



# Orange Township Public Schools

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Office of the Superintendent



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Dear Orange Township Public School District Staff Members,

The beginning of a new school year, like the dawning of a new day, reminds us that the future holds infinite possibilities. I hope that your summer vacations continue to be relaxing, filled with adventures and good health because you deserve it. The opportunity to refuel over the summer is a necessary component of the important work that we do. I know that we are about to begin a great school year filled with hope, vision, and excitement. As we begin this school year, I wish everyone the greatest success as we welcome over 5,500 students to their educational journey of 2021-2022.

At the July 13, 2021, Board Meeting, I presented the five-year strategic plan coined “Moving into Greatness.” This document outlines our ambitious academic and social emotional goals that will assist in the development of the whole child. The words within the plan were the voices of the stakeholders who were part of our strategic planning roundtables in Fall of 2019 and the Winter of 2020. No Strategic Plan can encompass every subject taught, or every tactic for reducing inequities or mobilizing community support for our students and schools. The intangibles of public education are as important as what we measure in this Strategic Plan: the joy of learning, the building of good citizenship, appreciation of and expertise in the arts, fostering habits of healthy living, and more. We expect our school communities, educators, and staff to continue to innovate; creativity is in our DNA. Having a Strategic Plan ensures that we will not lose sight of our purpose while we continue to expand our horizons. This will be a living plan. In addition to regular progress updates to our Board of Education, families, and school community, we will also assess the goals and strategies themselves.

As you know, we have returned to in person instruction during the summer. What a great feeling it has been seeing the students and staff interacting with students. I can say that the students have become the benefactors of the work planned and delivered by our instructional staff. The questions elicited by our students were thought provoking to say the least. It became evident from day one of the summer program our students embraced the instructional program and were certainly happy to be back in brick and mortar; that is a testament to our teachers, support staff, paraprofessionals, and administrators working in tandem. You are appreciated.

Throughout the summer, we reviewed the state of the curriculum. Currently, we are in the process of revising curricula documents across content areas that will certainly impact not only the academic standards for what we do, but will further the social emotional learning supports that are critical as we move back into our school buildings. Instruction and student acquisition of knowledge and skills must make sense. We want to ensure that everything we do instructionally is intentional and rigorous.

I do not need to remind you of how important your job is for our children within the Township of Orange because I know as educators you believe in what you do each and every day. Your students need your continued wisdom and care. My hope is that through our reinvigorated Professional Learning Communities will anchor the instructional work; both you and our students will think of the schools within our district as a place where communities of learners will come together to do interesting, consequential work. My desire is that you ask sound questions to stretch your instructional thinking, become purveyors of the great work, and as a result challenge your students with high demand and interesting questions. We at Central Office will, in turn, continue to provide the infrastructure and human capacity to support your ability to make great things happen.

As we move forward with our reform efforts, I invite you to think about something written so long ago but something that still resonates today. “Knowledge empowers leaders, drives breakthroughs, and inspires discoveries. With every milestone reached, sights are set beyond the horizon, bringing hope and peace for the journey ahead.” I am confident that we will blaze a trail filled with success and accomplishment as, together; we launch the best year yet for Orange Township Public School District. I look forward to seeing each of you on Tuesday, September 1, 2021, for the Superintendent’s Forum. More details regarding the Forum; including but not limited to design and times will be sent under separate cover. Again, thank you for your dedication to not only our district but to one another as well as to the children that we serve.

Educationally yours,

*Gerald Fitzhugh, II, Ed.D.*

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Superintendent of Schools