

April 2022

To Our Fort Thomas Families,

Spring carries a vibe all its own in “the Fort.” As flowers and trees gradually come into bloom, they deliver beautiful splashes of color that only enliven our surroundings, both at school and around town. The windows facing east at Johnson Elementary School and Highlands High School have front row seats to spectacular sunrises. In the Robinson house, baseball is a rite of spring, and as long-time Dodgers broadcaster Vin Scully often described, we love to view the stunning interplay between sun and clouds as “cotton candy in the sky.” Nature bestows unmistakable gifts for us to enjoy.

I also notice a different energy in spring, a unique buzz as more doors open to gathering and supporting one another outdoors. It’s getting warmer, with increasingly more daylight, and we are truly at our best in Fort Thomas when we gather, throughout the community, centered around the wonderful happenings in our schools. Over the course of several days, Highlands Middle School students used chalk to write uplifting messages for all passersby to enjoy on the sidewalk outside the school. It was heartening to see affirmations such as “You are loved”, “You got this!” and “You’re awesome.” As early as kindergarten, we teach all of our students to support one another and that emphasis extends through 12th grade.

On a beautiful day at Highland Park before spring break, the Moyer students who sold the most tickets to Santa House earned a spot on a special kickball roster. Their opponents? The Moyer teachers and staff. The kids took running starts at home plate to kick the ball as far as they could. Students and teachers proudly sported their Moyer clothing and cheered on all of the participants on the hillside overlooking the field. It was spirited, friendly, fun, and galvanized the school community—the essence of a Fort Thomas school experience. The field at Highland Park will also be home to a baseball game with a community-minded purpose on Saturday, April 16th, as the Highlands Bluebirds partner with Beechwood High School to donate all proceeds to the fight against pediatric cancer at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center. Thank you to the Bluebirds and Tigers for living, and playing, for something much bigger than themselves. I am proud to see our students and coaches have a heart for others.

Our students and teachers have resumed traveling beyond the 41075 ZIP code to take part in once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Our students only go to school once, and it’s our shared mission to make that experience as memorable and impactful as possible. Over spring break, Jason Burgess led a group of Highlands Theatre students to New York City to participate in Broadway acting workshops. Wow! What an opportunity—to learn from some of the best cast and crew in the world, and to show our students that dreaming big, pursuing passions and working hard can lead one day to the bright lights in the heart of Manhattan’s Theatre District. Our 8th graders at Highlands Middle School will be taking a trip as well, to Washington D. C., as we resume learning on the ground in our nation’s capitol about the people, places and politics that comprise the centerpiece of our democracy. It will be so exciting to see the buses out in front of the school again, with an unforgettable journey awaiting our students, teachers and chaperones. Safe travels!

Spring also affords us ample opportunities to celebrate and further pursue academic excellence in Fort Thomas. It was wonderful to gather in the Mess Hall at Tower Park for “Nesties—Best in the Nest.” Together with our partners at the Fort Thomas Education Foundation we celebrated high achievement from both students and staff, and spotlighted past winners that waited to be honored because the pandemic canceled the event in previous years. I left this event inspired,

energized, and reminded how fortunate we are to have the best educational professionals in the country.

It is so rewarding to see parents once again volunteering in cafeterias and classrooms to see the positive energy and achievements in our school communities. A Cincinnati-based puppet company visited Moyer earlier this spring to deliver a puppet show for students and teachers in the cafeteria, and I am excited to see you at the "Taste of Moyer Art and Culture" night later this month on April 21st. I also know our Johnson Jaguars will have their spray paint at the ready on April 30th to take part in the Johnson Color Run at Tower Park. Word has it that Mrs. Dikeos, the principal, likes to sneak up on the runners and spray paint them! In keeping with the running theme, Woodfill will host a Booster Run to allow generous supporters to lace up their sneakers to promote wellness and school spirit. And I know our Highlands High School students and families are eagerly awaiting Prom festivities this month.

Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, I have witnessed first-hand how incredibly hard our students, staff and leadership have worked academically, and I wish our students in all five schools good luck as Kentucky state proficiency testing awaits later in the spring. Sleep well, eat a good breakfast, and do your best! I share our community's anticipation to see how well we do knowing our students will set the pace for the state.

The great poet and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "Our chief want in life is someone who shall make us do what we can." With every sunrise in Fort Thomas, a fresh opportunity awaits on that particular day: to pursue our passions, to encourage and guide others as they chase theirs, and to foster the kind of community-minded culture that allows our students to shine, both in the classroom and beyond. We are doing great. Spring has sprung. Let's keep going!

Sincerely,  
Brian