

Dear Montgomery Township School District Community,

With spring in full swing and the school year quickly ending, it's the perfect time to give some wonderful updates on what's happening in the district! It is hard to believe that the first day of school was almost eight months ago. A lot of exciting events and activities have been taking place across our district since my last newsletter in December, and I wanted to highlight some of them.

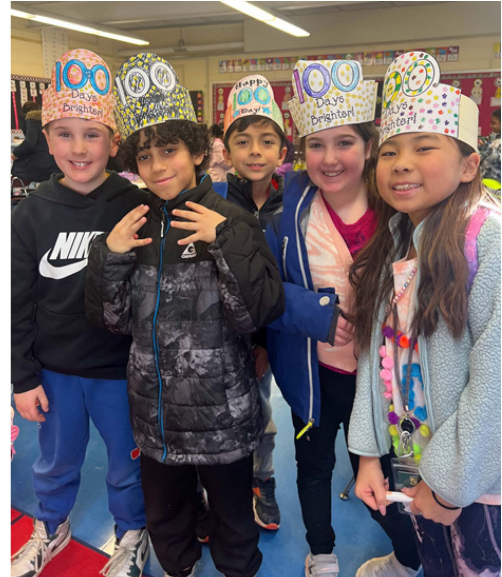
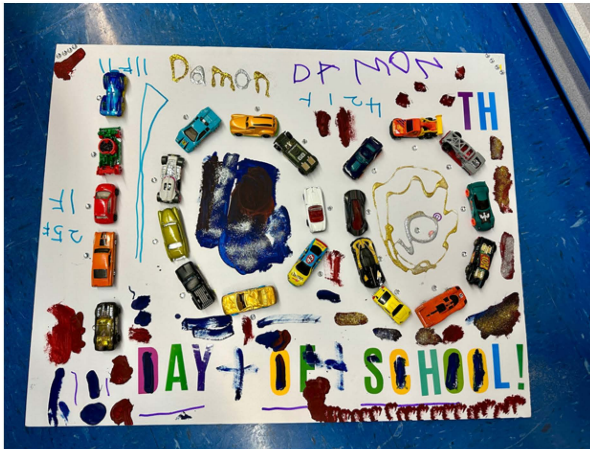
As part of our overall strategic planning goals and initiatives, each school held a Principal's Roundtable event in January, while I held a Superintendent's Roundtable in February. We wanted the roundtables to be an opportunity to share information about various district initiatives and procedures, and simply come together as a community.

For OHES, the focus of the discussion was student decision-making and responsibility and how the Cub Core Values relate to these important skills. The VES administrative team provided an overview of the school's core value system, Blazer's Beliefs, and how it empowers students to make good choices and follow the code of conduct. The LMS presentation centered on the discipline model at the school and how it connects to student growth and empowerment. UMS administrators spoke about their code of conduct and why being a trauma-informed restorative school has helped their students. At MHS, the discussion revolved around how academic stress and anxiety impact our students and how incorporating regulation skills into daily life can help protect their mental health. Finally, I held a meet-and-greet with our district's safety and security personnel and provided insight on some of the systems, programs, and procedures that we use to keep our students and staff safe.

Orchard Hill

- ❖ The 100th Day of School was a milestone for our OHES Cubs. Over the first 100 days, they have worked hard to build their literacy and mathematics skills while also learning how to be responsible and respectful citizens in their school community. The 100th Day was celebrated with various activities and events centered on the number 100. Students participated in counting activities such as counting 100 items and practicing skip counting by tens. In many classrooms, students worked on special projects, such as creating a 100 things display, drawing pictures that represent 100, or writing about what they would do if they had 100 dollars.





- ❖ OHES students gave tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with a Week of Service. During the week of January 20-24, Orchard Hill students learned about his commitment to helping others and participated in activities to support serving their communities. Our Cubs filled 16 boxes and over 30 shopping bags with donations for the Montgomery Food Bank at Princeton Elks. Students took part in the Color A Smile initiative, a nonprofit that distributes cheerful drawings to senior citizens, troops overseas, and anyone in need of a smile! The organization mails thousands of drawings each month. Finally, to end the week and build an inclusive and welcoming school community, students participated in Mix It Up Day by engaging in buddy activities with another class.
- ❖ Our Cubs have also been enjoying our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Lab. STEM education sparks curiosity by encouraging students to ask questions and explore new ideas. It encourages them to think critically and analyze the world in a scientific way. Whether it's conducting experiments, building prototypes, or working with new technologies, students learn how to approach challenges systematically and solve problems. STEM activities involve teamwork, where students work together to brainstorm, experiment, and solve problems. Collaborative work in STEM helps students develop communication skills, learn to work with others toward a common goal, and embrace diverse perspectives.



- ❖ All of our OHES students are learning how to write letters, words, sentences, and stories. Throughout the winter, our students attended assemblies with speakers who shared tips and tricks about the writing process and their love of storytelling. One of our speakers shared the inspiration for his stories and even taught the students how to draw. Another speaker shared her tips for writing interesting and engaging stories and encouraged our young writers to keep idea boxes.

Village

- ❖ Village School families and friends enjoyed fine entertainment at the Montgomery Performing Arts Center in celebration of Music in Our Schools Month. The fourth-grade bands and the fourth-grade Orchestra performed an impressive repertoire of pieces. Our young musicians have demonstrated incredible growth as individuals and as important members of large ensembles since they started their instrumental music studies in September. VES lays the foundation for the phenomenal music program that we hope students continue to participate in as they progress through the district. Congratulations to our fourth-grade musicians on such outstanding performances.



- ❖ Villagers celebrated the National Education Association's annual Read Across America Week. The week was coordinated by the Montgomery Township Education Association and included guest readers from throughout our community, featuring representatives from:

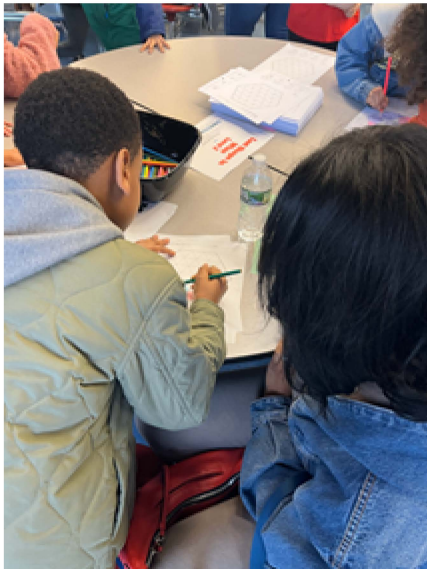
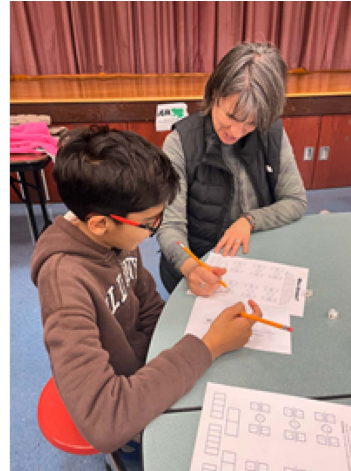
- District administration
- Transportation staff
- The MTEA
- The Montgomery Elementary Schools PTA
- Montgomery Volunteer Fire Company and EMS
- The local library
- and more!



Students heard from so many wonderful readers, dressed up for our reading spirit days, and decorated cereal boxes with images from their favorite books. A record-breaking 560 cereal boxes were donated to the Food Bank Network of Somerset County.



- ❖ On Wednesday, March 12th, 62 student volunteers instructed families, teachers, and friends to play 20-plus math games. We had over 200 participants who stretched their math thinking and found easy-to-play games that can be incorporated into future family game nights at home. Thank you to all the families and student volunteers who made this year's Family Math Night a great success. We have stored all the games from Family Math Night in [this shared folder](#) for anyone who was not able to make it.



