue of the container, I am always ready to teach, to love, and to serve a child. Please notice that my students are referenced as 'my children.' From the first time a student touches my life, he becomes my child."

Philson graduated from West High School in Jackson and earned a master's degree in supervision and administration from Southern University. During her career, she has served as social studies and English language arts teacher at Clinton Middle School; ninth grade English language arts teacher at Clinton High School; assistant principal at East Feliciana Enrichment Academy; and principal at Clinton Elementary School, East Feliciana Enrichment Academy, and East Feliciana High School. Philson holds particular passion for her current work as leader of the East Feliciana Enrichment Academy.

"East Feliciana Enrichment Academy is the refuge and home for my children who are my 'diamonds in the rough.' Whether angry or sad when they enter, most of the children and my parents ask to stay. The Enrichment Academy is a place of refuge, a place of light, love, and peace."

Philson is now serving her third and fourth generation children in East Feliciana Parish.



Mrs. Ella Mims-Philson currently serves as principal of East Feliciana Enrichment Academy

"Teaching turned me into a servant-leader, not only for my children but for their parents and guardians. Embracing the child's entire environment and community is a sure sign of servant leadership," she explains.

Philson has watched those same students become the leaders of the progress she has witnessed throughout her life and career.

"I believe in the children of East Feliciana Public Schools. I have always believed that they could reach my highest expectations. They have not disappointed me," she proclaims. "The children of this district never give up on trying to meet the success standards and are often surprised at their own capabilities. Once they get past the fear of rigor required to succeed, these children become powerful forces in the community."

Superintendent Netterville notes that this is a reflection on Philson.

"As a school leader, I admired her strength and ability to encourage while leading amid adversity," notes Netterville. "Whether dealing with an employee or student issues, she handles every situation with wisdom and professionalism." Philson notes that she, too, has a role model for her work. "I share the profession with my Father who is in heaven," she says. "We both love teaching and serving. We are servant-leaders."

Notes Netterville, "Ms. Philson says that progress is embedded in the fabric of East Feliciana Public Schools. That progress has only happened because of a legacy of dedicated servant-leaders like Mrs. Ella Mims-Philson. In recognizing her as our district Principal of the Year, we honor that progress, that legacy, and her 45 years of dedicated service to the families of our community."

Principal of the Year