



Orca K-8 School

Dear Orca Families,

We are in motion and moving with purpose. We've already had a potluck for kindergarten and 1st grade hco krgu and we've had elementary and middle school orientation on September 1st. It was a time for parents, children, and teachers to meet.

As some of you may know, I was out on a medical leave of absence for the majority of the last school year. It feels good to be back in my role as principal, full-time here at Orca. That was a personal goal that I had to keep in sight. Last year, I couldn't allow distractions of any kind to get me off course; it could have cost me my life. One of my goals was to beat cancer, get well, get healthy. and get back to doing my job. I've accomplished that!

Today was a great first day that reflected our vision of the Orca Way. Orca's goal has always been to provide a strong academic program and grow students that will be able to lead not only locally, but internationally. The teaching and learning I observed throughout the grades today gave credence to the very spirit of what it means to teach and learn through the lens of social justice. We are fortunate to have people in our midst with different gifts, talents, strengths. and abilities that desire to sprout these proficiencies into benefits for our students. These differences are the cornerstone that ignites our community to ponder and effectively function here and everywhere.

We have an excellent staff this year! There have been some changes in our population, but you've heard me say before, change is not always bad, it's just different. I look forward to experiencing the differences this year at Orca, but I won't be making this journey alone. I have staff members in key roles that will be integral in developing, shaping. and transplanting your children from one goal to the next; academically, emotionally, physically. and socially. No one person can reach everybody, but everybody can be reached by somebody. That's why I'm so excited about Orca's staff! Although they all deserve to be acknowledged, I specifically would like to highlight our new staff member and even our veteran staff members with new titles.

Donte Felder is someone you know as a middle school teacher, but Donte has taken on the role of Head Teacher. He will be working directly with me as part of the Administration Team, overseeing student discipline, working with students with attendance problems. and supervising students on campus. He will also be the school's liaison. conducting meetings with parents and guardians pertaining to their children. He will provide instructional leadership, as well as assistance to teachers and other staff members as needed in implementing learning.

Our elementary staff has new faces. You have two teachers on maternity leave, Supaydah Sanh and Krista Brown. Lillie Rainwater will be filling in for Supaydah and Crescent Campbell-McGlone will be covering for Krista.

Karen Deeter has taken the open position in 1st grade.

Jaqueline Runnels, who formerly taught 1st grade, moved to 2nd grade this year.

We have two new 5th grade teachers, Brianna Georgi-Densmore and Joe Zimmerman.

Zelda Padmadabhan is a new 6th grade teacher.

Tafuta Fundisha-Bey is a new 7th grade teacher.

We have a new nurse, Marsha Burnworth.

We are also in the process of hiring a middle school language arts teacher and .5 elementary music teacher.

Attached is a letter from Casey Cheever, instrumental music teacher, regarding a few changes in our 4th – 8th grade music program.

It will be a great year for our families and staff as we continue to keep our goals in sight. Let's not get put off course by the distractions that will come our way. Let's continue to move forward as a community that supports, encourages, and helps to build up our children and each other.

We All Belong, here at Orca K-8!

Principal Tonie