



marion p thomas
CHARTER SCHOOL

Voice of the Village

A Message from the Superintendent: Welcome Back!

On behalf of the MPTCS Board of Trustees and all of us who work with and support your scholars, I want to welcome you back to what will prove to be an **exciting, historic and transformational** school year. Building on the foundation laid by our founding Board and CEO, our partnership with **BRICK Education Network (BEN)** and stakeholders within the *Village*, has allowed us to reimagine our schools to ensure they prepare our scholars for the labor demands of the 21st century.

It's a sensational time to be a part of the *Village*, and my honor to serve as Superintendent. As I've learned at MPTCS, **"we are family."** Let's continue to work together, have open lines of communication and accountability, to ensure our schools become **the best places to learn and work.**

During the month of August, our new and returning teachers and administrators showed their unwavering commitment to our scholars and improvement, by engaging in robust professional development provided by BEN.

So, what's new?

We've launched this academic year with several new initiatives. We are implementing new research-based, culturally relevant curriculum in K-12 ELA, math, science and social studies. We have hired experienced instructional leaders who will coach and support teachers in curriculum implementation, analyzing student work, and identifying high leverage strategies that will assist our scholar's in mastering NJ Student Learning Standards (NJSLA)

All PreK through 3rd grade scholars will be serviced by two teachers, as we strive to ensure all students are performing on grade level by BEN, who is also supporting the Village's family and community engagement strategies, recruitment, school operations, talent and finances.

We have additional visual, theatre, and performing arts classes at all our schools. In October, we will introduce an array of after school co-curricular activities and clubs. Scholars throughout the *Village* can participate in activities ranging from athletics, student government, theatre, culinary arts, and much more. Moreover, students in need of academic support can take advantage of afterschool tutorials, NJSLA, and SAT prep courses.


Our high school scholars will be afforded the opportunity to earn college credit this Spring, through a partnership we've established with Rutgers University. We are also prioritizing Social Emotional Learning, which aims to develop resiliency, responsible decision-making, healthy relationships, and empathy (*continued on page 2*).

Welcome Back cont'd

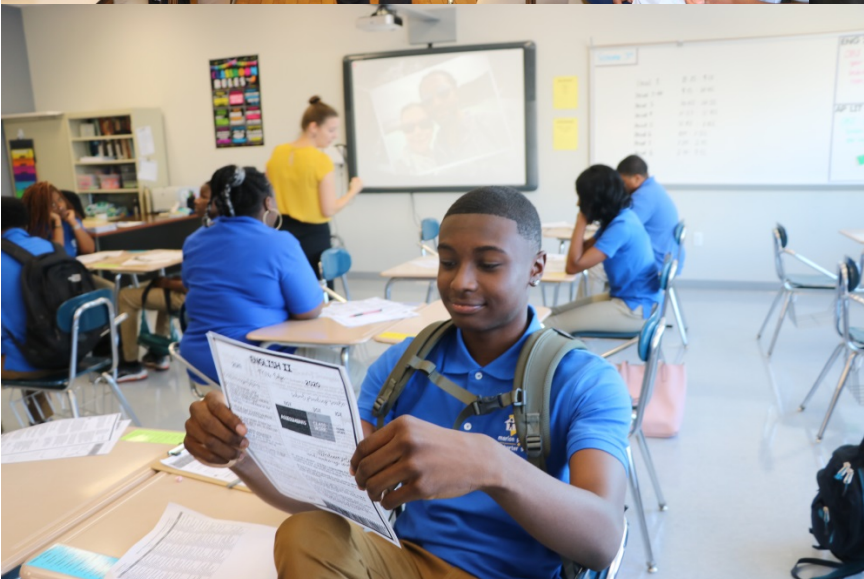
While the end of the school year seems so far away, we all know how quickly a school year goes. Each day is extremely valuable, and we plan on working hard to win and make every-day count for all scholars at Marion P. Thomas Charter schools

It truly does take a village to raise a whole child. We look forward to working with you this year and getting inspiring, transformational results for all our scholars. As I always say, “a better tomorrow starts with us today.”

Sincerely,


A. Robert Gregory

“It’s a sensational time to be a part of the Village. Let’s continue to work together, have open lines of communication and accountability, to ensure our schools become the best places to learn and work.” – Superintendent Gregory



Meet Our School Leaders

Jasonn Denard, Principal **MPTCS High School of Culinary & Performing Arts**

Q: Why did you decide to become a part of the Marion P. Thomas Charter School Village?

A: I decided to become a part of the village because I saw the great things that were a part of the school and those that are possible under the direction of Superintendent Gregory. As a product of this city, I am always excited to help further the legacy and future of Newark.

Q: What are your top priorities this school year?

A: The goal is to make Marion P Thomas Charter High School a top academic choice for students throughout our city. We will accomplish this by focusing on three priorities. **Priority 1** (affective) is around Climate, Culture and Co-Curricular. **Priority 2** (academic) involves cementing and creating a strong academic program in all subject areas, especially in the areas of MATH, ELA and CTE. **Priority 3** (accountability) will ensure that teachers and administrators alike are developed and held accountable for the work that needs to be done.

