



Message From the Superintendent

This week I had a chance to spend a lot of time at Maurice W. Downing Elementary School as so much was going on to close out the school year. Next year's Kindergarteners, class of 2038, were visiting the school with their parents as we hosted our in-person K orientation. Students were greeted by their K teachers while the parents went through an orientation session in the library. Of course, you know where I was. Many of the faces I recognized from our two PreK centers. The teachers and I were amazed at how proficient the children had become at coloring, writing their names, and building designs with Lego blocks. Many knew their numbers and letters and had no problem working collaboratively with their peers. As their teachers watched them interact with their peers, they remarked on what a difference having the PreK program has meant to our district. We may not have the financial resources just yet to have a district building to house our program, but I can say proudly that the partnership we have with our PreK providers at the Nottingham Academy and Tutor Time will serve us well into the future.

A few months ago, I shared with you that we removed three trees near the MWD playground for safety reasons. I promised then that our Kindergarteners would replant three trees to replace those removed. This week we accomplished just that. Every Kindergartener present had a hand in planting three flowering cherry trees and watering them to begin their growth. Present for the planting was our new Superintendent, Dr. Maria Rianna, our Board of Education president, Jeanne D'Esposito, and most important a second-grade student, Wescott Smith, who upon seeing the old trees removed, wrote a letter to Principal Walter about his concern for their removal. He saw first-hand, the power of advocacy. Look out Davison Avenue, you have a civically engaged young man heading your way!!

We now have a drama performance in each of our schools as MWD hosted their first ever production, Paradesia, with the support of the PTA. I was not able to make it to the performance, but I heard that it was a fantastic show. Bravo to the first and second grade students and the PTA for beginning this journey in the world of theatre! I hope that I will see some of the performers on the Malverne stage throughout their time here.

Each year our MWD faculty advisor to their student government works with the children to raise funds for Ronald Mc.Donald House. The children generously contribute their pennies and participate in various fund-raising efforts. Well, those pennies add up!! This year they presented a check for \$6,362, bringing the total since 2017 to over **\$50,000!** This is where it starts, and I just know that these children will continue their generosity and caring for others throughout their lives.

I hope you were able to come out and enjoy our Juneteenth celebration. It seems that the entire community was here enjoying the weather and the many performances. The food truck, student performances, and bouncy house allowed all ages to leave satiated with great food and fun. While we are having fun, let us not forget the meaning of Juneteenth, long celebrated on June 19th in Texas since 1865. The celebration commemorates the date when the enslaved people in Texas were finally informed that they were free. This was two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed, freeing all enslaved people. The holiday commemorates the date when the enslaved people in Texas joined others across this country in their freedom. It is for this reason that Juneteenth is often referred to as Freedom Day.

As always, my email is llewis@malverneschools.org, please do not hesitate to connect with me.
#GreatnessUnleashed #GoMules

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