



# Mount Markham Central School

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The school year can sometimes be analogous to a race. At different times of the year, the race can be a sprint requiring a burst of energy; while at other times, it is a long distance race that requires endurance and persistence. We start the school year in September like a sprint, our energy and enthusiasm fuels our stride; in October and November, we try to establish a comfortable pace, establishing good practices and reinforcing learned skills; in December, we pick up the pace as we are fueled by sugar cookies and thoughts of the holiday season; during the winter months, we strive to keep a steady pace while looking forward to spring colors and warmer temperatures; finally, we enter the home stretch in April, May and June. During these months, our pace hastens as we assess our gains, celebrate our student's accomplishments, say farewell to friends and colleagues and close out the school year positively while also preparing for the next school year's race to begin.

Here are some of the exciting things that will be occurring in your school district over the next month:

School Budget Presentation- The public is invited to the regular meeting of the Mount Markham Board of Education on Tuesday, April 5 at 7PM in the MS board room. A draft of the 2016-2017 budget will be presented along with other business items. As of this writing, we continue to wait upon our representatives in Albany to see how much state aid we can expect; however, we look forward to presenting a budget that maintains our strong academic programs while also being sensitive to fiscal challenges faced by many in our school community.

State Assessment- Our students in grades 3-8 will have the opportunity to show their progress toward meeting rigorous standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. This is federal and state mandated testing and will occur April 5-7 and April 13-15. I have encouraged all of our parents to have their students take these assessments as they have been delinked to teacher evaluation and the results provide valuable information regarding student and program performance.

Speech and Debate Team – Mrs. Culver and members of the Mount Markham Speech and Debate team will compete in the New York State Championships on April 9-10 at Hofstra University on Long Island. For much of the school year, approximately 40 of our students have participated in competitive speech and debate contests. Our top students will face the top speakers from across the state in April. We also have a number of students that have also qualified for the national championship that will be held in Sacramento, California in May.

MOMMS Mixer and Amateur Night – One of my favorite groups to visit with is our MOMMS group. MOMMS provides our school and our students with so many wonderful programs and additional financial support for special classroom and building activities. They are always looking for volunteers. They meet on April 11 at 7PM in the ES library and they are coordinating a wonderful opportunity for student performance on April 15-the MOMMS Amateur Night starting at 6:30 PM in the HS Auditorium.

Smart Schools Investment Planning Meetings- The school district has been allocated \$1.4 million of the Smart Schools Bond Act approved by New York State Voters in 2014. Join us on April 6, May 10 and May 24 to learn about the plan to strengthen our school network, increase campus security and increase instructional technology on campus. On April 6, the community is invited to attend a meeting at 3:15 in the high school room B102. On May 10, the plan will be presented as part of the annual budget hearing at 7PM in the HS Auditorium; and finally, on May 24, the board of education will consider the plan on May 24 at its regular meeting at 7PM held at the MS board room.

Greater Winfield Historical Society-Town of Winfield Bicentennial Celebration-April 17 10-5PM (Town Municipal Building). Come and enjoy the Mount Markham Jazz ensemble and take a walk back into the school's history during this celebration event. Over the last month, middle school students have been examining yearbooks, news articles, pictures and other documents that share the history of the school district over the last 200 years. Samples of their work will be displayed along with many other exciting things to do and see.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Registration Activities-April 18-19; If your child is ready to start school and meets the eligibility criteria for these wonderful programs, we encourage their registration (10am-1PM on 4/18 and 5-7PM on 4/19)

Music Performances/Art Show-Our High School and Elementary performance groups will entertain us on April 20 (High School Spring Concert and Art Show-7PM HS Auditorium). Our artists will amaze us with their talent and creativity. On April 21, our elementary students will perform at 7PM, also at the HS Auditorium.

Spring Recess-April 25-29-School will not be in session. Final recharge of the batteries before the finishing laps of the school year race! On April 25-26, the American Red Cross coordinates a babysitter training program at the high school.

As I complete this month's article, I cannot help but mention how proud I am of our students, staff and school community. From the dedication of our school board members, to the above and beyond efforts of staff, to our talented students, and supportive parents and community, we are engaged in an important mission. Our community's future depends so heavily upon the success of our students. I'm grateful that we are running the school year race together and that it is a race that we all can complete and feel such a sense of accomplishment.

Yours in the education of our students,

Paul Berry, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools