

Center Moriches Union Free School District

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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I hope you have been enjoying your summer and are spending some well-deserved time with family and friends.

Reflecting on the 2016-2017 school year, I am truly proud and impressed by the accomplishments of our schools, which could not have been achieved without your commitment and contributions, and I would like to welcome you back to another school year. The vision of the Center Moriches School District is truly encapsulated by the Latin expression, *Semper nitens excellere*, "Always striving to excel." This is a pivotal time for our district as we continue to strengthen our practices at Center Moriches Schools and continue to develop into a unique place for learning and growth. I believe that with the talents and skills of our dedicated staff working together, we will continue to exceed our previous achievements and advance beyond our expectations.

This school year will be shaped by several initiatives including, but not limited to, the endeavors of the International Baccalaureate Programme, the implementation of the Smart Schools Bond Act, and the continuation of the Capital Project. In the spirit of striving for excellence, the International Baccalaureate Programme ensures a strong future of unity, alignment, perpetual growth and has already breathed new life into the fabric of our educational philosophy. As part of that growth, the Middle School will be entering its second year of the Candidacy Phase of the IB Middle Years Programme (IB MYP) and the High School will be preparing to apply for candidacy for the IB Diploma Program (IBDP). To these ends, our Middle School teachers have already completed many hours of professional development, composed units of study and have integrated elements of IB into their instruction. The impact is evident and impressive: as one can see the IB Learner Profile on the walls of the Middle School and in various student projects, reflecting the increased level of student engagement and subsequent mastery. In addition, the overall effect is apparent in the level of intellectual teacher dialogue at collegial circles, during professional development sessions, at faculty and Board of Education meetings; and in the classroom. To pursue these practices further, our High School teachers have initiated professional development and will be carefully examining how IBDP will mesh into our existing high school structure over the next several months. Although these endeavors are exciting, they are not without obstacles. I truly appreciate that our Faculty and Administration have been inspired by what International Baccalaureate can offer the students of Center Moriches and are willing to accept the challenges posed throughout the process. With our collective determination and acumen, this endeavor will ultimately provide innovative professional development for all Faculty and will increase real-world learning experiences for our students.

Technology is a crucial element in striving to expand opportunities for both students and staff. Fortunately, the Smart Schools Bond Act has provided the opportunity to implement significant technology enhancements throughout the District. As it has since the Spring of 2017 and during the summer, Center Moriches Schools

will experience the positive impact of these upgrades throughout the next several months. Some of the items in the Smart Schools Plan include district-wide wireless, internal network and infrastructure upgrades, replacement of the intercom system at Clayton Huey, new desktops, Chromebooks, document cameras and STEM elective equipment. These improvements will increase student and staff access to technology, introduce new media and presentation tools, allow for more active learning and collaboration and create more opportunities for distance learning and virtual field trips. In addition to the educational enhancements, new cameras at both campuses and a new door strike system have been installed to improve the safety and security of our school buildings. It should be noted that although a portion of this work has been completed by outside vendors, our exceptional technology personnel have played a critical role in the successful implementation of all of these remarkable advancements.

Without facility improvements, there are limited physical spaces where enhanced educational experiences can occur. Therefore, facility improvement will be an ongoing process and will remain a focus as we venture forward examining the needs of the District. Currently, Phase II Capital Project specifications include the renovation of our High School Science classrooms, reconfiguration of Technology and Special Education classrooms and a new security vestibule for the Secondary Campus. The project will continue into the 2017-2018 school year to include HVAC upgrades at both campuses, bathroom renovations, and two classroom reconfigurations at Clayton Huey Elementary School. In addition, there have been other summer projects including Main Office renovations and much needed sidewalk repairs at Clayton Huey. At the Secondary Campus the Large Group Instruction room and one of the courtyards have received a phenomenal facelift - truly impressive features within our facilities. Needless to say it has been an incredibly active summer during which our maintenance, custodial and grounds staff have worked day and night not only to complete regular summer tasks, but also a myriad of additional duties to assist the Capital Project and other improvements. Their dedication and continued willingness to go above and beyond, ensure that we can welcome our students into a safe and clean school environment in September - and to that we are most thankful.

All of these efforts aim at one common goal: to improve our students' lives through an education that is both rigorous and caring, that provides knowledge while fostering critical thinking skills, and focuses on academics while building character. The key to attaining this is through making sure our staff have support in and beyond the classroom. In addition to our academic and facility enhancements, we have also partnered with the Employee Assistance Program. Support and care for our staff and their families is an essential element in honoring our educational mission. Last year with the support of the CMTA, Administration and the Board of Education, our employees and their families were given access to the services offered by the Employee Assistance Program. The mission of the program is to help individuals maximize their wellness. Beginning July 1st, anyone who works for the Center Moriches School District as well as every member of his/her family can seek assistance from EAP. During this past June, each building's Faculty was introduced to the benefits of this program, and there will be additional information to follow.

Please plan to meet for a general session on Thursday, August 31st, at 8:30 a.m. at Center Moriches High School. Good fellowship and refreshments will be available in the cafeteria starting at 8:00 a.m.

I am looking forward to yet another year filled with great successes, achievements and positive experiences for everyone in our educational community. Enjoy the rest of your summer vacation!

Best Regards,

Russell J. Stewart

Superintendent of Schools