



## **F.A. Day Middle School Newsletter**

***October 5, 2020***

### **Quote of the Week**

**ORANGE WEEK**

“If we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow.”  
---John Dewey

### **THIS WEEK’S QUOTE**

As we enter our third week of distant learning at Day, our students and faculty have worked through the initial phases of orientation and expectations and have transitioned into the routines of daily learning in this virtual world. As adults in the lives of our children, we have much to worry about and mourn the loss of daily connections that are so essential to our middle school students. But as leaders throughout history have noted, in every crisis there are opportunities. My hope is that the skills that our students are learning in these unforeseen and unexpected circumstances will help prepare them for the world they will inherit. For example, we would have never dreamed of using Google Calendar to “invite” students to class in a typical school year, and yet I know that we are building our students’ executive functioning skills every time they are asked to look ahead at their virtual calendar and prepare for their day. There are many more similar examples. That said, your worries about social connections and learning will certainly remain, and I hope to continue this dialogue about how we will meet your children’s needs in this distance learning and eventually hybrid model despite the challenging circumstances that we find ourselves.

Toward that end, each week I will share with you resources to assist you in supporting your children from home. Our partnership in these challenging times is even more essential to your child’s continued growth and well being.

This week I am sharing two articles from this week's *Boston Globe Magazine*:

[Five Ways You Can Help Kids Learn in Online School Right Now](#)

[Will My Kids Learn Anything This School Year? Experts Take on the Most Worrisome Questions](#)

### **UPCOMING DATES:**

Monday, October 12, 2020: No School – Columbus Day

Tuesday, October 20, 2020: Back to School Night for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

Wednesday, October 21, 2020: Back to School Night for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

Thursday, October 22, 2020: Back to School Night for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Wednesday, November 11, 2020: No School – Veterans Day

Friday, October 16, 2020: Mid-Term Progress Updates

Friday, November 13, 2020: End of Term 1

Monday, November 16, 2020: Beginning of Term 2 and Projected Transition to Hybrid Model at the middle school level

### **WEDNESDAY DISMISSAL BEGINNING OCTOBER 7<sup>th</sup>**

As noted in Superintendent Fleishman's email on Friday, beginning on Wednesday, October 7, 2020, the dismissal for NPS middle schools will be at 1:55 p.m. (instead of 3:05 p.m.) in order to accommodate professional development and collaboration time for faculty. School dismissal on all other days will remain at 3:05 p.m.

### **CHANGE IN WEDNESDAY'S SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS**

This week your students will be given a new schedule for Wednesdays that reflect the earlier dismissal time. This new schedule will include:

- 20-minute advisory
- A full class in the morning
- 40-minute blocks with World Language and Rotation Classes
- Flex Time for ensembles and optional virtual drop-in PE offerings
- 60-minute time with on-team teachers

All of the Wednesday classes are mandatory EXCEPT for the drop in open gym options at 10:05.

Please reach out to your child's teachers with any questions.

### **OPTIONAL OPEN GYM TIME**

On Wednesdays from 10:05 – 10:40 a.m. our PE Department is offering optional virtual “open gym” sessions during this flex block. I will be emailing students directly with links to these sessions. Students who are not in an ensemble groups and who do not wish to participate in one of the virtual open gym sessions can enjoy “off screen” free time from 10:05 – 10:40 a.m.

### **ADVISORY THIS WEEK**

This week in advisory we will begin discussing the concept of identity. Monday is an opportunity for a check-in, goal setting and to prepare for the week. Tuesday's lesson focuses on identifying feelings, both in others and ourselves. In Wednesday's “Paper Bag Biography” activity, students will have the chance to present some important aspects of their own identity and passions.

