



Welcome to the 2022-2023 School Year!

We are so excited to welcome students back to school! Over the next two weeks our teachers return to campus and we will all be working together to learn, connect, and prepare for an engaging and exciting school year. There is a lot of activity on campus as we finish up the construction on our 2nd floor, move in all our beautiful new furniture, and move off the Carver modular building! No long lazy days of August on our horizon, but the buzz of progress and forward momentum is energizing.

We hope you are getting excited for the new year as well! There is a lot of information in this newsletter. Hang on - you'll get through it. And we'll dig in and help you get what you need to know during our Virtual Parent Orientations, 6:30 pm August 11 for Middle School and August 16 for High School.

While this is our 2nd summer newsletter (did you miss the July newsletter? [It's linked here!](#)), it is the 1st of our Sunday newsletters. The Sunday newsletters are one of the ways we keep families informed about everything going on at Franklin. After school has begun you will also receive weekly grade level newsletters. These newsletters are more detailed about what is going on in our classrooms. We encourage you to read these two newsletters to keep up to date.

We can't wait to welcome students on Monday, August 22! Please remember that attendance is important on the 1st day and every day. It is especially important on that 1st day! The State does not consider students enrolled with Franklin until they show up in person. We lose funding for every missed day, which takes away from all our students and staff. Let's work together to make it a great start to the year!

With excitement and gratitude,

Michelle Vruwink, Executive Director
Tony Freeman, Middle School Principal
Peter Tromba, High School Principal

Important Dates

Tues, Aug 9, 6:00 pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Meetings are held in person in the Music Room (in new building/Big Ben; classroom is next to the elevator)

Thursday, August 11, 6:30 pm: Virtual Middle School Parent Orientation

Meet your principal and learn all the things you need to know! Drop-off & pick up procedures, communication, Canvas, extracurricular activities, volunteer sign up, and more! The event is on our Community Calendar; here's the link! <https://zoom.us/j/93126985993?pwd=V1ZJVGHDTFpzYks0WjUwbml1WUZUZz09>

Meeting ID: 931 2698 5993

Passcode: JCd8dR

Tuesday, August 16, 6:30 pm: Virtual High School Parent Orientation

Same as above, but for our high school families! Link to join:

<https://zoom.us/j/99676300304?pwd=L2ZHNjFqME9VUFh0NmK1a1FjVWNsdz09>

Meeting ID: 996 7630 0304

Passcode: X59rTt

Monday, August 22- 1st Day of School!

8:15 am - 3:15 pm: Middle School

8:25 am - 3:35 pm: High School

Wednesday, August 24 - Early Release! We will begin our “short” Wednesdays right away.

Mon, September 5: No School - Labor Day Holiday

Find all our events on our [**Community Calendar!**](#)

Help Us Feed Our Teachers!

We are looking forward to spending time with our teachers and supporting a great start to the school year! Orientation is intense and a great meal helps keep us going strong and feeling good. If you would like to help us show appreciation, you can make a contribution here: [Staff Welcome Back Lunch](#) We appreciate your support!

Substitutes Needed

We are recruiting for substitute teachers! Substitutes truly keep the school running, allowing our teachers to take days off for illness and personal needs. Prior teaching experience and certification are nice but not required. Please send resume and cover letter to jobs@thefsi.us.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Traffic Flow Map - [click here!](#)

With the new spaces, there are big changes to drop-off and pick-up procedures! Below is an overview - be sure to click on the traffic flow map! The visual is essential to understanding how traffic flows on campus. You can also read the new procedures on our website: [Transportation Information](#). And remember to check out our Facebook carpooling page if you are looking to share transportation! You will find information about the Facebook page on our website (follow the link above).

With construction of the gym and new classroom wing, all space behind our new building is a construction zone. We will not have any use of this space (although we do have access to the creek!). This has a big impact on our traffic flow. To keep traffic moving we really need everyone to follow our procedures. Do your best to arrive during the designated times (coming early actually slows everything down!). Display the colored name cards clearly in the windshield of your vehicle. Use the designated zones for pick up. And be patient! It takes time for everyone to get used to the procedure. It will be slow and frustrating the first couple weeks but it does get better! We will be evaluating the new procedures and working on improvements as best we can.

At all times

- Drive slowly and cautiously!
- **Traffic is ONE direction.** Enter on the west side of campus (next to AAA Storage) and exit the east side of campus (next to the gym). Turn RIGHT onto Sardis Road at the exit. If you need to go east, you can drive to the gas station at the corner to make a legal turn. Drive carefully through to the road behind the gas station and make a left turn onto Sand Hill Road, and then a left at the light back onto Sardis.
- Follow instructions from our staff on duty. Traffic duty is hard. Our staff are here to keep students safe and to keep traffic flowing.
- Please have student car rider tags in bottom left hand corner of windshield. Those without will have to park and come into the office to check out student.

