March Superintendent Corner

I am so grateful that we live in a time when service to country and to community are recognized positively. Service is such an excellent way to give back and often, service becomes a rewarding learning experience. In June, three members of our board of education will complete terms of service. I am grateful to Cathy Wheat, Phil Casler, and Jack Kilty for their ongoing service, dedication and commitment to our school community. Mrs. Wheat, has devoted nearly thirty years to board service at Mount Markham! Mr. Kilty, has been called back to serve on the board more than once and has served for more than a dozen years; Mr. Casler is completing his first term, but represents a family legacy of service to the school community. Selfishly, I hope that each will consider running for another term on the board; however, I want to state unequivocally, how grateful I am to each for their outstanding work as members of our board of education!

Board service is not easy and it is not a small commitment. The board of education provides leadership to the school district by creating a shared vision, focusing attention on academic achievement, developing the school budget, reviewing and adopting policy, approving collective bargaining agreements and maintaining strong ethical standards. Importantly, the board of education hires a single employee, the school superintendent, who it charges with the responsibility to manage the day to day operation of the school district. The board annually evaluates the superintendent and together, they form the governance team for the district.

The Mount Markham Board of Education generally meets twice a month on the second and fourth Tuesday. Board members also serve on board committees that help to facilitate policy review, negotiations, audit review, and advocacy. Sometimes daily, but at least weekly, board members receive updates from the superintendent about activity on campus. In addition, board members receive and review a detailed packet of information that supports the board meeting agenda. The president and vice president of the board meet with the superintendent to establish the agenda. Board members are encouraged to attend professional development activities coordinated by the School Board Institute or the BOCES. Board members are also encouraged to attend school functions. Often, board members have or have had children attend school in the district; however, it is important for board members to stay up to date about educational practices, education law, and what’s happening on our campus. In all, it is not unusual for board members to devote 20 hours or more to service each month! I should mention that this service, while a result of an election or appointment, is completely voluntary. Board members are not compensated for their service to the school district.

Are you interested in learning more about service to your school district? There is a training provided by the School Board Institute that will be held on Saturday, March 30 from approximately 8:30 until noon. The training is held at the OMH BOCES located on Middle Settlement Road in New Hartford. If you wish to register for this training, please reach out to our district clerk, Christine Roberts (315-822-2824 or croberts@mmcsd.org ) by March 25. Petitions for the board election in May must be filed with the district clerk by April 22, 2019. Petitions and other information can be obtained by contacting the district clerk or visiting the district office. To serve as a board member, you must be at least 18 years of age, be a qualified voter in the school district and be able to read and write. You cannot be employed by the district or live with another member of the board.

I am grateful to each member of our board of education. Their service to our school district and to our school community is essential. Service is critical to our success. Special thanks to Mrs. Wheat, Mr. Casler and Mr. Kilty, who will all complete terms of service in June! Interested in learning more about board service? Please consider attending the March 30 School Board training by contacting the district clerk today!