



FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Joel Jocelyn, Ed.D.
Principal

January 14, 2021

Dear Franklin Families,

As we enter into the second half of the school year and a brand-new year, our students are back in their routines and settling in nicely. After four weeks on parental leave, seeing our students and greeting inside the school has been a good feeling. As you may notice, I am not greeting the children at the main front door. Since the children now enter through six different entrances, it is easier for me to welcome most of them while roaming the main hallway.

Despite the challenges inherent in this academic year, our staff continue to take the time to connect with their students both individually and as classroom communities through morning meetings during their in-person days and virtual team building activities during their remote days. We have also taken steps to bring some fun into the day as a community of learners. In addition to what teachers have done in their classrooms, we have taken the following initiatives as a school:

- During the last week of December, our students enjoyed five days of virtual and in-person fun with our spirit week, including activities such as Snow Day (students wear something white), Pajama day, and Franklin Green and White.
- We also had our first virtual all-school meeting in December, and we plan to have them throughout the school year. We are working to ensure that Franklin continues to be a safe and fun place of learning for our students.
- For Morning announcements, we begin the day either with some positive affirmation words to carry the students and staff through the day or a Joke of the day. Many students have contributed their witty jokes to share with our community (e.g., Why did the 2nd grader bring a ladder to school? He wanted to go to High School)

Some Important School Related Updates

1. *Extended in-person time for Students in K – 2* has been working well. Our younger students enjoy additional time with their teachers and peers. I am also happy to report that lunch in the classroom, and post-lunch recess are also working out well. Lunch is proving



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to be safe with the children keeping appropriate social distancing. They have also been enjoying being outside with their peers.

2. *Free Lunches for All Students* - The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is funding free lunches for all students for the 2020-21 school year. This change means that any Newton Public Schools student is eligible for free lunch (and complimentary breakfast where available.) For our K-2 students who will now stay through lunch, students can ask for the meal on the menu for that day and the meal will be given to them free of charge. Students in grades 3 – 5 who want lunch may also order grab-and-go lunches at no cost to their families, regardless of income. Please send a note to your child's teacher if you want them to have lunch at school (K – 2) or grab and go lunch (3 – 4). We will also serve lunch to our extended learning time students who stay beyond the regular school day.
3. *Increased In-person and synchronous interaction with students* – We have augmented our learning models following updated requirements from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for in-person and synchronous (live) interaction with students. I will share another memo that will describe the enhanced model.
4. *School and Home Connection Newsletter* – I am pleased to resume our monthly School and Home Connection newsletter publication. I attached it with this update email.

Thank you for trusting us with the education of your children in these very challenging times. 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