September 2025

Dear Families and Caregivers,

We have had a wonderful summer session at Summit Academy and hope you are looking forward to an exciting new school year. Please note that there has been a change to our calendar; you received an updated calendar with your printed parent packet. Our calendar is also posted on The Summit Center’s website.

As we embark on a new school year, I wanted to share some resources and information with you.

* Our **Parent Handbook and Code of Conduct** will be updated and ready for you to review on our website in early September. To access these documents, please go to <https://www.thesummitcenter.org/parent-resource/summit-academy-code-of-conduct/> (this can be accessed by navigated to the Academy Parent page from the menu).
* Please review information about our **allergy sensitive school** in the attached letter
* **Open House** is scheduled for September 24th, 2025, in all buildings (times to be announced)
* Please remember to sign up for **Class Dojo** (specific information will be shared by the building leaders) and our **e-alert system**; these are critical tools used by our school for communicating routine and urgent information with you

As shared in my previous letters, we have officially moved to our new age-based building model for the 2025–2026 school year. Families have already received detailed letters outlining the transition plans that we implemented, and most students were able to participate in tours and activities designed to help them feel confident and prepared. Our teams actively observed and learned about their new students, and supervisors supported these transitions by having individual conversations with families as requested. We also offered several opportunities for families to visit their child's new school, see the learning spaces firsthand, and meet the supervisors.

For those of you that had your children move buildings, we recognize that change can be extremely challenging for our students and for all of us who love and care about them. While our team makes every attempt to be sensitive to this reality, we also want to assure you that we collaborate and work hard to make the best decisions we can for our students given our building structures and resources. The new model will result in our students accessing programming that is most appropriate for their ages, while maintaining our highly individualized educational plans for each student. School districts have been notified about these overall changes and have also been alerted about individual student building changes.

I wanted to provide information regarding some questions we have received.

* **Building security:** Each building, including our newer buildings, is fully equipped with alarms, cameras, and other security measures to promote safety for students. Students are always supervised, including during group and individual transitions. When students are ready for more independence, we have a policy for hallway independence, and families are notified and involved in these decisions.
* **Individualized programming:** All students will continue to receive educational programming according to the mandates on their IEPs, using the evidence-based curricula that we have been using
* **Classroom and building assignments:** Students are placed based on the ratios indicated on their IEPs. Students are required to be in classrooms with their same-aged peers, and each classroom is expected to have no more than a 36-month age range from the oldest to the youngest student in the classroom. The NYS Education Department allows an exception to this in special circumstances. In previous letters, I have indicated an expected grade range for each building, while stating that there will be flexibility depending on a variety of factors. For example, while our Central building will house students generally considered elementary school age, and our Creekside building will house students generally considered middle school, there will be some 4th graders in both Central and Creekside, based on space and class size ratio.
* **Access to sensory-based activities:** Summit Academy promotes the use of sensory-based activities and incorporates them into student programming as appropriate. Students access sensory-based activities during therapeutic activities, as a calming/regulation strategy, for leisure or play, during language activities, etc.
* **Building Assignments:** Your child will not be moved or placed in a different building or classroom without you being notified.

Please know that your first line of support is your child’s educational team and building supervisor, however, I am available to answer more general concerns, questions, and ideas you have regarding Summit Academy. Please feel free to use my contact information below to reach out.

Sincerely,

Mary Bennett

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Summit Superintendent

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