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**Fairfield Public Schools**

## *SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE for September 2018*

Dear Families,

We are ready for a fabulous 2018-2019 school year! I want to welcome all of our new families to Fairfield Public Schools (FPS). This is the first of several periodic updates that I will send throughout the year to keep our community informed about FPS.

### *What's New in FPS?*

#### Innovative Learning

Staff are excited about this year as we embark on an Innovative Learning initiative to support our Vision of the Graduate. After students matriculate from PK-12, we want all of our students to be: collaborators, communicators, critical thinkers, responsible citizens, innovators, and goal-directed, resilient learners. Our students are entering a world that is vastly different from just a decade ago, and we want to be sure that they use their intrinsic skills to adapt and change with the future. Our focus in FPS is on joyful learning, inquiry, and solutions-oriented thinking. The acronym STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) best defines our district because it includes the Arts, a crucial component for students. Innovation fuels creativity, which is ranked by several groups as one of the top three skills needed for success.

We are implementing a new STEAM program in Grades 3-5 at every elementary school. We have expanded our access to technology for middle and high school so that students and teachers have 21<sup>st</sup> century tools available for their classrooms. FPS is committed to supporting social and emotional learning and we are entering the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of our DBT program and new IMPACT program, partnering with Yale consultants. We have the most talented educators and support staff in the country, and we can't wait to watch our FPS students flourish this year.

#### Big Topics

The Board of Education (BoE) agendas are expected to be very full this year. This includes two town-hall style meetings dedicated for community input. Stay tuned for those dates! The meeting this week concluded at 11:45pm, with our elected officials working hard on our behalf.

## Early Childhood Center

Student enrollment at ECC has grown each year for several years, pushing the building's capacity to its limit. Last year, the first off-site class was added at Stratfield Elementary as ECC's enrollment peaked to 161 students.

FPS is beginning staff and community discussions regarding solutions that support smaller class sizes, best-practice peer ratios and responsible staff caseloads. If interested, please watch for opportunities to be a solutions-oriented thinker and help determine the best option to accommodate growth.

## Student Enrollment

The official student count for FPS will be taken on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. As of today, our enrollment is within 20 students overall of what was projected for this year. Elementary is a little lower, and secondary is a little larger.

## Safety and Security

There is nothing more important than the safety and security of our staff and students. FPS works closely with our Fairfield Police Department to make sure that we are adhering to recommendations and making adjustments as necessary. We know that locking our entrances and dropping items off on our designated carts is inconvenient, but we thank our families in advance for complying in order to keep our buildings secure. This summer we added safety bollards at all schools with ground level entrances. Some of the bollards look like giant planters, and some are the typical yellow pylons. These bollards serve as obstacles (should a car jump the curb), and provide another layer of safety for our students. We have a phenomenal Fairfield Police Safety Unit that is mobilized around our school district on a daily basis. There are six police officers designated to our schools, with two of those stationed solely at each high school.

## Bus Schedules

Thank you for your patience during the first two weeks of school as we adjusted to new transportation software. Please continue to check Infinite Campus for any updates to routes or times. Please note that 'space-available' riders have not yet been assigned, and bus stops and times may be different from last year. If you have remaining transportation issues, please email [busservice@fairfieldschools.org](mailto:busservice@fairfieldschools.org). The transportation staff is monitoring that inbox and you will get a reply. The enormous volume of calls during the first week prevented many people from reaching the Transportation Department.

## Capital Projects

Our FPS Facilities team managed more than 65 projects this summer across all 17 schools. In addition, several projects are managed by a general contractor. Sprinturf is the general contractor for the FWHS turf. The contractual timeline for turf completion is September 28, but the company has provided a written statement that athletes will be on the new turf sometime during the week of September 17.

We have new ADA access at several schools, along with concrete repairs, playground updates, new windows at FLHS, and much more.

Holland Hill is in full construction mode and the interior of the building reflects it. The ceiling grids were removed over the summer and students can actually see up into the ceiling. It's not pretty, but it is a learning opportunity about construction. The new classrooms are visible with the steel structure up and students can see the location of the future courtyard. Expected completion is December 2019.

Mill Hill and Sherman have building committees hard at work on the various stages necessary to move those buildings forward.

We are grateful for the support provided from our community to Fairfield Public Schools. We are ready for a wonderful year!

*Dr. Toni Jones*

Superintendent of Schools