



Orange Township Public Schools

Gerald Fitzhugh, II, Ed.D.
Office of the Superintendent



August 18, 2023

Good Day Orange Township Public School District Community,

In just a matter of weeks, the Orange Public School district will reopen to staff and students. Throughout the summer months, the Board of Education, district leaders, and curriculum writers embarked on a mission to work diligently to provide an intentional and smooth transition as we start SY 2023-2024. Over the last four years, we were able to celebrate successes including but not limited to the strategic partnership with Verizon Digital Promise Grant. A little bit of background, Verizon's award-winning education initiative addresses barriers to digital inclusion. In partnership with Digital Promise, the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools program equips every student and teacher at select middle and high schools across America with a device and up to a four-year data plan. In addition to free technology and access, schools receive extensive teacher training and support, along with the opportunity to engage in powerful teaching and learning that leverages technology in and out of the classroom. Orange High School, Oakwood Avenue Community School, and Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry and Innovation are among the 32 new schools joining the 10th cohort of Verizon Innovative Learning Schools, bringing the program to nearly 600 middle and high schools nationwide. In addition to a free laptop with accompanying Verizon data plans for every student and teacher beginning in fall 2023, participating schools will be assigned a full-time coach to train teachers in effectively integrating technology into their lessons.

Scholarships totaling over 35 million dollars this past school year, the largest amount we have garnered in our school district, up from 26 million dollars last school year. Congratulations to the Class of 2023, we are so proud of you. As a district, we continue to embrace our five-year strategic plan coined "Moving into Greatness 2021-2026." The district continues to have a focus on the instructional program coupled with the social emotional supports for staff and students. As a school community we leaned on one another, grew from lessons learned, and celebrated our successes as one Orange. Our narrative is gaining momentum not only throughout the state but nationally. This is important because building relationships is vital to our movement as a district. I will continue to intimate that success comes two-fold when we work together. The district will continue to share our narrative which will give you an outlook of things accomplished.

The beginning of a new school year reminds us that the future holds infinite possibilities. I hope that your summer vacation continues 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 5,600 students to their educational journey of 2023-2024.

What a great summer experience for our students throughout the months of June through August. To our summer administrators, thank you for leading such robust programs. To our summer instructional and support staff members, we could not have done this work without you. To our fantastic scholars, I hope your summer experiences in district made you energized and ready for September. To our parents, thank you for entrusting us with your children both in the summer and beyond.

As we move into school year 2023-2024, I ask that we continue to trust one another, work as one unit, and finally provide supports to our students and staff so we continue to move from "Good to Great." Over the course of the last three years, we have certainly gotten to know one another in a multitude of ways. As a reminder, our reopeningofschools@orange.k12.nj.us email address will remain in tact for you to ask questions and get in real time answers from the Superintendent's Team. This is a safe space to ask questions, so the information given is accurate and timely.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new staff to the district. Being a part of many interviews, you continued to show the true essence of why we will continue to be great. As your Superintendent of Schools, I look forward to seeing each of you in action but more importantly sharing great experiences.

Over the summer, there were a few administrative changes that I want you to be aware of. The following staff members were appointed to varying administrative positions throughout the summer.

Principal of Park Avenue School: Ms. Natasha Cox

Orange High School: New Assistant Principal: Ms. Michelle Madariaga

Orange High School: New Assistant Principal: Mr. Dairon Montesino

Cleveland Street School /Oakwood Avenue Community School: New Assistant Principal: Mr. Kashiff Foster

Supervisor of Guidance and Academic Services: Mrs. Felicia Williams-Ware

Supervisor of Bilingual/ESL/World Languages (Grades 6-12): Mr. Frank Tafur

Supervisor of Bilingual/ESL/World Languages (Grades K-5): Nurka Nieves, Ed.D.

Breakfast and Lunch Menus will Continue This Year (Monthly): As shared this past school year, we will continue to share breakfast and lunch menus for your planning purposes. Prior to September 7th, all families will be notified of the September menus for Pre-Kindergarten, Elementary, and Secondary. Thank you to the Office of Food Services for ensuring that menus will continue this upcoming school year.

Return to School Dates for Staff and Students: As a reminder, the first day for staff is Friday, September 1, 2023. The first day will begin with the Superintendent's Convocation with other exciting activities planned to bring a dynamic staff back together on one accord. Monday, September 4, 2023, the district will be closed in observance of Labor Day. Tuesday, September 5, 2023, is the district professional development day for STAFF ONLY. Wednesday, September 6, 2023, is the last district professional development day for STAFF ONLY prior to students returning on Thursday, September 7, 2023.

