



# MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

## Office of the Superintendent

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Dear Montgomery Township School District Community,

As we stand on the cusp of summer, I want to take a moment to celebrate the remarkable year we've had and recognize the accomplishments of our students, educators, staff, and families.

From academic achievements to extracurricular successes, our students have demonstrated a commitment to excellence and a passion for learning. Whether it was excelling in the classroom, participating in sports and the arts, or engaging in community service, our students have made us proud every step of the way.

Our dedicated teachers and staff have continued to go above and beyond to create a supportive and enriching learning environment each day. Their commitment to fostering a love of learning and their ability to inspire and motivate have been truly exceptional, and I know they have all made a profound difference in the lives of our students.

To our supportive families: your involvement and encouragement are crucial to the success of our students and our schools. Whether through volunteering, participating in school events, or providing support at home, your partnership has strengthened our community and enriched the educational experience for everyone.

The 2023-2024 school year provided a lot of highlights throughout all of our schools.

### **Orchard Hill**

The first year of our full-day kindergarten program was a big success. With a curriculum rooted in play, our students explored numbers, letters, sounds, words, and MORE! Outside the classroom, our kindergartners had successful experiences in the cafeteria - our first kindergarteners to EVER eat lunch at OHES! They also had positive experiences in exploring the Spanish language and other Related Arts outside their homeroom.

In its second year of implementation, Orchard Hill's students have embraced the Cub Core Values. Safe Spaces, Kind Words, and Friendly Faces could be seen all around school - in classrooms, the cafeteria, and on the playground! The students worked hard to be positive role models and stand-up citizens! Nothing brightened the day more than seeing a student bursting with pride, showing off their receipt of a Cub Core Values sticker!

OHES students had multiple opportunities to bring their scientific learning beyond the walls of their classrooms. Due to a generous donation from an OHES family, students were given the opportunity to observe the life cycle of chickens from egg to baby chick. Once hatched, students helped to care for the chicks and even named them all.

In April, students were afforded another opportunity to bring science to life when a scientific phenomenon occurred right in our backyard! Students donned their protective eyewear to view the partial eclipse. The "oohhhhs" and "ahhhhs" were audible!

It wasn't just the students learning at OHES, though. Staff members spent many hours working toward acquiring new instructional strategies and tools to support student growth and learning. With a focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), OHES staff supported students through multiple modalities, empowering them to reflect on their learning and continue to grow.



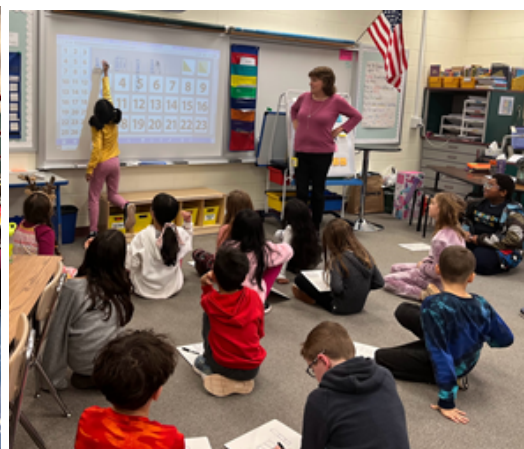
## Village

Third and fourth graders at VES made many strides in and out of the classroom this year. In language arts, students grew tremendously as readers and writers. Third graders worked in Animal Research Clubs, synthesizing information across texts and topics. They also enjoyed a favorite third-grade writing unit, creating their own fairy tales by adapting the classics. Fourth graders finished the year with Mystery Book Clubs and Historical Fiction Book Clubs, putting their interpretive reading skills to work. In writing, they enjoyed crafting realistic fiction narratives, using their creativity in combination with character development.

In math classes, students expanded their number sense this year into the 1,000s through all operations. They used this knowledge to build fraction sense and apply these skills to measurement and data. In science, they learned about forces, weather versus climate, the structure and function of animals, and how they interact with each other.

VES also celebrated the eclipse this spring as a community and completed the year with an impressive showing of 25 group tables that showcased students' scientific and engineering skills at the Montgomery Science Expo.

The visual and performing arts programs thrived at VES. Our young musicians and vocalists progressed beautifully this school year as individuals and as large groups. They concluded the year performing an impressive repertoire of challenging pieces at the June concerts. Fourth graders are eager and ready to pursue visual and performing arts opportunities in fifth grade and beyond.



## Lower Middle

Our fifth and sixth graders kicked off the year with a Harvest Fest held on the campus between LMS and UMS. The goal was to have the community meet the new administration and to bridge the sixth and seventh-grade experience for our students. There was face painting, a scarecrow-building contest, a DJ, yard games, and so much more! Both LMS and UMS are looking forward to making this an annual event.

LMS hosted two out-of-this-world dances this year along with several fundraising events such as Duct Tape Your Principal and VP to the Wall, Be a Principal/VP for the Day and Penny Wars.



Additionally, LMS' Black Student Connection Club hosted our first-ever Game Day. All our events were huge successes!

