May has finally arrived! Perhaps, our long winter is over. We are tough people in the North Country! We just survived what the weather forecasters suggest is the third coldest and snowiest winter on record for our area. The winter sports season ended in mid-February; hopefully, turning the calendar page will bring us some track and field, softball and baseball on our fields.

The next two months of the school year are filled with exciting events and opportunities for us to recognize the achievements of our students and our school community. Please take the opportunity to attend our spring concerts (HS-May 9; Cabaret Night-May 23) (MS-June 6); the Prom Grand March (May 12); the Elementary School Art Show (May 15); the National Junior Honor Society Induction (MS-June 4); Senior Athlete Awards (June 5); ES Play (June 7); MS Play (June 12-13); ES Fun Day (June 14); Senior Academic Awards (June 14); 4th Grade Moving Up Ceremony (June 20); 8th Grade Moving Up Ceremony (June 20); and our Class of 2018 High School Graduation (June 22).

Please also mark your calendar and plan on voting on Tuesday, May 15 (1-8PM; ES Café) as part of the annual School Budget Vote and Election. Each year, the Mount Markham Board of Education develops a budget to present to the community on this statewide budget day. This year’s budget of just over $26.3 million supports all existing school programs and represents a 2.1% increase over the budget funding the current school year. The budget calls for a 1.98% tax levy increase which is below the state’s tax cap and the maximum allowable levy for the district (2.39%). The Board works very hard to provide our students with the highest quality education possible. It focuses on providing students broad opportunities to develop content knowledge and skills that will allow them to succeed and compete in the 21st century. Importantly, the Board also seeks to develop a budget that the community can support. Thank you for voting on May 15 (1-8PM; Elementary Cafeteria).

In addition to the budget vote, registered voters will also have the opportunity to consider a proposition that will authorize the district to use $400,000 of previously approved capital funding. In December, 2014, the community approved approximately $12.8 million in funding for capital work including new roofing, new windows, new HVAC units, boiler expansions, campus security, field improvements and energy efficient lighting installation. Careful management of the project has resulted in the opportunity for the district to address additional needs in the bus garage (new lift) and in the middle school technology (air ventilation) and in the high school agriculture classroom (greenhouse) with remaining funds. Since these items were not part of the original authorization, the District seeks the community’s approval to use the funds.

Finally, on May 15, voters will have the opportunity to vote upon members running for board election. Tom Huxtable and Cynthia Miller have each submitted petitions to continue their service on the board. Tom has served the board for 16 years and has twice served as board president, including the last two school years. Cynthia Miller joined the board last May and is seeking her first full three year term. Board service is volunteer service. Board members receive no compensation for their dedication and commitment to the school district. Board members volunteer approximately 20 hours per month to attend board meetings, committee meetings, training workshops and other school functions. I am grateful for the willingness of each board member to serve their school district and their school community so admirably.

Mount Markham is a special place. Each day, our teachers, pupil personnel staff, administrators, bus drivers, and support staff have the privilege of working with our community’s children. Each day, they work with care and professionalism to support the learning and development of our region’s future that is so inherently linked to the success of our current and future students. Thank you for being an active participant in this process by attending school events and by coming out to vote on May 15.