Drop-Off - Every Day

- Students may be dropped off in either Zone 1 or Zone 2.
- Pull as far forward as you can to allow others to pull in behind you.
- Observe the crosswalks - it can be difficult to see on sunny mornings. Proceed with caution.
- 7:15 - 7:45 arrival report to Community Room for Before the Bell. There is a fee for early arrival.
- 7:45 - 8:00 am (MS) or 8:10 am (HS) arrival: Report to the Community Room
- Students who arrive at or after 8:00 (MS)/8:10 am (HS) report directly to their 1st period class

Pick-Up - M/T/Th/F

Students will generally line up outside, in front of or behind the Einstein building. We will have indoor dismissal for rainy/stormy weather - this WILL take longer and will require extra patience from all of us!

Arrive during the designated time. Drivers who arrive early will be asked to return to Sardis Road and re-enter traffic.

- 5th & 6th Grades: 3:05 pm, Zone 2. Arrive between 2:45 and 3:05
- 7th Grade: 3:15 pm, Zone 2. Arrive between 3:10 and 3:30
- 8th Grade: 3:15 pm, Zone 1. Arrive between 3:10 and 3:30
- 9th & 10th Grades: 3:35 pm, Zone 2. Arrive between 3:30 and 3:45
- 11th and 12th Grades: 3:35 pm, Zone 1. Arrive between 3:30 and 3:45

Pick-Up - Wednesdays

- Use the same zones as above (Zone 2 for Grades 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10; Zone 1 for grades 8, 11, 12)
- Middle School: Arrive between 12:55 and 1:10 pm
- High School: Arrive between 12:20 and 12:45
- High school dismissal is 12:35. All car riders are expected to leave campus at dismissal - this is a change from prior years. Students who ride the bus, stay for BtB, or carpool with middle school students stay on campus until middle school dismissal.

Carpools, Bus Riders, Beyond the Bell, and Student Drivers

- Middle school students who carpool with high school students will remain in a classroom until high school dismissal (this flips on Wednesdays - high school carpoolers will wait for middle school dismissal)
- Use the zone for the YOUNGEST carpooler.
- Bus riders will be escorted to the buses. Buses will load in front of our main entrance, out of traffic.
- Beyond the Bell students will gather in the Community Room.
- Student drivers must submit an application and pay the parking fee. Parking spaces will be assigned to 12th grade students first, then 11th grade students. We are working to create extra parking spaces where the Carver (former 7th/8th grade) Building sits. We are waiting for the leasing company to complete removal of the building and then we will grade and build the parking lot! Just one of the many moving pieces this summer. We appreciate your patience as we work around the loss of parking related to our construction. We believe we will be able to assign spots for all 12th and 11th grade student drivers, but we aren't able to do this until we build the parking lot.

Beyond the Bell Before & After School Program

Beyond the Bell (BtB) provides early morning care and afterschool programming for both middle and high school students. If you think your student might be using Beyond the Bell - even just once - this school year, head on over to the [BtB page](#) on our website for all the details. To register, please complete [this form](#) and someone from the BtB team will be in touch. We look forward to welcoming your student to the BtB crew! For more info, contact Martha Rutherford at mrutherford@thefsi.us

Student Schedules

Student schedules will be sent electronically prior to the start of school. We are working hard to finalize the schedules, and anticipate sending them late this week or early next week.

Once you receive your schedule, please review for any errors. Schedule change requests will be accepted during the first 5 days of the school year. Students may submit both schedule error changes and optional schedule change requests during the first 5 days of school. However, students should understand that we may not be able to accommodate optional change requests.

Please note that schedule change requests will be prioritized as follows:

- Schedule errors such as: enrolled in a class for which you have already earned credit: scheduled in a class without prerequisite (e.g. Math 2 but have not completed Math 1), and missing classes/incomplete schedules
- Teacher recommendation for different level (honors or standard)
- Student preference/optional change requests will receive lowest priority

Tours!

If you have not yet had the opportunity to visit campus, we are offering a few tours for new students/families! Tours will be offered at the following days/times:

- Tuesday, Aug 9, 10 am
- Thursday, Aug 11, 1 pm
- Tuesday, August 16, 10 am
- Thurs, Aug 18, 1 pm

Please sign up [here!](#) When you arrive on campus, park in any available spot and follow the blue painted footprints to our main office. Sarah Jean Smith will be your tour guide!

Food Truck Updates & School Lunch

We are very sad to announce that we will no longer have food trucks available! We have been unable to find food trucks who are able to provide an affordable option for our students. We are exploring other options and we will keep you updated if we are able to find alternatives!

We will continue to provide meals for students eligible for free/reduced lunch. If your student is eligible, you will receive a survey next week. Please watch for and complete the survey! If you do not receive a survey

and you believe your student qualifies, please contact Erinn Otten (eotten@thefsi.us) to update your eligibility information.