### **SAVE THE DATE: BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT AT DAY**

This year we are planning our Back to School Nights for parents by grade to avoid conflicts that parents have experienced in the past with siblings in different grades. These events will all be live virtual events. I am meeting with our teacher leader group to finalize details this week, but for now, I ask that you hold the following evenings:

Tuesday, October 20, 2020: 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Back to School Night

Wednesday, October 21, 2020: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Back to School Night

Thursday, October 22, 2020: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Back to School Night

### **Flu Vaccine Clinics**

Newton's Health and Human Services Department has initially scheduled two drive-through/walk-up, appointment-based, weekend flu clinics open to Newton residents and Newton Public Schools students and their families.

Registration is not yet open for these clinics. Online appointment registration will open by early next week at [www.newtonma.gov/flu](http://www.newtonma.gov/flu).

Adults and children older than 6 months may be vaccinated at these clinics. Some high-dose flu vaccine will be available for adults who are at least 65 years old. These clinics are free and health insurance information is requested, but not required. If you do not have a vehicle, you may walk-up to receive a vaccine.

Saturday, October 10, 9 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Newton North High School  
(457 Walnut Street)

Sunday, October 18, 9 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Newton South High School  
(140 Brandeis Road)

*Additional dates may be added depending upon demand.*

Appointments are required and may fill quickly. Alternatively, consider getting a flu shot at another time and place; they are available in many locations, including primary healthcare provider offices, local pharmacies and urgent care clinics. A list of some additional options for flu shots can be found at [newtonma.gov/flu](http://newtonma.gov/flu).

## **PRINCIPAL VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS**

Below is a link to the recording of last week's principal office hours:

[Principal Office Hours 9-30-20](#)

**This week's Principal Office Hours:  
Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.**

### **See the Zoom link below:**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://newton-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/83594804975>

Meeting ID: 835 9480 4975

Passcode: 117242

### ***Norms for virtual Principal Office Hours:***

- To join, please click on the Zoom meeting linked above at your designated time.
- When you enter, you will be muted so that we can hear all participants one at a time. Please keep your microphone muted unless called on for a question.
- The video sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend at the designated time.

- You need to use the chat feature to write questions.
- Please post your name on your screen in your Zoom settings as I will ask you to unmute so that we can have a dialogue about your question.
- 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 refrain from asking specific questions about your child or a faculty member out of respect for confidentiality. Any questions of that nature should be directed to me via an email so that a personal conversation can be scheduled.

## **PARKING LOT**

To make this time most productive, I have again created a virtual “parking lot” for your questions. Please follow the link below to submit questions you might have for the coming year. I will do my best to answer them periodically right in the parking lot, but will also use the parking lot questions to frame our discussions during office hours. 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.

[Day Parent Parking Lot Questions](#)

***In order to respect the privacy of you and your child, I ask that you do not put any questions about any individual student issue into the parking lot but rather email me directly for an appointment.***

## **PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED INFORMATION**

### **ABSENCE, TARDY AND DISMISSAL PROTOCOLS**

Even though most of our students are learning in virtual classrooms, teachers are taking attendance every class. If your child is expected to be absent or late to a class or needs to be dismissed early from classes, we ask that you call the absence line at Day: 617-559-9102 or email Ms. Gandolfo at [gandolfo@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:gandolfo@newton.k12.ma.us)

### **MORNING ROUTINES**

As your child settles into a routine around virtual classes from 8:30 – 3:05 p.m., I would like to add the additional routine of each student logging in to check their NPS Gmail every morning before the start of the school day as teachers may have emailed important messages.

### **TEACHER ABSENCE AND CLASSES**

If a Day teacher is unable to teach a class, the teacher will notify students no later than the morning of classes. The teachers unable to teach an online class will instead provide students with asynchronous assignments to continue their learning during the teacher's absence. It is important that students check their email every morning before beginning their day. The other team teachers will also notify and remind students if one of their teachers is absent that day.

If a teacher is absent for more than three days, we will assign a building-base substitute teacher to resume online classes.

### **DAY FALL MUSICAL SIGN-UPS**

Day's First Ever "All Virtual, All School Musical" will be Bye Bye Birdie, young performers edition. This will be auditioned, rehearsed, and performed entirely virtually.

