

**Brown Middle School**  
**First Friday Letter**

February 1, 2019

Dear Families,

The school year seems to be flying by! Next week, mid-year feedback reports will be going home with all students. We ask that you please review the mid-year feedback report(s) with your child. The mid-year feedback reports provide an opportunity to have a conversation with your child about their progress this school year. The second term ends on Monday, March 25.

**Upcoming Early Release Day:** On Wednesday, February 6, all middle school students will be dismissed at 11:30 a.m. for a system-wide professional development workshop for teachers and staff. Lunch will be served at school before dismissal.

**Our Musical Production:** The cast, crewmembers, costume & set designers, and directors of "Mary Poppins" are all working hard, and continue to be very busy focusing on final preparations and rehearsals for their upcoming performances. We hope that you will plan to join us on Tuesday, February 12, 2019 and Wednesday, February 13, 2019 in the Brown auditorium for what promises to be two incredible evening performances of "Mary Poppins."

**Winter Vacation:** School will close at the end of the day on Friday, February 15 and will reopen the morning of Monday, February 25.

**High School Course Registration:** After February vacation, our eighth grade students will be receiving registration materials from either Newton North or Newton South High Schools. Their teachers will make recommendations for the courses they will take. Please look carefully at your child's registration sheet and the high school course catalog so that you may decide if the recommended course is appropriate for your child. If you have any questions, please contact your child's subject teacher and/or school counselor.

Parents of eighth grade students are invited to meet with Joel Stenbridge (principal) and members of the Newton South High School faculty and staff on Wednesday, March 6 from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at Newton South. If your child will be attending Newton North High School, there will be a meeting on the Thursday, February 28 with Henry Turner (principal) and members of the Newton North High School faculty and staff from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at Newton North. These meetings will initiate the process of transition into ninth grade. You will have an opportunity to learn about the high school's academic program, the course registration process, school activities, as well as the orientation process that has been designed to support your child(ren) as they move into a new school at the end of this year.

**2019 MCAS Testing:** This year, students in all three grades at Brown will be participating in the computer-based version of the Next-Generation MCAS testing. During the Spring of 2017, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) upgraded MCAS to better measure the critical thinking skills students need for success in the 21st century. There will be two testing sessions in English language arts and two testing sessions in mathematics during April 1 - May 24, 2019. Specific MCAS testing dates are listed in the schedule below:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Tests</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Grade 6	ELA (English Language Arts)	Tues., April 23

	<i>(ELA testing sessions on two days)</i>	Wed., April 24
	Mathematics	Wed., May 8
	<i>(Math testing sessions on two days)</i>	Thurs., May 9
Grade 7	ELA (English Language Arts)	Mon., April 29
	<i>(ELA testing sessions on two days)</i>	Tues., April 30
	Mathematics	Wed., May 15
	<i>(Math testing sessions on two days)</i>	Thurs., May 16
Grade 8	ELA (English Language Arts)	Thurs., April 25
	<i>(ELA testing sessions on two days)</i>	Fri., April 26
	Mathematics	Fri., May 10
	<i>(Math testing sessions on two days)</i>	Tues., May 14
	Sci./Tech. Eng. MCAS	Mon., May 20
	<i>(Sci/Tech.Eng. testing on two days)</i>	Tues., May 21

**Spring Ahead:** Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday, March 10. Yes, once again this spring it is several weeks earlier than in previous years! Don't forget to move the clocks ahead one hour.

**Looking ahead to June:** Our "Moving On" Ceremony for eighth grade students (and their families) will be held on the last day of school. In April, the specific date will be confirmed when the Newton School Committee votes to establish the last day for students. Thus far, there have been no snow days and the "tentative date" is Monday, June 17 at 8:15 a.m. in the Newton South High School field house. However, the date will change if there are additional snow days. Perhaps tomorrow morning the "Ground Hog-Punxsutawney Phil" will provide some wisdom regarding our spring weather.

Sincerely,

John F. Jordan