Morning Meeting delved into many social and emotional learning (SEL) topics this year. Picture Book Wednesdays, where sixth-grade teachers visited fifth-grade classes and fifth-grade teachers visited sixth-grade classes to do thematic read-alouds, further supported our SEL efforts.

Empowering Young Monty is a new club that began at LMS this year. It provides students with a platform for discovering the importance of their voice and pursuing their passions through justice education, peer mentoring, raising awareness, and community outreach. Students have created anti-racism lessons and a video that was shown to the school which encouraged students to "call it in" and empower our students to stand up against racism at LMS.

In December, LMS teachers and administration braved the elements at the Somerset County Special Olympics Jingle All the Way 2K. This month, our student-athletes brought home many medals from their performances at the Princeton Special Olympics event!

The annual MTSD Winter Bowl was held at LMS. While everyone was preparing for the Super Bowl, we celebrated this fantastic event sponsored by the Montgomery Township Special Education PTA, the Montgomery Middle Schools PTO, and many community groups. With a record high of 188 students, staff, and community participants coming together to empower and inspire, it was truly a wonderful, fun time.





## Upper Middle

This year, for the first time, UMS proudly expanded its Unified Program into the world of the arts. UMS introduced a unified music explorations class and a unified studio art class, both of which were incredible successes. These new offerings have allowed our students to explore their creativity and taught them the power of empathy, inclusivity, and resilience.

Our seventh and eighth graders learned the power of “Never Giving Up” and how to be “All In” through inspiring visits from notable speakers. These themes resonated with the students and as they embraced the message and emulated their meanings.

The music programs offered at UMS continued to thrive. The UMS ensembles received the highest rating of superior at the Music in the Parks festival at Hershey Park, a testament to their hard work, dedication, and musical prowess. For the 2024-2025 school year, 512 UMS students have signed up for band, choir, and orchestra classes, almost 70% of the school population.

UMS students put on a spectacular production of the musical *The Wizard of Oz*! The timeless theme of the show, “There's no place like home,” resonated with the UMS community, as students and staff strongly believe there is no place like UMS.

In its second year, the UMS theater class “Theater Arts On Stage” gave two brilliant performances— *Booked for the Night* and *A Spoiled Story*! In this class, under the guidance of our fantastic theater teachers, students work together to write an original play. Students wrote the script, designed the lighting, helped select costumes, and played an integral role in assisting with production and direction. Both performances were an incredible demonstration of our students’ creativity and talents.

There was a lot to be excited about with the UMS sports teams! A UMS wrestler won Districts and competed in the State Finals Wrestling Match under the guidance, support, and leadership of our Wrestling Coach. The UMS boys basketball team had a 14-1 record and won the CJJBL Championship. The UMS boys' and girls' cross country teams won the CJJSA Meet of Champions, and the girls placed second in the state at the New Jersey Middle School Cross Country Championships!



## High School

Cougar Robotics Team 1403 and The Montgomery Science Olympiad Team traveled the country to participate in their respective national competitions. Cougar Robotics traveled to Houston Texas, while Science Olympiad made their way to the Michigan State University campus in East Lansing to represent Montgomery Township School District!

En route to Coach Kris Grundy's 300th career win, the basketball team won the Skyland Conference Valley Division and captured the Central Group 4 Sectional Championship by dominating for a 63-37 victory. The Cougars had a record of 25-4 and finished the season ranked #16 in the state. Coach Zoran Milich amassed his 100th victory in a successful 8-1-1 season which culminated as Big Central Liberty Division Champions with Milich winning coach of the year.

For many, Senior Prom is a forever memory, and on May 17th, Montgomery High School students enjoyed a magical evening at a new venue: The Marigold in Somerset. With a theme of "twilight garden" and plenty of dancing, dinner, and dessert, it was certainly a night to remember. The new venue added to the ambiance and amazement.

The Montgomery High School Theater presented *Radium Girls* and *The Addams Family*! Both productions were wildly successful and the talents of the cast and crew were on full display.



Each year the shows get better and better. The costumes and the sets were wonderful and the performers let their talent shine!

The Montgomery High School Marching Band was given a unique opportunity to perform during the halftime show of the Rutgers versus Ohio State football game on November 4th. The band also took a trip to Hawaii and played at Pearl Harbor. The music provides a vast variety of sounds that everyone can appreciate. These talented musicians always put on a great show!



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To our graduating high school seniors, congratulations on reaching this significant milestone! As you prepare to embark on the next chapter of your lives, whether it be further education,

entering the workforce, or other ventures, know that you carry with you the skills, knowledge, and values nurtured here in Montgomery. We are incredibly proud of each of you and excited to see the bright futures you will create.

Thank you once again for your dedication, support, and partnership throughout this school year. I wish you all a safe, restful, and enjoyable summer break. I look forward to welcoming you back in the fall, refreshed and ready for another fantastic year of learning and growth!

Sincerely,

**Mary E. McLoughlin | Superintendent of Schools**