

Dear Franklin Families,

I hope that many of you can join us this evening for our PTO meeting! Our PTO Board will be sharing key information about exciting opportunities to be involved in our community, and I will be talking about the NPS Statement of Values and Commitment to Equity and some of the professional learning that is happening for the Franklin Team this year. You can access this virtual meeting at 7:30 p.m. at:

<https://newton-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/83729983639>

Passcode: 106367

**Differentiating Instruction at Franklin:** In our first six weeks of school, teachers and students have been busy getting to know one another, learning and practicing routines, assessing strengths and growth areas and beginning to engage in meaningful curricula.

As is true every year, teachers are adept at working with students and meeting their needs. Students are grouped flexibly in all subject areas and receive both whole-group and targeted small-group instruction. These groups are fluid and may be facilitated by a classroom teacher, teaching assistant, curriculum coach or specialist. This collaborative approach to student learning and growth is one of the many things that makes the Franklin community a very special place.

In your upcoming family conference, teachers look forward to connecting with you and sharing your child's social-emotional and academic progress. Growth areas will also be a focus, and we welcome your input as we develop student goals for the next few months. Afterall, you know your child best!

**Important Safety Information:** In the interest of maintaining a safe environment for all of our students, I am writing once again about rules for our "Blue Zone" on Derby Street. During arrival and dismissal times, the curb along the street in front of the school is exclusively for live parking, which means that drivers must stay with the vehicle and drive away as soon as their child is in the car. **There can be absolutely no double parking in this area as this creates a hazard for children.** If you need to park and walk up to the school, please park on a neighboring street. We also ask that pedestrians please cross Derby Street only at the crosswalk. We appreciate everyone's help in keeping our students safe.

**Update about Literacy Assessments:** As part of our NPS System-Wide Goals for the 2021-2022 School Year, we have committed to identifying and addressing students' strengths and needs in literacy development. In addition to our ongoing district measure, the Benchmark Assessment System, we have adopted universal literacy screeners at all grade levels, K-5, Fall, Winter, and Spring.

Because the best time to identify and address reading difficulties is as early as possible, in Kindergarten, students will complete the EarlyBird Screener, a comprehensive, game-based assessment tool that assesses our youngest students on the key literacy milestones most predictive of later reading success.

In grades 1-5, students will complete the i-Ready Diagnostic, an adaptive assessment that provides teachers with both screening information and actionable insight into specific literacy growth and needs. Both the EarlyBird and the i-Ready meet MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Guidelines for Dyslexia Screening.

Both of these assessments will enable educators to support students using a proactive, preventative model. Classroom teachers will be using this information and meeting with school-based teams to plan targeted instruction that will support the growth of all students.

**Change to COVID Communication Protocols:** As was the case last year, it is my commitment to be consistent and transparent with notifications of COVID cases in our school building. As we continue to respond to COVID scenarios, we have adjusted our communication protocols to be meaningful and informative. Moving forward, please note the changes outlined below:

- Close contacts will continue to be notified by a public health professional and provided appropriate instructions.
- Students in a class with a positive case will be notified immediately following the identification of close contacts.
- Principals will notify families of the number of cases in the school per week through either the weekly eblast/newsletter or a weekly email. This notification will take the place of the “all school” notification that was previously sent on the same day as the class notification.

Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

**Weekly COVID Case Numbers:** This week, Franklin School recorded one COVID case. Close contacts and classrooms were informed and provided instructions, per our notification protocols. Information on districtwide COVID cases and vaccination rates can be found on the Newton Health and Human Services website here: [NPS COVID Case Count and Vaccination Rates](#).

**Parent Coffee/PTO Evening Meeting Dates:** This year, we have a mixture of morning Parent Coffees and evening PTO Meetings through which we hope to engage all of you in conversation about life and learning in our school community. Please join us on the following dates. We will meet in-person when feasible and rely on virtual meetings when necessary. At this point, in-person meetings will need to be outdoors, so we expect to be limited by weather or lack of

daylight as we move farther into the fall. We will let you know the format for each meeting as the date approaches.

Tonight: 7:30 p.m.  
<https://newton-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/83729983639>  
Meeting ID: 837 2998 3639  
Passcode: 106367

November 19th	8:30 a.m.
January 20th	7:30 p.m.
February 18th	8:30 a.m.
March 24th	7:30 p.m.
April 29th	8:30 a.m.
June 2nd	7:30 p.m.

**Absences:** If your child will be absent from school for any reason, please call the Student Absence Line at 617-559-9509 before 7:50. Also, please be sure that teachers have accurate information about dismissal routines for your child.

**Early Release Dates:** We will have dismiss at **12:10 p.m.** on the following dates: November 2nd, December 9<sup>th</sup>, February 3rd, March 24<sup>th</sup>, and May 12<sup>th</sup>. November 2nd will be an afternoon for Parent-Teacher Conferences.

**Creative Arts & Sciences Programs:** The Franklin Creative Arts & Sciences Committee, led by **Chris Daly and Helen Makadia**, organizes and manages enrichment programs at Franklin that support Newton Public Schools' curriculum, system-wide goals, and core values. The Franklin PTO provides 100% of the funding for these programs, and we are planning to have three programs per grade level this year. Programs brought into Franklin enhance instruction in Art, English, Language Arts, History and Social Sciences, Music, and the Sciences. Thank you to all of the parents whose support of the PTO makes these programs possible! Upcoming programs are:

Tuesday, October 19th:	Storyteller Kemp Harris visits Kindergarten and First Grade
Tuesday, October 26th:	Author Vita Morrow visits Fourth Grade

With best wishes,  
Mark Chitty