All students in all grades with interest in performing, designing or technical work are welcome at the General Interest Meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 30 at 3:15 PM - you need to register at the Day Drama website to get the Zoom link - go to [bit.ly/daydrama](http://bit.ly/daydrama) to register! Email [daydrama@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:daydrama@newton.k12.ma.us) with questions.

### **DAY AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS**

Mr. Comings and Mr. Murphy, our After School Clubs and Enrichment Program Coordinators are in the process of creating a "virtual club fair" where students can

watch videos and view descriptions of virtual club offerings at Day. We hope to have this out to you within a week.

We are also exploring some in-person club or intramural options for students and hope to get these to you soon as well. Any in-person offerings will follow the HHS and CDC safety protocols and likely have limited capacity to ensure student safety.

### **BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB:**

The Newton Boys' and Girls' Club is offering a program called "Out of School Time Program" which offers enrichment programs for middle school students and compliments the schedule of NPS middle schools. See the link below:

<https://www.newtonbgc.com/outofschooltimeprogram>

### **HELP DESK**

The Help Desk is not longer running, as we have been successful in getting most students fully engaged in online learning. We greatly appreciated your flexibility as we navigated some of the frustrations of technology glitches.

Should your child experience technology issues going forward you should email the [familytechsupport@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:familytechsupport@newton.k12.ma.us)

I also encourage your child to email teachers directly to notify them of your difficulties.

### **FORJ (Families Organizing for Racial Justice)**

#### **UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

**ADDITIONAL OFFERING: Wednesday, October 14th 7pm-8pm –**

#### **HOW TO RUN CONSTRUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS ON RACE**

Come learn more about District Highlight Initiative: Constructive Conversations on Race and what it entails to run a group.

**Thursday, October 22nd 7:30pm 9pm - School Leaders Meeting**

**Thursday, October 27th 7pm-8pm - [Raising Antiracist Kids Panel](#)**

**Tuesday November 19th 6:30pm-8pm - Housing Inequities with special guest Richard Rothstien author of "The Color of Law, A Forgotten History of How Our**

## Government Segregated America.”

Here is the 2020-2021 [FORJ City-Wide Meetings Calendar](#)

### PTO NEWS

Dear F.A. Day parents and caregivers,

Welcome to the 2020-21 school year at F. A. Day! We especially welcome all the 6th grade parents and caregivers that are joining us for the first time. The second half of the 2019-20 school year was nothing like we expected and all our PTO planned events that go towards fostering a sense of community and belonging at Day had to be put on hold.

As we start this school year, we grateful that we are still able to educate our kids in this ever-changing environment. But this also leads us to think about the new role the PTO must play during this time and how to bring value to the community without in-person gatherings and activities.

While we have some volunteer positions on the PTO board (see article below), we welcome any feedback and suggestions you may have on socially-distant or online events, as well as ways to connect and communicate that are safe, yet foster a sense of community. Please **[email us](#)** with your suggestions and feedback.

Sincerely, Day PTO

## **Volunteer Opportunities - Join the PTO!**

First, we would like to extend a HUGE thank you to ALL Day PTO volunteers, including our PTO Board members, volunteers at events, committee members, and committee chairs for all the hard work you put in last year. There were several events that were held last year prior to the Covid-19 crisis that were so important to the Day community, for community building, raising funds, enriching our children's learning experiences, and helping our teachers. And, for those volunteers whose events were not able to come to fruition, we thank you for volunteering, and for the work that you already put into the planning phase. We could not have done it all without you.

We would like to continue the work that the PTO does for Day Middle School this year, and we are again calling on you to help. We are also asking our new 6th Grade families to get involved with Day through the PTO as well.

We are looking to fill the following 2-year Executive Board positions:

**PTO President-Elect**

**PTO Treasurer**

**PTO Secretary**

**PTO METCO Representative**

Please send an **email** to the Co-Presidents stating the position you are interested in holding with a paragraph or two telling us who you are, any experience you have with other Boards and/.or PTOs, and why you'd like to volunteer. These statements will be shared only with the other members of the Executive Committee and will not be shared publicly. The deadline to submit statements is **October 6th** and will the slate will be voted on at our next Executive Committee meeting.

