

Brown Middle School
First Friday Letter

October 5, 2018

Dear Brown MS Families,

Next week, you will receive individual student results from spring 2018 Next-Gen MCAS testing. At Brown Middle School, students in all three grades participated in the computer-based version of the Next-Generation MCAS testing. Last year, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) upgraded MCAS to better measure the critical thinking skills students need for success in the 21st century. Over the next several weeks, we will begin to analyze the various data on student performance. The Massachusetts DESE has posted information on Spring 2018 school and district results. Some of the Test Items from Spring 2018 Test Items are also available on the DESE website, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html>

School Picture Day: Our annual School Picture Day will be held on Tuesday, October 9. You should have received order information earlier in the week.

Parent/Guardian Visiting Days: You are invited to visit **Brown Middle School** in session on the following mornings:

Monday, October 15 (Grade 7) 8:45 a.m.-10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, October 16 (Grade 6) 8:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m.

Thursday, October 18 (Grade 8) 8:45 a.m.-10:00 a.m.

We have identified grade levels in parenthesis for mornings that students are in their "team" classes. It is strongly suggested that you check with your child about their schedule for the day you intend to visit. We hope you will be able to join us.

Middle School Enrichment and Athletics: The Brown Middle School Enrichment program is officially under way. Programs generally run from 3:00 to 4:15 p.m. Late buses are provided for students. Our goal is to offer a variety of options for students throughout the school year. All students are encouraged to participate and to suggest clubs of interest. Please contact Katrina Antonellis at Katrina_Antonellis@newton.k12.ma.us with any questions/suggestions. Please visit this link to pay the one time \$60 User fee: <https://unipaygold.unibank.com/transactioninfo.aspx>

Our girls' and boys' soccer, and cross-country teams are in the midst of a successful fall schedule. I know our student athletes and coaches greatly appreciate all of your support from the sidelines.

School Musical: Our all-school musical for this year will be a production of "Mary Poppins." The two evening performance dates are Tuesday, February 12, 2019 and Wednesday, February 13, 2019. There will be an important informational meeting for all students interested in participating on Wednesday, October 17 at 8:00 a.m.

Flu Vaccine: The Health and Human Services Department is pleased to offer the influenza vaccine to all Newton students. The Brown Middle School flu clinic will be held on the morning of **Friday, October 26.** All forms are due at Brown no later than Wednesday, October 24. The information to vaccine form:

<http://www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/91392>

Email: lucy_boyer@newton.k12.ma.us

Web: <http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/1539>

Mid-term Feedback/Progress Reports: The first term will end on Monday, December 10. Mid-term feedback/progress reports will be going home with students during the week of November 5.

Early Release Day: On Thursday, November 1, all middle school students will be dismissed at 11:30 a.m. for professional development workshops for teachers and staff. Lunch will be served at school before dismissal. On that afternoon, our teachers and staff will participate in the second part of the *Courageous Conversations* training, which is part of a district-wide initiative to create greater understanding about the impact of race and racial identity on the school experience. This training is part of our commitment to becoming a more culturally responsive district in which all students consistently feel connected to school and achieve at high levels.

The *Courageous Conversations* training is based on the book *Courageous Conversations about Race* by Glenn Singleton and Curtis Linton and includes learning around the distinction between equity and equality, the definition of micro-aggressions, and the impact of race on academic achievement and social/emotional growth. To become more effective educators, we believe we must understand the development of racial identity and build our capacity to lead conversations on these issues. Our first three-hour training on September 27 was highly engaging and we are excited to continue this important work within our school community.

Turning Back the Clocks: Please remember that Daylight Saving Time ends on Sunday, November 4 (move clocks back one hour).

Sincerely,

John F. Jordan