

Clarence Bee Article – September 2019

The School Year Begins

There is nothing quite like the beginning of another school year. It is a time filled with great enthusiasm and the promise that all things are possible. The energy of the students is electric and the positive vibe in all of our buildings is palpable.

I wanted make our community aware of some summer activities and new initiatives for the 2019-20 school year.

First, we hired thirteen new teachers for probationary or long-term substitute positions. Our hiring process delivers the very best teaching candidates in our region. The new teachers attended a rigorous orientation program and they are excited to begin working with students. We also have four new administrators including a new Director of Personnel, a Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics, an Assistant Principal at CMS and a new Chief Information Officer. We are eager for these new leaders to begin making an impact across the district.

One of our new initiatives last year was to create a Family Support Center (FSC). The FSC received over 200 referrals last year and it was able to link families with services at eleven different agencies as well as a number of private practitioners that partner with Clarence. We consider the FSC a great success and it will continue to evolve to better serve families and students.

One of our new initiatives this year is the addition of a districtwide behavioral specialist position. The behavioral specialist will assist teachers, parents and students with developing, implementing, and monitoring behavior intervention strategies and plans.

Another new initiative is the institution of the Leader in Me program at our elementary schools. The program focuses on social/emotional learning and helps students to set and achieve goals, improve self-esteem, independence, and self-confidence, create positive relationships, and self-regulate their emotions.

We are also piloting more inclusive practices for special education students this year. Our inclusion programs schedule special education students into general education classrooms for larger portions of the school day and promote co-teaching methodologies with special education and general education teachers.

We also have a new high school graduation pathway beginning in 2019-20. The Academy of Visual and Performing Arts will provide a specialized graduation pathway that includes specific coursework and colloquia for students with an interest in art and music.

Finally, the Board of Education will finalize plans for a new capital project over the next two months. The project will provide enhanced safety features as well as general repair and maintenance in all the schools.