Superintendent Message

The start of a new school year is so exciting! The eagerness and enthusiasm of our students, parents, faculty and staff is at its highest. There are great expectations and strong feelings of confidence that the school year will be filled with growth and enjoyment. It is my sincere hope that we can continue to maintain a high level of these characteristics throughout the school year. How? Focus! Perseverance! Perspective!

Parents and teachers are incredibly important to the children in our community. Many of our parents are struggling to find the time to continue to be focused and engaged in their child’s education, but there are ways. Parents can stay connected to their child’s education by reaching out to teachers (parent conferences, email, SchoolTool Parent Portal) and letting teachers and school staff know what’s happening and asking how they can help. Focus-keeping an eye on the importance of each child’s educational experience and working collaboratively with school staff to assure each child’s growth.

Sometimes school is criticized for being unlike the “real world”. Frankly, I wish the “real world” was a bit more like school; a bit more tolerant, a bit more accepting, and a bit more supportive. In life, there are good days and bad days. With nearly 1100 students on campus, there are bound to be days when students have negative interactions with one another or even with a staff member. In these instances, it is important for us to quickly intervene to understand and support a safe and respectful school environment. We must report negative behavior and we must not stand by while a member of our community is disrespected. We must be able to persevere through difficulty together.

We have high expectations that each one of our students is going to be successful. Important life lessons are taught on a daily basis in school. While we seek success for each of our students, we recognize that challenge and failure provide fertile soil for growth and learning. As parents, we want to protect our children from all of the world’s evils and all that hurts. Sometimes however, there is much to be learned and perspective is what is needed. If a child fails to study for a quiz or test and fails, what lesson can be learned? If a student-athlete does not get the playing time that they wish, what lesson can be learned? If a student auditions for a lead part in the school play, but only receives a small role, what lesson can be learned? Perspective can help us to see the lessons that will help our child be able to persevere through challenge or failure.

I’d like to end my September message by inviting and encouraging parents and the school community to become engaged and stay engaged with our school district. The board of education recently adopted its goals for the school year and included a desire to increase community engagement. Here are several ways to become involved: Join a school building team; Join our district shared decision making body called PAC; Join the MOMMS (Mothers of Mount Markham Students) organization; Join the Mount Markham Education Foundation; attend school functions; attend board of education meetings; join the Optimists Club. You can find out more about each of these opportunities by contacting a school office or the district office. Don’t hesitate to reach out to me for further information or to provide feedback (pberry@mmcsd.org).

Let’s keep the energy, enthusiasm, and high expectations for the beginning of the school year going. Let’s make the 2017-2018 school year a wonderful and memorable time of growth and enjoyment for each of our students. Have a great school year!

Paul Berry, Ph.D.
Mount Markham Superintendent of Schools