- ❖ Kindness Week at VES took place from February 18-23. Villagers spread kindness like confetti by demonstrating small acts of kindness to inspire and uplift others throughout the school community. Teachers engaged students in various activities, and Montgomery High School Peer Leaders visited classrooms to promote this special week. During the Week of Inclusion from March 10-14, our school community celebrated our commitment to creating an inclusive and caring school community for learners of all ability levels and backgrounds where every voice is heard, valued, and respected.
- ❖ Our third and fourth-grade students attended some engaging and interactive assemblies during the winter months and walked away with some great tips for their reading and writing. One speaker conducted a read-aloud and taught students the power of empathy, diversity, and being courageous. Another speaker honed in on being proud of who you

are and embracing diverse friendships. A small group of students had the opportunity to participate in a writing workshop following each assembly.

Lower Middle

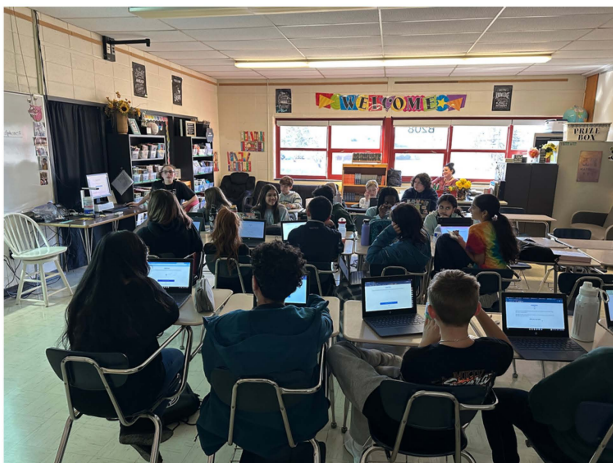
- ❖ Our fifth and sixth-graders had a blast at the “Duct Tape the Principals” event. During lunch, students lined up with strips of tape in hand to tape Mrs. Romano and Mr. Pachuta to the cafeteria wall. The principals were great sports as they cheered on the students throughout the event. The event also raised over \$1,000 for the Montgomery Middle School PTO.



- ❖ Our Seussical Jr. Performances were a huge hit! From April 3rd through April 6th, our students put on a tremendous show of Seussical Jr. and brought the fun and colorful world of Dr. Seuss to life. Congratulations to all those who were involved!
- ❖ Members of our high school's Black Student Union visited LMS as part of our celebration of Black History Month. These students portrayed influential Black historical figures and helped bring history to life. LMS students were captivated as they listened to accounts of struggle and success. We are grateful to the high school students for taking the time to give our fifth and sixth graders an educational and inspiring experience.
- ❖ Students came together to raise over \$600 for a partnered school in California. Many families from this school were affected by the devastating wildfires earlier this year. Students sold handmade keychains, plushies, and bracelets during their lunches. The LMS Interact Club has also been busy—they delivered bags of food and toiletries to the Montgomery Food Pantry following a very successful food drive.
- ❖ LMS hosted the annual Winter Bowl on Friday, February 7th. Unified Physical Education students from our Upper Middle School also attended, and they helped to facilitate activities and participated alongside our younger Monty students. All of the students and staff members who were in attendance had a fantastic time!

Upper Middle

- ❖ UMS celebrated the end of Marking Period 2 by hosting our second Cougar CARE (Compassion, Acceptance, Resilience, and Empathy) Day Series. During these programs, our students worked with the MHS Peer leaders in lessons on managing anxiety and stress. Students could choose some bonus free time to socialize with peers or enjoy a hobby of their choice. The program finished with an all-school rally to celebrate the UMS school spirit and community. The timing was also perfect to introduce our Interim Principal, Mr. Matthew Barbosa! Various student clubs and teams were highlighted at our rally. The rally concluded with a nail-biting game of seated basketball between our boys' basketball team and our staff.

