

Dear Summit Hill School District 161 Students, Staff, and Families,

I am so excited to be joining the SHSD161 team as Superintendent and enthusiastically look forward to partnering with you to make the upcoming school year a refreshing and positive experience for our entire school community. While my position officially began on July 1, I have frequented the District to visit each school, meet people, listen, learn, and begin to develop the relationships necessary for us to carry out our important work.

As I reflect on my initial interactions across the District, thank you for the warm welcome and for your trust, confidence, and partnership as we ensure that school is a place for every child, where they are known, and where they can learn and grow. The preK-8th grade years help shape our students into the adults they will become, so our work carries significant importance for our students, their families, and for the health of our entire community. The learner experience should be rigorous, supported, and enjoyable; demonstrating cooperation, collaboration and wisdom in how we approach our learners so they can safely and appropriately flourish.

It is also important that we acknowledge and celebrate the hard work of our teachers and staff, ensuring they have the tools and resources needed to carry out their work inside our classrooms and in our schools as they facilitate a relevant, student-centered learning experience. Listening and responding to our team members is critically important and helps provide ownership and voice to the kind of school system so desperately needed in today's ever-changing world. When we all work together, our student's learning is accelerated and everyone wins!

I look forward to meeting you and becoming a part of this amazing team. Thank you again!

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul J. McDermott
Your Superintendent