



## From the Desk of Mr. Craver

Thank you to the Mendham Township Elementary School community for an enjoyable and rewarding Back-to-School Night. Parents in support of their children, their children's educators and their school system turned out in impressive numbers. I would also like to recognize the HSA for their efforts with decorating, providing refreshments and distributing the highly anticipated School Directory. We also owe Mrs. Hogan our gratitude for ensuring that everything ran smoothly with her kind reminders over the PA as well as the custodial staff who had the building in pristine shape. As enthusiastic as everyone was, our professional educators exuded a sincere dedication to our children's learning and well being in their presentations as they discussed expectations and anticipated experiences. With this event now behind us, our routines re-established, and the arrival of October, it is time to consider the hopes we have for our children in this new school year and the possibilities we can create for their futures.

You'll notice our new logo and school motto on the website and on school literature, "M.T.E.S. – A home for nurturing habits of the heart and the mind." It comes from the belief that each of us plays a vital role in our children becoming well-adjusted, responsible, mindful and compassionate young people with the ultimate goal being a dignified, morally driven, productive adult. Our primary focus is the child in this stage of her/his development, but we also have our sights on the big picture – this child will one day be an adult. We have to ask ourselves "What is my role in such a school with this belief?" While thinking about my role as principal, I have begun with the end in mind. I have a vision of characteristics and habits that I want my own children to embody so that they may morally exercise their freedoms and responsibilities in order to thrive and contribute in a democratic society. As I am with my own children, know that I will work endlessly to provide the same for your child as well, taking liberty to assume that the vision you have may vary slightly. My vision for our children includes:

- Acquiring and demonstrating essential knowledge, skills and information to positively influence their lives and the lives of those they touch
- Possessing the tools to be successful in virtually every learning venue they encounter, both formal and real-world
- Being able to identify their own strengths and needs
- Establishing, reflecting on and modifying personal goals and standards for learning and living
- Using problems, challenges and mistakes as learning opportunities to enhance themselves as thinkers and human beings
- Seeking and using feedback to improve their learning and enhance their thinking
- Becoming aware of the relative effectiveness of their efforts and thinking about their thinking
- Becoming introspective human beings who learn how to be more human with each other for the moral purpose of leading a meaningful life.

Being mindful that as parents and educators we have to recognize when we are being pulled off this course by forces seemingly out of our control, we have to ask some difficult questions regarding the type of education children experience to make this vision a reality. What would a system of learning look like if we were to educate a child to be advanced proficient in the aforementioned habits? We currently have to ask, "Why do we do what we do?" And if we derive an answer that is neither meaningful nor at the least acceptable, we may need to reconsider the premises of our dispositions. There is a terrific quote that I shared with the faculty and staff on the first day of school:

*'No man who worships education has got the best out of education... Without a gentle contempt for education no man's education is complete.'*

I invite you to share your thoughts with me and your child's educators as each of us consider the possibilities of our children's' futures and the purpose of education along their journeys toward self-determination. I look forward to hearing from you!