June—Strong endings and New beginnings
June is all about strong endings, new beginnings, celebrations and recognition. In an earlier update, I shared that the school year is like a long distance race. In June, the finish line is in sight and the pace is quickened. Students and teachers are filled with excitement and angst; parents are hopeful and the entire community relishes the opportunity to enjoy all that summer can bring.

June is an opportunity to enjoy student performance and student recognition programs. Please join us at our spring concerts and plays (MS concert-June 1; MS Play-June 8-9; 4th grade-June 7). Celebrate the accomplishments of our newest National Junior Honor Society members (June 6); congratulate our high school student-athletes (June 7); and dance the night away with our eighth graders as they prepare to bid farewell to the middle school (June 10). We also have moving up programs for UPK (June 15), Fourth grade (June 21) and Eighth grade (June 21) to enjoy.

For our seniors, this June is particularly special. We honor our students first at our senior awards night (June 16); we follow this wonderful program with Baccalaureate at St. Joseph the Worker Church (June 23); and celebrate Graduation (June 24). It’s a busy month to be certain. In between, there are enjoyable and enriching field trips, fun days and Regents Exams. I wish all of our students and staff the best as we finish the school year with energy, enthusiasm and the desire to always do our best.

For our seniors, graduation is a long anticipated event. Often, the seniors wish to speed through the ceremony, but I wish to encourage them to take the time to absorb and appreciate the time with friends and family. Graduation is an end, but it is also a new beginning. For many of our seniors, graduation will be followed by a summer of work and then, sometime in late August, a trip to a college campus. This is a liberating and exciting challenge. Seniors, remember that you (and probably, your parents) are paying for you to attend classes at college. Like any experience that you are paying for—take advantage of the opportunities. Prepare for a meaningful life by taking courses that will not only expand you intellectually, but will also expand your skill set and you opportunity to earn a living. Many of our seniors will enter the world of work after graduation. Skills you learned in school and at home will benefit you most. Show up to work on time; respect your supervisors and coworkers; work a full day; work well with others; take pride in your work; and contribute positively to your community; finally, some of our seniors will enter military service. I am proud and grateful to all of our seniors; however, let me share special praise to our seniors who have pledged to serve our country. May your service be safe and fulfilling; may you return home often and be strengthened by the support of a grateful nation and a grateful community. Congratulations to all of our graduates!

Community Thanks
Special thanks to the school community for supporting our school budget. Our school board developed and the community supported a budget that sustains our strong programs, strengthens program where it can and does so without significantly increasing the tax burden on our residents. Some highlights of the 16/17 school budget include ongoing support for our strong academic programs, enrichment activities and athletics, while adding teaching staff to reduce class size in the elementary school, supporting the arts and music at our elementary school and high school, supporting students with special needs in the high school and appointing a new athletic director. Congratulations to our board members Chris Burke and Cathy Wheat on your reelection and to our newest member of the board, Phil Casler. I look forward to working with the board and the community to assure the continued progress of our school district.

Excuse Our Appearance
In 2014, the community supported a $12 million capital project. Nearly $6 million of that capital work will be completed this summer. Please excuse our appearance and please be mindful of our contractors and staff as we collectively work to complete necessary upgrades on our buildings and grounds, while also preparing for the 16/17 school year.

On behalf of the board of education and our dedicated staff at Mount Markham, I hope that you have a wonderful summer.