Bus Transportation

We are proud to offer the most extensive bus transportation program of Western North Carolina charter schools. Our transportation program is part of our school's commitment to equity and accessibility. We have added a 5th bus route and we're currently staffed with bus drivers!

Our buses are currently full. We are establishing a waitlist and we will work to accommodate as many students as possible. Last year we were able to accommodate all students - it just takes a little while to work through all the schedules.

School Safety

Keeping our students and our staff safe is our top priority. We know that the increasing violence in our country is traumatic and stressful for everyone. There are many measures we are taking as a school to protect our students and staff. While this overview doesn't address our full school safety plan, we are including some of the highlights. School safety is something that evolves and is revised all the time. If you ever see something of concern, please reach out! We welcome involvement from all stakeholders.

Securing funding for our main building was one of the most important steps we could take to improve campus security. With high school students now taking almost all classes in the new building, student foot traffic will be cut down significantly from prior years! We look forward to having all students in the new building for the 2023-2024 school year.

Like all schools, we have a comprehensive school safety plan. By law, safety plans are confidential. The following addresses some of the high level measures in place:

- Each year we invite the Asheville Police Department to do a walk-through of our campus to become familiar with our buildings and to advise us on security concerns. Maps of our facilities have been uploaded to a statewide emergency personnel database.
- All exterior doors are locked during the school day. School administrators check the doors at scheduled times throughout the day.
- The main entrance is the only point of access for students and guests in our new building. All other exterior doors are locked at all times. Similarly, there is one access point for the 5th and 6th grade buildings, with other doors locked at all times. The Einstein building (7th/8th grade) is the only building with 2 points of entrance.
- Recent/ongoing improvements to exterior doors in the new building include:
 - Installation of key card locks on exterior doors to allow easy access for staff and restrict access for everyone else.
 - Installation of key card locks on the doors to the Community Room. Access to the building is restricted even when the main doors are unlocked.
 - New buzzer and intercom system for the main entrance doors for visitor access.
 - Alarm system for exterior doors alert us if a door is propped open or fails to close completely.
- All visitors must sign in at the front desk and are issued visitor passes. Passes must be displayed at all times during the visit.

- Staff are trained on lockdown procedures and other emergency procedures. We will practice emergency procedures with students early in the year. We prepare for lockdowns by starting with Crew lessons, practicing, and then debriefing with students in Crew. We understand that these drills are essential and can be traumatic.
- We have excellent staff to support students. We have 2 full-time school counselors dedicated to the mental and social health of students; a 3rd full-time counselor supports students with college and career pathways. We also have 2 full-time behavior specialists and a fully-staffed Exceptional Children department.
- Our Crew advisory program is a research-based approach to supporting a positive school culture. Strong relationships with trusted adults is essential to a healthy school environment!
- We use several additional tools to alert us to potential student concerns, including a firewall, electronic monitoring for high risk terms or language, and the Anonymous Alert program that provides students, staff, and parents with access to a 24/7 helpline.

Masks & COVID Updates

From the beginning of the pandemic, North Carolina maintained a “Strong Schools Toolkit” with procedures for schools. The Toolkit has been discontinued and schools are now recommended to follow guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control.

The Board of Directors will discuss and decide on specific measures during the August Board meeting on Tuesday, August 9. We will notify the community of Board decisions by the following day.

We intend to continue offering diagnostic (rapid) COVID tests on site, as long as we are able to obtain testing materials from the State. We are determining whether the weekly pooled testing is still supported for schools. Please bear with us as we determine what steps are available to us and how to best proceed as we continue to adapt!

The most important steps parents and guardians can take to keep our community safe and healthy continue to be:

- Be up to date on vaccinations and boosters
- Monitor symptoms daily! Students who are symptomatic must remain home
- Students who test positive for COVID must remain home for at least 5 days following the onset of symptoms or date of positive tests, and must wear a well-fitting mask for 5 additional days.
- Masks are effective! We support the use of masks as a safety measure. We will ensure that the option to wear a mask is supported.

Volunteer Corner

Parent and community involvement is essential to the ongoing success of any school community. At Franklin, we know that without the support of our families, we cannot be the school we want to be! We ask our families to share their time and talents, with each family contributing four hours (two hour for one-parent households) of volunteer support per month.

Our hope is that you will find volunteering to be rewarding! Getting involved is a great way to meet other members of our school community, and to see first hand what is happening at Franklin. We have many levels of volunteering, from helping plant or weed gardens, to serving on the Board of Directors.

[Please complete this survey](#) to let us know how you would like to get involved. Thank you!

Whew! That was a lot of information! Be sure to join us for the virtual Parent Orientations on August 11 (middle school) and August 16 (high school). We'll share the slide deck from the Orientations in case you miss it!