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## **Volunteer Opportunities - Cohort Liaisons Needed**

The Day PTO's main objective is fostering a sense of community and belonging at our school. But as you can imagine, with our students starting remote, cancelled events, postponed sporting events, and all of the Covid-19 social distancing rules about

gatherings, our families are feeling disconnected from other families at Day.

To help remediate this, we would like to pilot a program to connect parents in multiple facilitated online gatherings throughout the school year, or at least until we can once again gather together once more in person. Because of the size of the school (around 1,000 students), we have decided to break up these groups by both grade and cohort.

We are looking for a group of at least 12 fun, social, Zoom-savvy Cohort Liaisons to both organize and facilitate online cohort gatherings for the 2020-2021 school year. Because this is a new responsibility for the PTO, we will need to adjust and plan these events to suit the needs of the groups. Depending on the interest and/or size of the groups, we may have co-liaisons for the following groups:

**6th Grade:**

**Cobalt**

**Indigo**

**Sky**

**Ocean**

**7th Grade:**

**Phoenix**

**Cardinal**

**Fire**

**Ruby**

**8th Grade:**

**Emerald**

**Evergreen**

**Ivy**

**Mint**

If you are interested, please send an **email** to with your student's cohort color, why you want to lead the cohort group, any issues you think the groups should address, and any ideas you may have to connect the group in a fun and inviting way. These statements and ideas will be shared only with the other members of the Executive Committee and will not be shared publicly. The deadline to submit statements is **October 6th**. We will discuss cohort leader placements at our next Executive Committee meeting.

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**Day Online Merchandise Store Now Open!**

DAY SWAG IS HERE!

The Day Middle School store is now open for business. The store will remain open until **October 5**, and will fulfill the orders shortly after. Each t-shirt, sweatshirt, and sweatpants come in both grey and navy. Let us know if you have any issues ordering products at **[copresidents@daypto.org](mailto:copresidents@daypto.org)**.

**<https://daymiddleschool.itemorder.com/sale>**

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## Day Middle School Dues Drive

### Help us kick off the 2020 Day Middle School PTO Dues Drive!

PTO dues payments are an important part of the PTO's annual budget -- and one of only two major PTO fundraising campaigns each year. Our dues drive fund pays for:

- Curriculum and classroom support, such as: Creative Arts and Science enrichment programs, student assignment books, classroom supplies, PE equipment.
- Technology, such as: Chromebooks, Chromecarts, Cricuts, A/V equipment, Zoom subscriptions
- Community-building events, including: welcome back teacher lunches, student socials, 8th grade moving-on ceremony
- General operations of the PTO including: directory, communications, supplies, principal coffees

Although there is no set annual dues payment required, we greatly appreciate any, and all, amounts our families are able to give.

Day PTO dues payments can be made by clicking [HERE](#) or you can mail a check (payable to Day Middle School PTO) to:

Day PTO, Attention Treasurer  
F. A. Day Middle School  
21 Minot Place  
Newtonville, MA 02460

*Your PTO dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Day Middle School PTO is a 501(c)(3) organization and the TIN is 81-0572465.*

Thank you for your support!

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## Community Notes

- Monday September 28th: No School - Yom Kippur
  - [2020-21 School Supply List](#)
  - [Day Merchandise](#)
  - [Newton Community Education classes \(lots of online options\)](#)
  - Student Absence Phone Line (617) 559-9102
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## ZOOM EXPECTATIONS

As we settle into our first full week of school, it is important that you join us in reinforcing expectations for how your child engages in learning online. For the most part, our students did an amazing job despite the many obstacles. They will find this year that their teachers are using a variety of different ways to engage them in learning online- some of which will rely on trust in student behaviors. While teachers will engage in a practice known as a “gradual release of responsibility”, meaning they will create settings that are initially quite restrictive as students learn the norms for interacting online, we still need to reinforce some basic expectations.

