Happy New Year!

The new year and the new decade begin with trepidation and hope. Herman Melville said that "ignorance is the parent of fear". Nelson Mandela recognized how fear can cripple our actions and encouraged "may your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears". We fear things that we do not understand or that are different. We are encouraged to learn more about the object of our fear and through that understanding overcome fear. Similarly, we are encouraged to act in support of our hopefulness. Hope with well-intentioned action leads to success!

Our seniors are six months from graduation. They, as do all of our students, embody our hope for the future of our community, our state and our country. As we have the last twelve years, our teachers and our community, have six more critical months to act to educate, challenge and inspire this outstanding group of young men and women. Seniors, you have six months of work remaining to complete an important milestone in your life’s journey. We are committed to your success, but you must continue to work hard and sharpen the skills and qualities that will help you succeed.

Our district continues to reflect upon and celebrate its 50th anniversary. We were so pleased and proud to welcome back nearly a thousand alumna to campus this fall. The organizing committee has more activity planned along with a collective effort that can engage our entire community in a campaign to support our students for many years to come. We are also hopeful that we can celebrate the success of one or more alumni at graduation in June. Nominate outstanding alumni who have made a significant impact in their field, service to the community, or contribution to society for recognition as at Mount Markham Hall of Fame Inductee. Applications are available on our website (www.mmcsd.org) and must be submitted by April 1.

This fall, our campus was stricken by the sudden death of middle school counselor Jessica Cooper. We continue to mourn her significant loss; however, on behalf of our campus, I am so grateful for the support shown by so many including friends, community members and colleagues from schools throughout the region. Jessica worked with action and with hope. She challenged and encouraged each of us to be the best us we could be. Jessica was a leader on our campus and few were more committed to the social and emotional wellness of our students. While still mourning, we know that our student’s needs are great and we are hopeful that our search for an experienced interim school counselor will be successful.
Yes, concerns about poverty, the environment, geopolitics, the future and the unknown can cause fear. As we move into 2020, may we see how education can help to overcome ignorance and fear; may we be hopeful and intentional in our actions to achieve our hopes and goals, short term and long. I am hopeful that 2020 will be a memorable and productive year for the Mount Markham School Community.

Paul Berry
Mount Markham
Superintendent of Schools