

MAY 2018

Greetings to everyone in the MBS community! It's hard to believe that we are in the home stretch for the current school year. Each year around this time, many people start to mentally "pump the brakes" because the year is coming to an end, but in reality, this is the time to "hit the gas"! The reason for this approach is that the teachers try to break as much new ground as possible so they are able to better prepare their students for the challenges that lie ahead next year. I share this with you because it is possible that your child/children will be talking about their learning with new and challenging topics in the coming weeks. One of our goals each year is to provide an appropriate level of rigor for our students and that should continue through the end of the year.

As most people know, this is the time of year when many of our students are participating in PARCC testing. The most important thing to know and remember about this experience is that our curriculum at every grade level is based on the NJ Learning Standards and the test is based on those same standards. So, in short, our teachers have been delivering lessons all year that will help prepare the students for the challenges seen on these tests. As much as the test results will provide families with valuable information about individual student progress, the data also helps the district identify strengths and needs for our school. Although the test data is used for multiple purposes, we recognize that the scores alone do not ever completely define a student's academic status. Classroom performance over an entire school year reflects a much larger body of work with a wider variety of assessments. It is for these reasons that final report card grades and comments are so important.

Arguably the biggest topic of the year has been school safety and security. Horrible and tragic events that have taken place at schools around the country this year have intensified the concerns from staff, students, and families regarding daily school safety. In order to remain open and current with our practices and protocols, the MBS administration has conducted open forum meetings with staff members and the parent community during the year. In every case, Chief Walsh has been personally involved with our discussions and planning practices. Although we are proud of the various measures we currently have in place to maintain a safe and secure setting at MBS, we also recognize the need to look for ways to further tighten things up. To that end, members from the MB Teachers Association attended committee meetings with the Board of Education in April to offer their suggestions for steps that can be taken to help firm up our current level of school security. Those suggestions are currently being discussed and considered among the administration and the Board of Education for planning and budgeting purposes. Once we are ready to put something new in place, a notice will be sent home to all families to make everyone aware of what to expect. Our goal remains to maintain the safest possible environment each day at MBS, and I believe the relationship we have with the MBPD and parent community allow us to do so at a very high level.

Hopefully by the time this newsletter is published and shared, we will have actual spring weather that will be here to stay!

Respectfully,
Michael E. Ettore
Principal/Superintendent