1. We ask that all students access Zoom using only their NPS Gmail so that we can identify them.
2. We ask that cameras be on unless you or your child has reached out to the teacher and/or guidance counselor requesting permission to have a camera off (\*\* Please know we are working with our tech folks on creating a Day approved background that students can use instead of showing their own background).
3. Student microphones must be muted unless otherwise directed by the teacher.
4. Students must follow teacher directions about using the chat feature, and most teachers will only allow a child to chat to them and not to peers initially as students learn the norms and earn trust.
5. Zoom links MUST NEVER be shared with anyone outside of the class.
6. Like in school, students must exhibit the same focus on learning in their virtual classroom – cell phones must be off and away, and students should be

demonstrating that they are prepared for learning by removing all distractions such as video games and finding a space for them to focus on learning.

7. Please see the full list of Zoom expectations for NPS middle school students linked below. Please take a moment to review it with your child this week:

[NPS Zoom Expectations](#)

## **PARENT TECHNOLOGY ORIENTATION**

We are temporarily postponing our Parent Technology Orientation that was planned for September 23<sup>rd</sup>, and will be combining it with our planning for a Back to School Night. More information to follow this week.

## **STUDENT SCHEDULES IN ASPEN**

As of Friday, students were able to view their schedules in ASPEN. When you or they log in and click on the schedule, you must change the date on the calendar to the current date, and the order and times of classes for students on that day will appear. I have included a screen shot of what you will see below:

Please know that teachers will continue to use Google Calendar as the way to share class time and meeting links with students.

## **GOOGLE CALENDAR**

As a reminder, all Zoom meeting links (invites) for classes have been shared with your child through NPS Google Calendar.

The easiest way for your child to access their NPS Google Calendar is by

Visiting:

<http://npsgoogle.newton.k12.ma.us/>

OR

[Newton Public Schools on Google](#)

From here they need to click on what we call the “waffle” or the matrix of dots in the right corner that looks like this:



If they click on this matrix, it will take them to their Google Apps, and then they need to click on their calendar icon:



Calendar

If students click on the day, they will find the invites to all of their classes for the day.

### **DISTANCE LEARNING SCHEDULE**

Your children may have shared that the new distance-learning schedule has adapted our 6-day cycle into a two-week cycle. The only block that changes in the two-week cycle is the multi-team classes. To help students identify which multi-team class they have on a given day, we refer to the two weeks as “Blue Week” and “Orange Week”.

### **YEARBOOKS**

If you purchased last year’s yearbook, and have yet to pick it up from school, please email Debbie Nicolazzo to make arrangements: [nicolazzod@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:nicolazzod@newton.k12.ma.us)

### **SUGGESTED SUPPLY LISTS**

Below is the F.A. Day Middle School Suggested School Supply List

[F.A. Day School Supply List 2020-2021](#)

Please know that students will receive some school supplies in their swag bags this week, so wait until you receive the bags before purchasing any times.

Students will not be required to have school supplies the first week of school.

These are only suggested supplies. If a family is unable to get the supplies, the school will help your child access them. Please reach out to your child’s guidance counselor for additional support.

## **SCHOOL WORK EXPECTATIONS**

Our distance- learning model this year, like all others at the middle school level in NPS, is set up in a highly structured way so that students will engage in learning with their teachers from 8:30 – 3:05 p.m. in 65-minute class sessions. It is expected that a majority of your child’s schoolwork and learning will take place during school hours with the exception of independent reading, which should take place EVERY evening. Your child will have three, 65- minute extension blocks during each week in which to finish any school work that they were not able to complete during class. Team Extension time is also a time for students to access teachers for extra help or work independently.

As a result of the fact that there will be little to no asynchronous work assigned, we will not be using Weekly Learning Plans this year. Class meeting links will be shared via Google Calendar with students and curricular materials via Schoology. Students will be trained in the use of both. There will be a technology orientation for parents as well in the coming week.

