



FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Joel Jocelyn, Ed.D.
Principal

January 6, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope your new year is starting well. Our students are settling back into their regular routines at school. We revisited explicitly and modeled interactively with our students last Thursday and Friday the routines and rituals they should follow in each setting across the school. Our staff also took time to reconnect with their students both individually and as classroom communities through morning meetings, goal setting, and other team-building activities. We know both from experience and through the research literature that students learn more effectively when they feel safe and connected to the people around them. At home, there are also things you can do to make your children's transition back to school a bit smoother and more enjoyable. I have included below the following resources that you may find useful::

- Tuesday's All-School Meeting PowerPoint Attached – I have included with this email the PowerPoint that we will use to present to the students during our All-School Meeting tomorrow to remind them of the academic and behavioral expectations that we have of them. Please review and discuss the content of the presentation with your children at your earliest convenience.
- Healthy Holiday Habits: The following link provides some reminders about ways we can reduce stress at home around the holidays and the long winter months.
<https://www.unitypoint.org/blankchildrens/article.aspx?id=899c0e33-0fa5-4754-9e95-18a049e9d2fd>

Some Important School Related Updates

1. *Progress Reports*: During January, teachers will reassess students in reading, writing, and math as part of our efforts to monitor the progress of our students regularly. Teachers and other staff members use the information they glean from these assessments to inform their instruction and customize the academic interventions they provide to each student to meet their individual needs. Teachers will update families regarding the progress of their children through progress reports. Your children's teachers may also contact you if they have any specific areas they would like to discuss with you or highlight. The district IT



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department will make progress reports available to families on Aspen on Thursday, January 30th. The progress reports will include scores and comments in several areas where your children are assessed and their current performance in each area.

2. *Upcoming MCAS Administration for students in 3rd, 4th, and 5th Grades* – Elementary school students in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades are required to take the state assessment known as the MCAS. I outlined below the dates of the administration of the ELA, Math, and Science MCAS for your information so that you may ensure that your children in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades are in school on the days when they will take the MCAS. Public schools in Massachusetts are penalized in their state accountability status if their MCAS participation rates fall below 93%. We would be grateful if you could please schedule your family vacations outside of these MCAS windows. Thank you for your support in helping Franklin to achieve full participation in the MCAS. Please find below the dates when we will administer the ELA, Math and Science MCAS:

- 3rd Grade English Language Arts, 3/30 & 4/1 3rd Grade Math 5/6 & 5/8
- 4th Grade English Language Arts 4/6 & 4/8 4th Grade Math 5/14 & 5/15
- 5th Grade English Language Arts 4/2 & 4/3 5th Grade Math 5/11 & 5/13
- 5th Grade Science 5/18 and 5/20.

3. *Fifth Grade Winter Concerts* – We will hold our 5th Grade concerts on Tuesday, January 21st and Wednesday, January 22nd. The first presentation will be for our students and staff at 10:30 AM on Tuesday. The second one will be for families and will be held at 7:00 PM in the cafeteria on Wednesday, January 22nd. We invite the entire Franklin community to come, support our students, and enjoy this concert.
4. *Update on the Work near the Bike Room Access by Side Entrance Door # 3* - The work to repair the retaining wall near is being extended due to groundwater conditions that are delaying pouring concrete. The plan is to create an area where the water can be diverted so the work can continue. The contractor anticipates completing the work on or before the week of January 20th. Consequently, we will continue to use the main entrance near the main office for arrivals for students in grades 1 through 5th. Students in 1st through 3rd grades will continue to exit in the afternoon through the main door by the office. Those in grades 4 and 5 will exit via doors 4 and 5. We apologize for the inconvenience.



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5. *Smart Watches and Other Electronic Gadgets* - As students return from the holiday break, we notice that many of them are wearing tech-watches and other gadgets that have screens and other features that enable them to make phone calls, text, as well as take photos and videos. Please encourage the children to keep these tech watches and gadgets at home or if they insist on taking them to school to leave these gadgets in their backpacks during the school day. In addition to the distractions these gadgets represent, for privacy and appropriateness, we cannot run the risk of students potentially taking pictures and videos of other students or making phone calls from their devices during the school day. If students need to call home, they may do so using the landline telephone in the main office. I have asked our teachers to review these expectations with their students and reiterate the message that they need to leave their smart watches and other gadgets in their backpacks.

6. *Reminder: Franklin is Recruiting Families to become Members of our School Site Council* – As I indicated in my December updates, Franklin is in search of two parents or guardians to join our School Site Council. We meet after school for approximately one hour once per month. This body plays a vital role in advancing the mission of our school and tackles projects that I assign. Last year, the School Site Council members developed the first draft of a Franklin School Family handbook. We plan to complete this family handbook once we have the additional parents needed to achieve quorum.

Please feel free to contact our school at your convenience with any questions about any of the items listed above or if you need to discuss any issues related to your child's progress in school.

Sincerely,

Joel Jocelyn