



Thursday, March 20, 2025

Dear P-H-M Community,

Over the past 19 years, I have had the privilege not only of serving as your superintendent, but also getting to know so many of you. Our dedicated teachers, staff, students, and families make Penn-Harris-Madison not only an exceptional school district, but a wonderful community.

I have absolutely loved serving as the Superintendent of P-H-M. My wife, Donna, and I have enjoyed being a part of this wonderful family. We are looking forward to the next chapter of our lives as I plan to retire effective in July 2025.

My journey at P-H-M began years ago as a teacher at Madison and Mary Frank Elementary Schools. It's incredible to reflect on my former students becoming parents—and even grandparents. The kindergarteners who walked into our schools in 2012 will soon graduate as the Class of 2025. Watching them, and so many others, grow into outstanding young adults has been an incredible honor.

As superintendent, one of the greatest joys of my career has been attending school events and witnessing our students shine—whether excelling in academics, performing in fine arts, or competing in athletics. Our students' talent and dedication are extraordinary.

We have been very fortunate to celebrate remarkable individual and collective achievements. One of our students earned the only perfect score in the world on the AP Calculus exam, and our Kingsmen alumni, including Olympic gold medalists in women's wrestling and volleyball, have made history on the world stage.

With the leadership and support of the Board of School Trustees, our commitment to safety has earned P-H-M national recognition, ranking us sixth in the nation for school safety. Through sound financial stewardship, we overcame a \$3 million deficit, built a strong and sustainable financial model, and maintained one of the lowest tax rates in the region—all while ensuring our students and staff had the resources they needed to thrive.

The tireless work of our teachers and administrators led to extraordinary milestones for our students. We raised our graduation rate from 79% to an impressive 98%, placed P-H-M in the top 4% of the state academically, and helped our students earn more than \$200 million in scholarships. These achievements are a testament to the strength of our world-class school system and the power of the **P-H-M Triangle of Success**—the vital connection between teachers, students and parents that has propelled us to new heights.

The P-H-M Education Foundation, the Forum, and our business partners have been fantastic collaborators helping to shape a culture of excellence in the district that will continue to transform lives for generations to come.

As I step away from my role as superintendent, I will remain in the field of education working as a consultant. Donna and I will spend the winter months in Florida. We will always be contributors to and supporters of P-H-M. Once a Kingsmen, always a Kingsmen!

I will carry with me the countless memories of our shared successes and the friendships that have made this journey so meaningful. The future of P-H-M is bright because of each of you, and I have no doubt that our teachers, staff, and administrators will continue to inspire, empower, and lead with excellence. Our families will continue to raise amazing children. And our students are aptly

prepared to make a difference in this world at every level.

With deepest gratitude,

Dr. Jerry Thacker

2012 Indiana Association Public School Superintendent of the Year (IAPSS)

2013 IAPSS Outstanding Educator

2014 Sagamore of the Wabash

2017 IAPSS Outstanding Educator of the Year