## **ATTENDANCE**

For the first three weeks of school, teachers will take attendance only at the beginning of each day. Beginning the week of September 21<sup>st</sup>, teachers will be taking attendance every period. A child must attend at least three of the five classes in the school day to be counted as “present” for the day. You will likely hear from your child’s teacher, guidance counselor and then Assistant Principal if your child has a lot of absences. We take a supportive approach to working with you on engaging your child in learning as each child and each family experience virtual learning in a different ways and each has unique potential barriers.

If your child is having difficulty in engaging in school in this virtual environment, please reach out to guidance counselors or teachers. We are here to support you and your child in this new learning environment.

## **INDEPENDENT READING AT DAY**

Independent reading is critical to your child’s academic growth. Our goal at Day is to create a community of readers. ELA teachers and our librarian Ms. Lightfoot will be working with

your children on establishing the habits of becoming an avid and fluent reading and experimenting with a variety of different genres. We ask your support in reinforcing the importance of independent reading with your children.

## **EBOOKS FOR STUDENTS**

Below is a message from Jamie Lightfoot, our fabulous Day Middle School Librarian:

The Newton Public School district is a subscribing member of the MLS Commonwealth eBook Collection. This robust collection gives our community access to over 20,000 eBooks and audiobooks shared with other schools and small libraries across the state. The collection includes texts with curriculum connections and many high interest titles for independent reading.

Sora is a powerful digital reading platform that is used to access the collection. It is a very intuitive and user-friendly platform, available online and as an app. Students are able to see and borrow titles in Sora based on their assigned school level and may connect to other digital collections using a public library card -- all with their familiar school login and password.

Getting started with Sora is easy, but we want you to be as successful as possible and take advantage of all that it has to offer. The NPS K-12 Library Department has provided a rich support site with both video and print based guides to using Sora, which you can access from the Day Library website. If you need additional guidance, including help troubleshooting or reader's advisory to help you find just the right title in Sora, contact me at the email listed below.

Happy Reading!

Jamie

[lightfootj@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:lightfootj@newton.k12.ma.us)

## **CONTACTING THE SCHOOL**

Our school offices are now open from 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The general school number is: 617-559-9100.

Contact Ms. Donna Fisher or Ms. Gandolfo for general school questions:

[fisherd@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:fisherd@newton.k12.ma.us)  
[gandolfo@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:gandolfo@newton.k12.ma.us)

Contact Ms. Michelle Barry or Ms. Maria Vitone with questions about registration:

[barrym@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:barrym@newton.k12.ma.us)  
[vitonem@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:vitonem@newton.k12.ma.us)

Contact Mike Thurm with questions about IEPs or 504s or any questions related to student services:

[thurmm@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:thurmm@newton.k12.ma.us)

Contact Deborah Romeo or Michael Harding for team, cohort or course placement questions:

[romeod@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:romeod@newton.k12.ma.us)  
[hardingm@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:hardingm@newton.k12.ma.us)

Contact your guidance counselors for questions about your child's transition to school:

6th Grade: Ms. Bernier and Ms. Murphy

[bernierbe@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:bernierbe@newton.k12.ma.us)  
[murphyj@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:murphyj@newton.k12.ma.us)

7th Grade: Ms. Bryant or Mr. Thompson

[bryantm@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:bryantm@newton.k12.ma.us)  
[thompsonj@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:thompsonj@newton.k12.ma.us)

8th Grade: Ms. Calabro, Ms. Burke, Mr. Dewees

[calabros@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:calabros@newton.k12.ma.us)  
[burkem@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:burkem@newton.k12.ma.us)  
[deweesh@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:deweesh@newton.k12.ma.us)

And of course, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at my email below.

Jackie Mann

F. A. Day Principal

[jacqueline\\_mann@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:jacqueline_mann@newton.k12.ma.us)

(617) 559-9100

On Twitter: @JMannNPS