Q: How will you ensure MPTCS students are college, career, and life ready?

A: The priorities mentioned earlier help us do this in a major way, but we will also rely on the work of our student support team who will complement the academic program and ensure that our students are well-rounded and exposed to each and every opportunity as it relates to scholarships and internships, our student's social and emotional health and receiving additional academic intervention or enrichment.

Q: How can parents and students support you in your role as the principal?

A: We will be forming HS Advisory Committee consisting of teachers, students and parents. This group will be asked to play a role in some of the decision making throughout the school year. We will also have monthly PTSO meetings to address the needs of and celebrate our students. Families can also reach out to me at PrincipalDenard@mptcs.org to contact me directly to share ideas, questions or concerns.

Q: What systems or programs will you implement to create an environment and culture that is conducive to learning?

A: Human capital is the best solution. Though there are some social/emotional and advisory programs that we are looking in to, the best way to create an environment and culture that is conducive to learning is to hire, train and retain quality educators. To that end, we have a team ready and willing to assist and that team of deans/advisors, social worker, college career counselors and administrators, coupled with engaged families, qualified teachers and sound curricular goals puts on the right track.



*Jasonn Denard, Principal
MPTCS High School*

**“As a product of
this city, I am
always excited to
help further the
legacy and future
of Newark.”**

**- Principal Denard,
MPTCS High School of
Culinary &
Performing Arts**

**Lisa Finn-Bruce, Principal
STEAM Academy**

Q: What are your top priorities for the coming school year?

A: This year will prove to be transformational. STEAM Academy remains on the move and we are committed to creating a school that ensures scholars have a strong foundation as they make seamless transitions from crayons to high school, college, careers, and life!

Q: How will you ensure STEAM Academy students are prepared for high school and beyond?

A: I believe that educated citizens of the 21st Century must have a solid background in **Science**, **Technology**, **Engineering**, **Arts** and **Mathematics**, through encouraged inquiry-based learning, interactive activities and instructional conversations that stimulate curiosity, discovery, critical thinking, cooperation and collaboration. The vision of STEAM Academy is to provide a challenging learning environment: the academic and social culture will instill a global perspective to prepare scholars for lifelong, social and emotional development and college and career readiness. We will prepare all scholars for college and career by providing a challenging curriculum that supports lifelong learning. Our scholars will be curious and creative learners who succeed through personal initiatives, and will develop strong work ethics and higher-level critical thinking skills needed to solve problems in the real world. Our goal is to develop scholars with the means and motivation to be leaders in an innovative future.

Q: How will you differentiate STEAM from other schools? How will it live up to its theme of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math?

A: We are striving to expose our scholars to every aspect of the STEAM curriculum. Scholars will receive science instruction throughout the year, which is a change from last year. We added two full time science instructors to make sure our scholars are receiving content rich instruction. We are becoming a 1:1 technology campus. Scholars will each have access to technology for their own use on campus. We have an after school engineering club that supports scholars in grades 5-7, and performing arts and music that continually enhance our art instruction. Our new math navigator program is introducing critical thinking for our scholars on a continual basis. Our options are more robust and this is just the beginning.

Q: How can parents and students support you in your role as the principal?

A: We want parents to be true partners in their scholars' education. It is important for parents to join committees, volunteer for school activities and participate in events. We love seeing our parents on campus, and our scholars are especially excited when their parents are involved.



*Lisa Finn-Bruce, Principal
STEAM Academy*

**Principal Finn-Bruce is
poised to take STEAM
Academy to higher
heights.**

Marjorie Manasse, Principal PAC (Performing Arts & Culinary) Academy

Q: Why did you decide to become a part of the Marion P. Thomas Charter School Village?

A: I decided to become a part of the MPTCS Village because the mission statement *“It takes a whole village to raise a child”* truly speaks to my belief. In order to ensure that our children become productive, successful members of society, we must all have a hand in shaping their academic, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. I entered into the field of education because I saw the need for our children to have strong and caring role models who want to have an impact in their lives.

Q: What are your top priorities for the coming school year?

A: My top priorities for the coming school year are **Priority 1:** Raise our NJSLA (state assessment) math and reading scores at least 12%. **Priority 2:** Increase parent involvement through academic and non-academic activities, and **Priority 3:** Improve both staff and scholar attendance. Additionally, I want to create a safe space for scholars to feel free to make mistakes and learn from them. When students are able to make mistakes, they become risk-takers, and will learn that not everything goes as planned but they can rebound from any situation.

Q: How will you ensure PAC Academy students are prepared for high school and beyond?

A: I will ensure that my PAC Academy scholars are prepared for high school and beyond by utilizing data to help provide the support necessary to close the achievement gap, providing quality professional development to our teachers in order to support our scholars, and provide an opportunity for our scholars to see what future opportunities are available and how to work towards those goals.

Q: How can parents and students support you in your role as the principal?

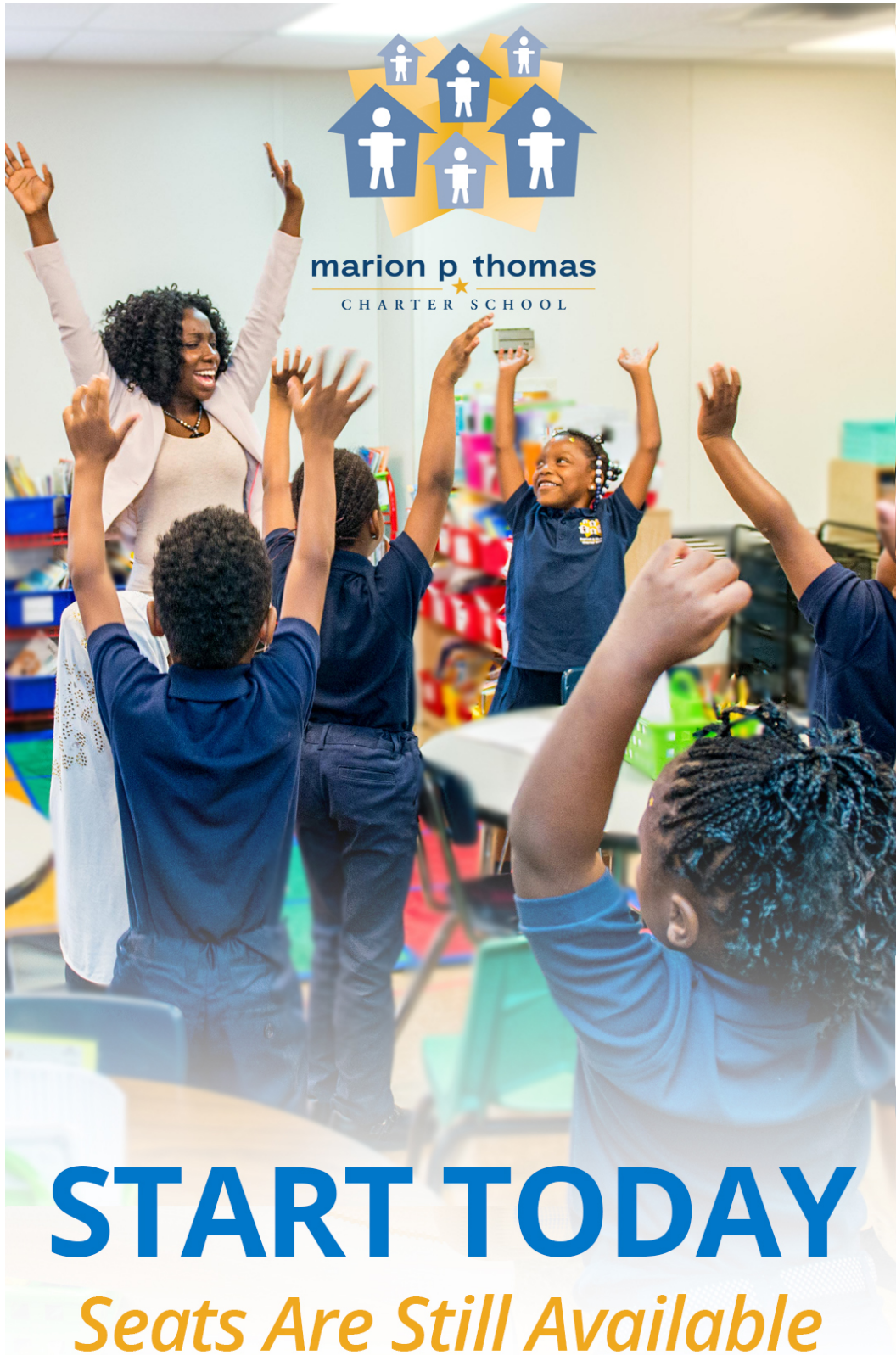
A: Parents need to know that I want what is best for each and every child. My role is to provide instructional support as well as ensure that policies and procedures are followed. I am the gatekeeper for their child’s education as well as their well-being. Scholars can support me in my role by working to the best of their abilities, advocate for themselves, receive feedback then implement, and to become role model scholars. The most important way that both parents and scholars to support me is to keep the lines of communication open.




*Marjorie Manasse, Principal
PAC Academy*

“I want to create a safe space for scholars to feel free to make mistakes and learn from them. When students are able to make mistakes, they become risk-takers, and will learn not everything goes as planned, but they can rebound from anything.”

**- Principal
Manasse,
PAC Academy**

A photograph of a classroom scene. A female teacher with dark curly hair, wearing a light pink blazer over a beige top, stands with her arms raised in a celebratory gesture. Several young students, mostly Black, are also raising their hands. They are wearing blue polo shirts and dark pants. The background shows a typical classroom with shelves of colorful supplies and a whiteboard. Overlaid on the top center of the image is a logo consisting of five blue house icons arranged in a circle, each containing a white silhouette of a person. Below this logo, the text "marion p thomas" is written in a dark blue serif font, with a small gold star to the right of the name. Underneath that, "CHARTER SCHOOL" is written in a smaller, dark blue sans-serif font.


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CHARTER SCHOOL

START TODAY

Seats Are Still Available

Contact Melissa Smith
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