December 2017 Message

Let me start by wishing everyone in the Mount Markham School Community and the region a happy holiday season! December is a wonderful month on our school campus; spirits are naturally lifted; holiday decorations and preparations for holiday concerts punctuate our schools as our teachers and support staffs strive to keep pace with learning goals. We are particularly grateful this season for the generosity in our community and among our staff. Anonymous giving and concerted efforts abound to assure that no child wakes up Christmas morning without a gift to open. If you wish to help, contact a school office. If you want to spend an enjoyable evening on campus to get in the holiday spirit, consider attending one of our holiday concerts (MS-Dec. 6; ES-Dec. 13 (at the HS Auditorium); HS/with Art Show-December 20). In the event of a weather related school closure, the concerts will occur the next evening.

Recently, I was encouraged to create a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page for our website. First, however, I had to consider which questions to answer and discovered that most could already be answered with information on the site. For example, I’m frequently asked how to apply for a job on campus? Most jobs will start with an internal posting; however, once the internal process is complete, you can find a list of openings by visiting the district website (www.mmcsd.org) and selecting the District-Employment Opportunities links. We are always looking for substitute teachers, teacher assistants, teacher aides, school nurses, school bus drivers and monitors. Teaching jobs will require you to visit another website (www.OLAS.org). We use this site to expand the reach of our recruitment. Another question that I am asked frequently is how much are school board members paid? The answer is $0. Our seven board members volunteer ten or more hours a month to attend school meetings, regional education and advocacy events as well as many school functions. Board meetings are generally held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. You can find out more by visiting the District-Board of Education Page.

Every now and then, I’m asked a question that is not answered on the website. For example, we get many compliments on our campus and facilities; however, I am frequently asked why the campus keeps parking lot and entry way lights on throughout the night. We have taken steps to reduce our energy costs with high efficiency lighting in our parking lots and throughout campus, but the fact of the matter is that we keep our campus well lighted for security reasons. We have high megapixel cameras throughout the campus and the lights serve to support their use; unfortunately, from time to time, we will get visitors to campus whose driving or behavior on campus is unwanted. It is my hope that the cameras and lighting serve as a deterrent for some of this behavior. When these steps do not serve as a deterrent, the video that we capture has been very helpful to us and to law enforcement.

Communication is so important! I’ll continue to examine the possibility of creating a FAQ link on the webpage. Until then, I hope that our website, our Twitter account (@MountMarkhamCSD), articles in the West Winfield Star and communications from each of our school buildings help to keep everyone in the community informed. If you do have a question, please do not hesitate to contact one of our school offices or me by phone (3158222800) or email (pberry@mmcsd.org) or stop by the district office located across from the middle school entrance.

Let me end this December message as I began, by wishing everyone a wonderful holiday season!

Happy Holidays!

Paul Berry, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Mount Markham Central School District