The day that we all have been waiting for, September 7, 2023, will be the first day of school for our scholars. This is certainly an exciting time for the entire school district. Please visit the district website www.orange.k12.nj.us. click Our District to Schools to view the supplies needed for your scholar to return.

Back to School Nights (BTSN) Announced: All Back to School Nights were announced in the month of July on our social media handles as well as district website. We wanted to get the dates out as soon as possible for planning purposes. Please visit the district website www.orange.k12.nj.us. under latest news and announcements to view the calendar of BTSN programs district wide.

Name of School	Date for Back to School Night
Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry and Innovation	Monday September 25, 2023
Orange High School	Monday, September 11, 2023
Rosa Parks Community School	Tuesday September 26, 2023
Scholars Academy	Thursday, September 28, 2023
John Robert Lewis ECC	Monday, October 2, 2023
Orange Early Childhood Center	Thursday, September 14, 2023
Central Elementary School	Wednesday, September 20, 2023
STEM Innovation Academy of the Oranges	Wednesday September 27, 2023
Heywood Avenue School	Monday, September 18, 2023
Forest Street Community School	Tuesday, September 12, 2023
Park Avenue School	Tuesday, September 19, 2023
Twilight Program	Monday, September 11, 2023

Lincoln Elementary School	Thursday, September 21, 2023
Oakwood Avenue Elementary School	Thursday, September 14, 2023
Cleveland Street School	Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Calendars to Continue this School Year: This year, we will continue pushing out the calendars each month on the website of each school as well as via our social media handles. Look out for the September calendars by school the Week of August 21, 2023.

Superintendent's Weekly Update: Yes, the Superintendent's Weekly Update will continue district wide beginning the Week of September 11, 2023. This update will provide each of you with the sense of the district's direction related to content pedagogy and practice as well as wellness and programming. Please take a moment to read the contents accordingly.

School Year Arrival and Departure Times for Staff and Students SY 2023-2024

School Level	Arrival Time for Students	Arrival Time for Staff	End Time for Students	End Time for Staff
Elementary Level (Including Pre-Kindergarten)	8:30 AM	8:20 AM	3:00 PM	3:10 PM
Orange High School	8:20 AM	8:05 AM	2:40 PM	2:55 PM
Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry and Innovation	8:25 AM	8:20 AM	2:50 PM	2:55 PM
STEM Innovation Academy of the Oranges	8:20 AM	8:15 AM	Mondays 2:20 PM for Teacher Professional Development Tues – Fri 3:30 PM	4PM* *includes stipend
Twilight Program	3:30 PM* *3:00 PM - lunch	3:00 PM	7:30 PM	7:30 PM

District Goals and the Strategic Plan Reminders

The district goals and strategic plan are the guiding force in the development of the Orange Public School District. You are encouraged to review each plan and ask questions related to development of the whole child as well as the district's partnership with families.

The following link is for the District Goals: <https://www.orange.k12.nj.us/Page/30018>.

The following link is for the Strategic Plan: <https://www.orange.k12.nj.us/domain/3344>.

To our families, I ask that you become an integral part of our district's fabric. What does this mean? Join the PTO/PTA at your child's school, visit the Board of Education virtual committee meetings via the district's Facebook page and attend the monthly board of education meetings, and serve as a class parent. You have a seat at the table, and I ask that you partner with us. We learn from all stakeholders and need your support. We will continue our Parent University series, please carve out time to join us for these robust sessions.

I remain humbled and honored to serve this wonderful community as your Superintendent. I am so proud to lead this great district. Our stakeholders have seat at the table. From our student and parent councils to our PTO/PTA meetings, listening to your commendations as well as questions for improvement are well received and appreciated. Your continued trust in the work is refreshing.

Please remember to check our website www.orange.k12.nj.us, under latest news and information, the Orange App, and our social media handles (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), as they will continue to be updated throughout the school year.

In closing, we look forward to seeing all staff on September 1, 2023, for the Superintendent's Convocation and Special After Convocation LAUNCH to SY 23-24. To our students as well as families, we will see you bright and early on September 7, 2023. Staff, another communication about the Convocation is forthcoming under separate cover.

In Partnership,

Gerald Fitzhugh, II, Ed.D.

Gerald Fitzhugh, II, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools