

FORT MILL SCHOOLS

Dear Parents,

The summer is almost over and the start of a new school year is very near. When the sounds of band and football practices fill the air, everyone begins to feel the excitement associated with a new start.

Families are busy preparing for the start of the year by purchasing new clothes and school supplies. Along these lines, a special thanks go to the Fort Mill Times, the Fort Mill Care Center, and Fort Mill School District for once again organizing the “Back to School” supplies drive. Because of this effort, all students will hopefully feel ready to learn as we start the 2010-2011 school term.

Last year, Fort Mill School District was the only district in the state to receive an “Excellent” rating on the state report card. This was accomplished in spite of mid-year budget cuts and continued increases in student enrollments. We opened two new elementary schools, Pleasant Knoll Elementary and Sugar Creek Elementary, and purchased a school site that will serve the Gold Hill area and eventually alleviate overcrowding at Gold Hill Elementary School. For the immediate future, however, we will continue the enrollment freeze at GHES by assigning new students to Riverview Elementary School. For parents new to the area, enrollment freezes have been a consistent strategy used by the district to address schools that exceed student capacity levels. We feel this approach is less disruptive over the long-term than constantly redrawing attendance zones and is more cost efficient for the tax payer. In addition, both high schools now have stadiums with the opening of the Nation Ford High School Stadium. Prior to last year, both schools had previously used Bob Jones Stadium on the campus of Fort Mill High School. We plan to receive a certificate of occupancy in the fall on our fourth middle school, Banks Trail Middle School, and celebrate the opening in August of 2011.

These additions to the building program are necessary for the district to address previous growth demands and be prepared for future growth increases that are predicted by our projection models. In contrast, declining state revenues for public schools means the district will have less money per student to operate than last year. Obviously, one can see the challenges associated with receiving less money coupled with increased student enrollments.

To address these challenges, the School Board and the administration enacted budget reductions in order to address the revenue shortfall in the 2010-2011 district budget. Employee furloughs and student fees were among several of the strategies adopted to balance the budget. This year’s budget, however, maintained quality instruction in core subject areas and at the classroom level. Although the classroom was protected from any major cuts, teacher-pupil ratios will experience minor increases across all grade levels. In spite of this, I am convinced that with our dedicated and committed teaching force, we will maintain the quality of your child’s education. Our mission statement, which was created by community members, demands that we educate all of our students to their greatest potential and keep the emphasis on “Children First.” My vision for the district is that all students have quality teachers who are passionate about teaching and learning.

This district has historically enjoyed strong community support for the schools. In addition, I know how hard our students, parents, and employees work every day to meet the needs of children. I am confident that by working together, this district will continue to achieve at a high level and remain a contributing factor to the excellent quality of life we enjoy in our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James N. Epps, Jr." in a cursive style.

James N. Epps, Jr., Ph.D.
Superintendent

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Welcome!

Thank you for visiting the Fort Mill School District website. As you maneuver through the various links, we hope you find the information helpful and meaningful.

Based on our mission statement, we strive to provide a progressive and challenging education that allows students the opportunity to achieve to their greatest potential. We hold high expectations for all students. Fort Mill School District consistently ranks high in student achievement measures on state and national tests.

We are dedicated to providing quality educational opportunities for all students. We welcome your comments and feedback as we work together in your child's educational journey.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James N. Epps, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

James N. Epps, Jr., Ph.D.
Superintendent