



# ALLEN PARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Riley Education Center ▪ 9601 Vine, Allen Park, MI 48101 ▪ (313) 827-2150

*...an uncompromising commitment to excellence*

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## ***Welcome Back Message from the Superintendent***

August 31, 2018

Dear Allen Park Public School Families,

With my first year as Superintendent in the rear view mirror, it is with great anticipation and enthusiasm that I welcome you back for an incredible school year here in APPS. It is always an exciting time to welcome our teachers, staff and students back to school after the summer months. It's a time unlike any other in a school system, where everyone comes back with a renewed sense of "energy" and "wonder." Students "wonder" what their new teacher will be like, what friends will be in their class or whether or not they will be able to find their way around their new school. Parents "wonder" if they have completed the supply check list, where the bus stop is, and whether or not their child will feel comfortable and safe in their school setting. Teachers "wonder" what new initiatives have been planned over the summer months, and Administrators "wonder" how new initiatives and staff working together will maximize the learning in each school. A new school year is a new beginning for everyone. The positive energy that everyone brings to the first day of school, **Tuesday, September 4**, is contagious because everyone is focused on the same thing... student learning!

With this united purpose of serving each and every one of our students, we enter a new school year by extending a warm welcome to the new members of the APPS Family and hearty congratulations to those serving in new capacities:

- William Aaron Ashmore – Science Teacher/APHS
- Jacob Barry – Social Studies-ELA Teacher/APCS
- Chelsey Bianchi – Kindergarten Teacher/Bennie
- Sara Bleau – ECP Teacher/Arno
- Allison Buttaccio – Counselor/APHS
- Yolanda Colon – Instructional Aide/Arno
- Alysse Ferrante/K-5 ESL Teacher/Elementary
- Kayla Goodwin – Preschool Lead Teacher/Lindemann
- Kim Harrison – Lunch Parapro/Arno
- Megan Johnson – Kindergarten Teacher/Arno
- Carrie Kephart – Resource Room-ELA/APMS
- Sabine Komray – Preschool Teacher Assistant/Lindemann
- Keri Krakow – Lunch Parapro/Bennie
- Katie Liberati – Preschool Teacher Assistant/Lindemann
- Laura Marshall – Math-Psychology Teacher/APHS
- Chelsie McKinney – Independence Parapro/APMS
- Nicole Messina – 2nd Grade Teacher/Lindemann
- Hannah Murray – Resource Room-Math/APHS
- Cody O’Kane – Custodian/Arno-Bennie
- William Polo – Social Studies Teacher/APCS
- Christine Rice – 1st Grade Teacher/Lindemann
- April Robertson – ELA Teacher/APCS
- Jennifer VanMaele – Young 5’s Teacher/Lindemann

We are pleased to share that we have expanded early education to include a Young 5's class at every elementary and have added an ESL (English Second Language) teacher to service K-5 in addition to the ESL teacher support at the secondary level. We have also increased our Social Worker team by one this school year to better serve our families and welcome Michelle Kean to the APHS support team.

As I reflect on the past few years in public education – all that has occurred in schools nationally, in the state of Michigan, and even locally - I have challenged staff to join me in committing to a school culture that sees, values and embraces the spectrum of difference in our community and our world. We must not tolerate racism, threats, intimidation, or violence of any sort and reject those who survey such beliefs. We teach our children kindness, respect, acceptance, inclusiveness and appreciation for all humankind. In the words of the incomparable, Aretha Franklin, “R-E-S-P-E-C-T, find out what it means to me!” (us!) With this in mind, we will be partnering with the Wayne State University Peace and Conflict Studies this school year and will kick-off the school year with an introduction of the program to district staff the afternoon of September 4. District staff will be asked to participate in a survey created by WSU and the program will be designed to meet our specific needs. More than ever, our students need the skills to make meaning of our current complex and rapidly-changing environment – please stay tuned as I will share information about the program with parents at a later date.

We've had a busy and productive summer here in APPS and are thrilled that we could provide elementary teachers with a summer professional development opportunity as they begin teaching *Journeys*, a new English Language Arts curriculum, and APMS is expanding their math offerings to better serve students. We are also proud to share that APMS and APHS will join Arno, Bennie, Lindemann and APCS, as they initiate a PBIS Program (Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports). More information will be coming from your building principals regarding this program. Throughout the summer, Arno, Bennie and Lindemann held weekly book swaps, with popsicles provided, to prevent the summer reading slide and our Summer Kids Camp provided 180 campers with amazing summer activities here at the Riley Education Center. I can't wait to see what else is in store for APPS students this year!

**Communication** – This year I will be hosting a series of drop-in coffee chats that will be held throughout the school year – please watch your email for dates/times. My goal is to provide some informal time for parents/guardians and community members to learn about important things happening in the district, our challenges and successes, as well as an opportunity for you to ask questions, share ideas and feedback.

As we continue to use our automated system for emergency notifications and other important communications, please remember to keep your phone contact information, as well as email address(es), updated through your Parent Connection portal or by contacting your building secretary. If you wish to contact a staff member by email, please visit the district's website – [allenparkschools.com](http://allenparkschools.com) - for a staff directory listing by school building or Central Office.

There are lots of outstanding things happening at our schools, so be sure to check out our calendar of events on the district website, school webpages, keep an eye on your email, and watch for flyers and other materials that will be sent home with your students! You can also follow us on Facebook – Allen Park Public Schools, or download our mobile app by visiting your Apple/Android store!

Our schools are eager to welcome you as partners in your child's education. We encourage all parents/guardians to get involved because we know that as parent involvement increases, student achievement also increases! You can find out more about how to get involved by contacting your child's teacher or your school office.

***School Safety*** – The safety of our students and staff has always been of upmost concern and as an additional safety measure, a school buzzer entry system has been installed. Office staff will be trained on the system in early October and parents/guests can expect some changes in procedures and routines once the system is implemented. Please watch for a communication in early October regarding protocols for visiting the building or dropping off a forgotten school lunch, book, etc. as main office doors will be locked during instructional hours in addition to all other building entrances.

If your child is not walking or biking to school, please use extra care as you drive your child to school. Please follow any traffic patterns for your child's school and be watchful of excited children who may not be focused on traffic, especially at the start of the school year.

In collaboration with the AP Police Department, we are grateful to welcome back Officer Marcos Madrigal to the position of School Resource Officer. We look forward to working with Officer Madrigal on school safety, along with regular meetings of the District Safety Committee. (Parent School Emergency Guide-attached)

***Bus Transportation*** – I kindly request patience and understanding for the first few weeks of school as we iron out the details of our bus routes for another school year. It is not atypical to have buses run late as we get things rolling, so please plan accordingly for the first few weeks of school.

In closing, as I enter my second year as your Superintendent, it has been my honor and pleasure to serve this school community. I thank you for your continued support of Allen Park Public School and look forward to strengthening our partnerships with district families as well as our community stakeholders. Let's make it a terrific, successful school year!

Sincerely,  
Michael H. Darga  
Superintendent of Schools