June Message

For educators and others that work on school campuses, June is a special month. June marks the official end to the academic year, but it also provides the school community with the opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of our students, faculty and staff.

First, to the Class of 2017, on June 23, you will participate in an incredibly important ceremony. Graduating from high school is a significant accomplishment. It is an important milestone for each of you. It is my sincere wish that you have taken advantage of every opportunity to learn, to grow, and to experience during your years at Mount Markham. Unfortunately, it seems to be human nature, particularly for seniors, to be in such a rush to graduate that time is not devoted to really appreciating the powerful and influential impact of your school experience, particularly your high school years. I encourage you to take time in the coming days and weeks to reflect back upon your experience; visit that teacher or staff member who made a difference in your life; thank your parents and family members for all of the love and support, rides, and financial assistance; recall with good friends the many moments, activities, victories and loses, accomplishments and relationships that bookmark your school career. Most of all, be proud of your accomplishments, know that you have had an impact upon your school community, and know that you will always be a member of the Mount Markham family. Best wishes for your future.

During the month of June, we have moving up ceremonies that mark important transitions for our students and school community. There will be tears of joy at UPK, Kindergarten, 4th grade and 8th grade moving up ceremonies. As the father of three, I remember fondly the innocence of my children at ages four and five; I remember the endless energy of my kids when they were leaving 4th grade. By the time my children were leaving 8th grade, I was myself a middle school principal. I experienced, struggled and survived the adolescent years along with the parents of my students. Parents and family members in our community may have similar thoughts as they attend these important events this month. I extend my congratulations to each of you and I hope that your child’s school year was positive and that you have witnessed and supported your child’s growth and learning.

Finally, during the month of June, we say our goodbyes. In an earlier message, I shared my thanks and best wishes for our retirees and our board members who will end their service. One retiree that I wish to offer special thanks is Janet Tillapaugh. Janet has dedicated her adult life to the education of Mount Markham students! Janet started her teaching career in Massachusetts in 1974, but returned to the area and began her career at Mount Markham in 1978. In the 1980’s, Janet was part of the process that led to the middle school being identified as a “school of excellence”. She encourage the use student portfolios as authentic measures of student progress and worked with hundreds of teachers by presenting at state conferences. Janet was recognized as a NYS Teacher of the Year and in 2000, she made the trip across Fairground Road and began her work as a high school English teacher. Like so many of us in education, Janet is excited to be stopped by adults who ask “do you remember me”. After 39 years at Mount Markham, and 42 years as an educator, Janet may not remember all of the names, but she knows that she dedicated her life to trying to help every one of her students have a greater command over the language and the literature that she loves. Janet, you will be missed; thank you for your years of service to our district and our children!

June ends another school year, but as we turn the calendar page, the new school year begins. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the board of education for their commitment and service to the district. I’m grateful to Jack Kilty, John Cornmire and Carol Lewis who served the district for many years and now have more time to devote to family. I would like to thank and congratulate all of the retirees who will call it a career at the end of the month; I would also thank our school community for its support of our school district. I encourage community members and parents of students, in particular, to take an active role in our school district. Finally, I would like to wish everyone a wonderful summer.