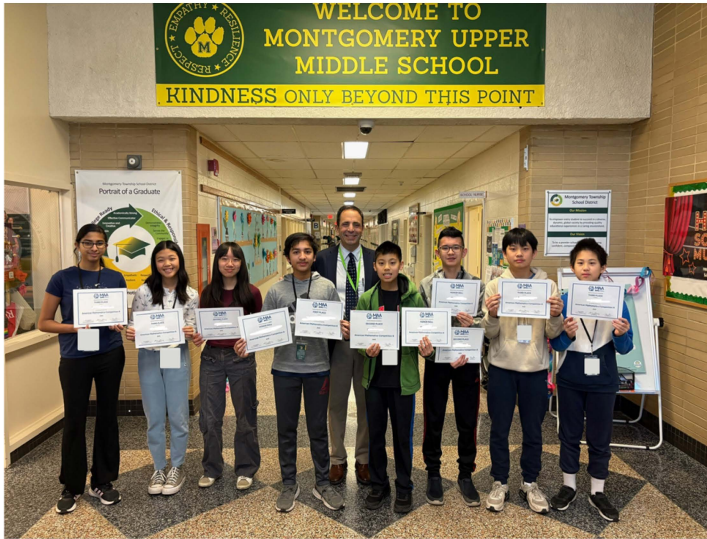




- ❖ We are so proud to share that the UMS boys basketball Team won the Central Jersey Junior Basketball League Championship. This is the second year in a row the team has won this title. Thank you to the coaches, athletic department, and parents for supporting our athletes.



- ❖ The American Mathematics Competitions (AMC) 8 is a 40-minute, 25-question multiple-choice exam that challenges middle school students to solve math problems. The AMC 8 is intended to help students build confidence in their problem-solving skills and prepare them for high school math. On January 22nd, 2025, over 60 of our UMS students took the AMC 8. Nine earned a first, second, or third-place finish. Of those nine, four also received an Honor Roll Certificate, which means they scored in the top five percent nationally!



- ❖ On Friday, February 28th, and Saturday, March 1st, UMS Performing Arts proudly presented High School Musical Jr. The incredibly dedicated team of directors worked together with over 75 skilled and devoted students to bring you this exciting production.



- ❖ On Wednesday, March 5th, our UMS Jazz Band Traveled to Monroe Township Middle School to participate in a Middle School Jazz Band Festival. Our students performed for other schools and learned more about their passion for jazz.

High School

- ❖ The MHS Science Olympiad Team has once again dominated the competition, securing their second consecutive New Jersey State Championship in the 2024-25 season. The team placed in 19 out of 23 events (earning first place in 11) to clinch the victory. Throughout the season, MHS delivered outstanding performances at Princeton, the

University of Pennsylvania, Cornell, and MIT. The team will compete on the national stage at the University of Nebraska at the end of May. Stay tuned for updates!



- ❖ On Friday, March 14th and Saturday, March 15th, Montgomery High School's Forensics Speech & Debate Team attended the NJSDL (New Jersey Speech and Debate League) State Tournament at Hunterdon Central Regional High School. MHS registered with 14 total entries and ended up with 11 awards!



- ❖ The MHS boys basketball team continues to shine, winning back-to-back conference titles and Central Jersey Group IV State Championships! This season, they made history by reaching the Group IV State Finals at Rutgers University for the first time. The players and coaches showcased incredible dedication, excelling on the court, in the classroom, and as a team. Congratulations on an unforgettable season!



- ❖ MHS students attended the Young Men of Distinction Conference. They arrived dressed to impress and were ready to make the most of the day. Their experience began with an inspiring keynote speaker who encouraged them to discover their passion, embrace their purpose, and take actionable steps toward realizing their dreams. Following this motivational session, the students participated in a series of insightful workshops. These workshops focused on building healthy relationships and exploring various career paths, and they equipped students with valuable knowledge for their future endeavors.



- ❖ Continuing a beloved tradition, 325 seniors traveled to Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, for their annual senior trip. Beyond the thrills and magic of the parks, students embraced newfound independence navigating Disney transportation, managing their time, and gaining practical life skills along the way. A highlight of the trip was everyone coming together for a special night of desserts and fireworks to celebrate their journey as a class. For many, this trip marked their first experience traveling without parents or family, making it a meaningful step toward adulthood. Most importantly, they created unforgettable memories with friends that will last a lifetime!



Thank you, as always, for your support and engagement. The next celebratory newsletter will be released in June!

Sincerely,

Mary E. McLoughlin | Superintendent of Schools