



F. A. Day Middle School
Newsletter
May 18, 2020

Quote of the Week

"It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light."
- Aristotle

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE

As we plan ahead for how to close out this unprecedented and challenging school year, I am struck by how hard it is to be an adult in the life of a child. Our role is to guide, to reassure, to offer answers and solve problems. In this uncharted world of a global pandemic, we have few answers and struggle to find ways to reassure our children about lost rituals such as graduations and transitions to new schools, and are unable to make promises of better things ahead such as family vacations and summer camps. And yet we are not the first generation to struggle through crisis to find the glimmers of hope and promise of better days. Since Aristotle's time, there have been thousands of such crises and even more examples of how human beings overcame them.

As our teachers dig deep to find creative ways to engage your children through live sessions, parents find ways to connect their children with friends and family, and the Day faculty and NPS staff finds ways to collaborate and support each other, I am struck by the importance of human connection to our growth and well being. Quite simply, we miss each other.

I truly believe that while they do not know it now, the legacy of the children who lived through this moment in history will be a deeply rooted sense of gratitude for human connections and community both at home and at school. The same will be true for all of us. Human interaction and interconnection, however flawed at times, is the lifeblood of our society, and our children will know that better than most, and will likely create a

world that fosters and encourages it. Our awakened sense of gratitude for humanity is the light within our current darkness.

MEMORIAL DAY

There is no school on Monday, May 25, 2020 in observance of Memorial Day. Weekly Learning Plans will be sent home that week by Monday evening at 7:00 p.m.

VIDEO MESSAGE FROM MS. MANN

I ask that every Day parent show the video message linked below. It is only 2 minutes long and asks all Day students to take the student survey this week and also asks all 8th graders to attend their Homeroom Hangout this week to learn about their Moving On Ceremony.

[Message from Ms. Mann 5-17-20](#)

STUDENT SURVEY

This week, Day Faculty will be asking your children to take a survey to offer us feedback on our current distance-learning model. All middle school students in the district will be taking the survey. We are hoping to get a close to 100% participation as possible as the student feedback will be a critical component to any adjustments we make in the future to our current model. We are also in the process of reviewing the parent and faculty feedback already gathered by the district. Please help us by encouraging your child to take the survey. The survey window is Monday, May 18th through Friday, May 29th. Their teachers will be sharing the link to the survey with their students.

8th GRADE HOMEROOM HANGOUT

Please encourage your 8th graders to attend this week's Homeroom Hangout. The 8th grade teachers will use the time this week to talk about the Moving On Ceremony. The times of each team's Homeroom Hangout will be in the Weekly Learning Plan. If you have any questions about the time, email your child's teacher. Please see the information below about the plans for a Moving On Ceremony. Also – be sure to ask you 8th grader to watch my video message above as it mentions the Moving On Ceremony.

8th GRADE MOVING ON CEREMONY

Moving On Ceremony

I know that many of you join me in wanting to honor the accomplishments of our current 8th graders and acknowledge their transition to high school. Unfortunately, at this time, public health guidelines will not allow us to schedule an "in person" ceremony in June. In its place all four of the Newton middle schools are planning a virtual eighth grade Moving On Ceremony for Thursday, June 18.

The NPS middle schools and high schools are working with Grad Caster by Dynamic Videocasting to produce a professional, high quality, pre-recorded, live-streamed graduation program. This video will showcase many of the features of a typical Day Moving On Ceremony. There will be remarks by the administration, thoughtful speeches by selected eighth graders, moving music by members of the chorus and band, and individual recognition for each 8th grade student--all in an online format. Because it is online, all members of the Day community--sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, all staff, and family near and far--can view it, either live-streamed on June 18 or at any time afterwards on the Day website. An individual certificate and mementos for each eighth grader will be mailed home as well.

We cannot recreate the shared joy of the real event, but we want to give our eighth graders a special experience that can be shared with their immediate family nonetheless. More information about the specific time of the event on June 18 will be forthcoming.

We will begin the planning for this process by speaking with our 8th graders this week during their Homeroom Hangout sessions. Each student will be provided an overview of the event and a description of how each of them will be asked to record and submit a 5-second video image of themselves which will be shown as their name is called during the ceremony. We will be giving them guidelines and timeframes for that process.

The most important thing you can do is to encourage your 8th graders to attend their Homeroom Hangout block this week. The times will vary based upon their team, but will be communicated in the Weekly Learning Plan. Please show them my video message linked below that explains the importance of their participation in their Homeroom Hangout this week.

[Message from Ms. Mann](#)

Please know that in addition to this virtual ceremony, I will be working with the PTO to plan a social gathering for our 8th graders where I hope they can gather to celebrate with each other and sign yearbooks later in the summer. This will only be possible if public health guidelines clear us to do so. If they do not, I will arrange for your child's yearbooks to be distributed.

I know that you will have many questions, and much more will follow in the week ahead, but I wanted you to know how important it is for me that we celebrate our 8th graders as they make this important transition, particularly given the challenging way that they are ending their years at Day.

