



## MONTCLAIR KIMBERLEY ACADEMY

August 2019

Dear Primary School families,

I am so pleased to welcome you to the 2019-2020 school year at Montclair Kimberley Academy! Next week, we will open our brand-new doors to our new and returning students and families, kicking off what I know will be an exciting and transformative year for all members of the Primary School community.

### **Campus Updates**

This summer, the Brookside campus was filled daily with architects, contractors, site managers, and other workers who toiled tirelessly to complete the new section of our building as well as our grounds in time and preparation for next Wednesday's opening day. As you will see next week, we now have a school building that has nearly doubled in size, with increased parking and thoughtfully planned landscaping that enhances the overall aesthetic of our campus. New spaces inside will accommodate students for arrival and dismissal, lunch, assemblies, performances, and more. You also won't be able to miss our awesome new playground out front! Complete with swings, bench seating, and a well-appointed sun shade, we know this new recreation space will be well-loved and utilized by our students.

### **New Community Members**

In addition to our new students and families, we also welcome a few new members to the Primary School team. MKA alumnus, current coach, and well-known substitute teacher **Mike Sasso** officially joins us as a recess aide. We also welcome **Marta Monaco** as our new Primary School Spanish teacher and member of the World Language team. In addition, we are thrilled to welcome back to campus **Steve Cristello**, who will serve full-time as the Primary School Security Officer and as the Lead Security Officer at MKA.

This year, **Fay Lonsinger** has moved into the role of full-time receptionist – she will be primarily located at her new desk near Colleen Helsel's work space. Later this fall, we will welcome back current substitute and previous Pre-K maternity leave sub **Suzanne Giarrusso** to work with John Odell in Pre-K Green when Erica Tricarico-DeTrollo goes on maternity leave in November.

## **Safety & Security**

With any changes to a campus comes the need to review and revise procedures because the safety, security, and well-being of our students remains our highest priority. We require that all visitors to the Primary School – including parents – check in with Steve Cristello at the front desk upon entering the building and wear a visitor’s badge or lanyard for the duration of their visit. In addition, all communication to the office regarding play dates, changes in transportation, attendance, etc. must be emailed to [psnotifications@mka.org](mailto:psnotifications@mka.org) **and each child’s teacher(s)**.

## **Important Information: Dates and Events**

All necessary forms and important start-of-school documents have been posted on our website: <http://www.mka.org/back2school>. Please check the “Forms and Info – ALL GRADES” section as well as the grade-specific sections. In addition, the full Primary School calendar of events is found on the school website, [www.mka.org](http://www.mka.org), as are the other campus and PAMKA calendars.

As is the case with virtually any calendar, there may be changes to ours as the year unfolds. While we will always inform you of such changes as soon as possible, we encourage you to regularly check the calendar(s) on the MKA website and to contact your child’s teacher(s) or the main office with any questions.

## **Orientation**

Earlier this summer, we invited all Pre-K, Kindergarten, and Grades 1-3 new students and their families to school on Tuesday, September 3 for the following orientations:

- 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. Pre-K Orientation, **ALL Pre-K students and parents** (no siblings, please)
- 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. New Student Orientation, **new students in grades 1-3 only**
- 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. New Parent Coffee, **parents of new students in grades 1-3**
- 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Kindergarten Orientation, **ALL K students and parents** (no siblings, please)
- 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. World Language Orientation, **new students only, grades 1-3**

During their orientation, students will have the opportunity to meet their teachers and some classmates. Students are welcome to come to orientation in comfortable, casual clothing; they do not need to be in our Primary School Code of Attire though they are welcome to do so if desired.

## **First Day of School**

Our first day of school is **Wednesday, September 4!** This will be a full school day beginning at 8:00 a.m. and concluding at 2:20 p.m. That morning, faculty, staff, and administrators will be available to greet students and help them find their classrooms. We know that the first day of a new school year

is exciting for all; therefore, you are welcome to walk your children into the building and to their classrooms on the first day of school if you wish. If you do, please be sure to arrive early enough to park on neighboring streets with consideration for our neighbors and in accordance with all posted parking signs.

In addition to the security personnel and administrators who will be out on carline each morning next Wednesday, one of the Pre-K teachers will meet and greet all Pre-K students at morning drop-off during the first few weeks of school to help students transition into the building. At dismissal, all Pre-K students will be similarly escorted to their buses and cars by supervising faculty and staff.

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We are ready to go and can't wait to see you. Thank you for your commitment to this community – for your support of and investment in the work we do and the relationships we seek to build, and for placing your trust in us to encourage and care for your children every day. I look forward to seeing you next week as well as when we come together for Back to School Night on Thursday, September 26 at 6:00 p.m. Please mark your calendar!

As we head into the new school year, I feel grateful and honored to work with such a dedicated, purposeful team as the one we have at the Primary School. We wish you a wonderful last weekend of summer and look forward to welcoming you all back to Brookside on September 4.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachel".

Rachel Geringer-Dunn  
Head of Primary School