PLANS TO PICK UP BELONGINGS

We are in the process of planning for an organized way for us to distribute student belongings in lockers during the first week of June. We will be sharing more information likely by next week, but it will involve a Google Form asking students if they have belongings in their homeroom and PE lockers. Our custodial team will be assisting us in bagging and labeling items for us to distribute to families in a curbside pick-up. Distribution of student belongings will also include any books purchased through school or other items. We will also be arranging for school items to be returned. You can expect to hear more from us by next week of the timing of pick-up appointments that will likely be arranged by homerooms.

SOME GOOD BOOK NEWS: EPISODE 3

Below is the link of episode 3 of “Some Good Book News” produced by our wonderful NPS Middle Librarians. These include wonderful new book recommendations for your children. Enjoy!

[Some Good Book News](#)

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP: *Middle School Matters*

I have invited author Phyllis Fagell to hopefully join us for our next session on May 18th

The next meeting of the *Middle School Matters* discussion group is

Monday, May 18, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

See the meeting link below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/378647716?pwd=eTlnZW13T1dFV3VuQoN3K29lWkFodZ09>

Meeting ID: 378 647 716 Password: 9NzHgh

In preparation for our book discussion, I uploaded a copy of the parent discussion guide for Phyllis Fagell's *Middle School Matters*. On Monday, May 18th, we will be discussing the Chapter 5 and then moving on to the "Social Skills" section of the book, Chapters 6-10. See the discussion guide questions linked below:

[Middle School Matters Parent Discussion Guide](#)

THIS WEEK'S PRINCIPAL HOURS

This week's Principal Office hours are scheduled for Thursday, May 21st at 8:00 a.m. I will do my best to create consistency around scheduling office hours for this 8 a.m. – 9 a.m. block of time. The link for the meeting is below.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86205553668?pwd=Soxob2N2WnBJc2d4ZSt6VmJzTT R6QT09>

Meeting ID: 862 0555 3668

Password: 3k2B4J

Norms:

- To join, please click on the Zoom meeting link below at the designated time.
- You need to use the chat feature to write questions.
- This is not a "drop in office hours". It is disruptive to add members while the session is going on, so I will only admit participants up to 3 minutes past the start time of the meeting.
- Please join at the designated grade level time to allow for smaller groups. We will use the same link to join. We will admit participants into the Zoom session only on the half hour based upon the grade level schedule. See below:

QUESTIONS AND ANSWER PARKING LOT

We made the choice not to record the Principal Office Hours to encourage an open dialogue, but in return I have captured the questions that parents shared during the three grade level sessions and recorded my answers in the ongoing Q&A Parking Lot that we have created to track ongoing questions about distance learning at Day. See that link to those questions and answers below:

[Parking Lot for Family Questions](#)

Please note that this document will remain live, and you can also use it to add your own questions. I will check it periodically to respond. The benefit of using this format is that many parents have similar questions, and you are able to view all of the responses.

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

WEEKLY LEARNING PLANS

In order to support your ability to guide your child and plan for use of technology in your household, effective the week of May 18th, we will be sending home the Weekly Learning Plans NO LATER THAN Sunday evening at 7:00 p.m. This is in response to parent feedback that many of you have your own work responsibilities on Monday morning and can better support your children in planning their week if you receive the learning plans before Monday when learning is meant to begin.

VIRTUAL CLUBS

We have created a new page on our website that lists all of the virtual clubs currently being offered through our After School Academic and Enrichment Program. See the link to the “Clubs at Home” page below:

[CLUBS AT HOME](#)

DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR OUT-OF-ASSIGNED DISTRICT REQUESTS

Due to the closure of the Newton Public Schools, the deadline to submit applications for Out-of-Assigned District has been extended until June 1, 2020. If you would like to

request an Out-of-Assigned District placement for your student(s), please utilize the Google Form below to submit your application. If you have already submitted an application, there is no need to complete a new form. All placement decisions will be made as close to June 30 as possible.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1U2sMybKoPR9ULv6wDa8IJ2S8fWiaUP3D8wYeQR7PbMo/edit>

If you have any questions, please contact:

Elementary Education (K-5) Maureen McAdams (mcadamsm@newton.k12.ma.us)
Secondary Education (6-12) Lisa Mazzola (mazzolal@newton.k12.ma.us)

Sincerely,

Khita Pottinger-Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education
Toby Romer, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

I would like to begin by thanking our technology department for their efforts to support families and faculty in this new distance-learning environment. I know that the difficulties in accessing Schoology and other platforms last week led to a great deal of frustration on our first day of live sessions. In response, our technology department has created a **direct email** for parents to use when they have specific technology issues. See below:

Tech Support Email for Families:

familytechsupport@newton.k12.ma.us

Additionally, technology updates and resources will be shared on the website page linked below:

Technology Support Website

<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/3639>

MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Beginning this week, we will be posting “morning announcements” on the distance learning page of our Day Middle School website.

Please see the link below:

[Day Morning Announcements](#)

Morning announcements were a big part of our routines when in school, and I think this is a good way to maintain your child’s connections with the school community and also create a formal start to their day in a distance -learning environment.

SPRING BOOK CHALLENGE

The Newton Free Library is hosting a spring book challenge. Families or classes can sign up. See the link below:

<https://newtonfreelibrary.beanstack.org/reader365>

My best to you and your families,

Jackie Mann

F. A. Day Principal

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On Twitter: @JMannNPS