



FREDERICKSBURG CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A K-12 International Baccalaureate Continuum Division
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Marceline R. Catlett, Ed.D.

August 21, 2020

Dear FCPS Families and Staff,

We are excited to announce that Fredericksburg City Public Schools has officially kicked off the start of the 2020-2021 Academic School Year! On Monday, August 17, I had the pleasure to visit all of our schools and am very pleased with the level of enthusiasm and excitement throughout our buildings! Our teachers and staff have worked extremely hard developing plans for providing our students with a quality education.

We are committed to providing a superior education for all students. It is important that we do everything possible to ensure each child's success. Our instructional plan centers on a distance learning model that allows teachers to provide quality instruction to every student in an asynchronous environment. Additionally, we are scheduling for real-time interaction with teachers and students to maximize social-emotional experiences that are critical to every child's healthy development.

Every teacher will hold daily office hours. This will provide an opportunity for students to connect with teachers for one-on-one assistance and tutorials. During this time, parents can reach out to teachers to build those important bonds that ensure students will be fully engaged and not fall behind.

Teaching and Learning

Walker-Grant Early Childhood Center:

Head Start, VPI and ECSE teachers have been making daily contact with their students through email, phone calls and bus visits. Since therapy services will begin next week for students, the staff at the Walker-Grant Center are looking forward to seeing the preschool students start their return to school. Appointments for therapy services are being scheduled case by case.

Hugh Mercer Elementary School:

The One School, One Book initiative started for Kindergarten through grade 5 this week and will continue until August 28. The book's main character, "Humphrey" has created a run on hamster purchases in our area and we are so pleased to see the number of photos being sent through social media that reflect our students enjoying their first distance learning experience. Keep up the great work, Patriots!

Lafayette Upper Elementary School:

Lafayette Lions are participating in the One Book, One School initiative along with HMES, and they are also having daily check-ins with their teachers. Students in Kindergarten through grade 5 participated in drive-through parades to meet their teachers in a safe, socially-distanced way. The turnout was great! Parents and students are encouraged to reach out to their teachers at any school from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. each school day, if they have class-specific questions.

Walker-Grant Middle School:

The first two weeks of school for the Walker-Grant Tigers involves a study of the school's namesakes as well as personal reflections. This project will be useful as students develop their IB Community Projects at the end of grade eight. We are also pleased to inform you that every middle school student has been assigned a 35-minute block each day for clubs, enrichment experiences and remediation as necessary. These opportunities will begin once the hybrid model of instruction begins.

James Monroe High School:

High school students are working on a time capsule project to memorialize what life is like for a teenager during a pandemic. The experiences include a variety of learning modalities such as art, music, writing and acting as well as student-choice. The JMHS admin team will keep us informed as to the location of the time capsule burial.

During the coming days, the release of video tutorials will assist students and families with accessing lessons on-line. These videos will be accessible through our school websites at <https://www.fxbschools.us/>. Starting August 31, classes will be taught through Canvas, an online learning platform. Directions about how to access Canvas are being shared at family/teacher meetings through August 28. If a family is unable to attend a meeting, please email or call your child's teacher to ask that the video be emailed to you. It is important to note that between now and August 31, your child's view on Canvas may change periodically based on the development of the coursework by teachers. Also, additional technology devices (to replace older devices) have been delayed due to COVID-19 shipping issues. As needed, paper copies of instruction and assignments will be made available to students, as individuals await replacement arrivals.

Equity and Inclusion

Our commitment to equity begins with meeting the needs of our most vulnerable students. On August 26, in-person therapy sessions with our special needs students will be offered. Additionally, plans to establish in-person instruction for students with special needs, early English Learners, and other identified students is being developed. Our expectation is to bring our most vulnerable students into schools for face-to-face instruction in the near future.

Technology

We are committed to ensuring every child has access to technology resources. Devices and internet access are the two main challenges we needed to address as we began this school

year. Staff placed orders for devices in early June to provide a school issued device to every Fredericksburg student. However, production delays have left us short on the needed quantity for the start of school. We are making sure all students have access to a device either school issued or personal as we await the arrival of our shipments.

Addressing the need for internet access, we applied to the FCC in early June for an EBS 2.5 GHz broadcast license to provide internet access directly to family's homes. The request for that license is still pending. We are installing 12 solar-powered Wi-Fi hotspots in areas of the city where there is a high density of families with internet needs as well as providing open networks at each school campus. To ensure the needs of each student, we are also using survey results to identify families that need internet access and can be connected through COX Virginia. In partnership with COX, FCPS will cover the cost of the internet connection through the Connect 2 Compete program, for families that qualify. Finally, we are utilizing LTE hotspots for families that cannot get connected and have no other options available.

School Nutrition

This week our School Nutrition Program began the division's virtual feeding program. The program currently has over 29 meal distribution sites throughout the city. Distribution sites will be evaluated weekly and adjustments will be posted accordingly. For more information about this program, please visit:

<http://www.schoolnutritionandfitness.com/index.php?sid=1570142031930>

Communications

Virtual Town Hall

We are pleased to announce that FCPS will host a second virtual town hall meeting on Thursday, August 27, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. This town hall will be held LIVE on the division's Facebook page, @FredSchools. If you would like an opportunity to have your question addressed during this event, please complete the form at the following link:

<https://bit.ly/2YpcTZD>

Website Launch

Fredericksburg City Public Schools is excited to announce the official launch of the division's new website, www.fxbgschools.us The goal of the website, along with each school's new website, is to provide timely and accurate information while also offering a more user-friendly experience. All questions, comments and/or concerns can be sent to webmaster@cityschools.com.

Community Outreach Community

Reaching out to families and letting them know how much we care about the wellbeing and education of their children during this pandemic has been the primary focus of FCPS. A COVID-19 Community Outreach Committee (COC) was formed in April as a pathway to reaching families in need. Members of the COC include the division superintendent, school administrators, FCPS employees, parents, members of the Fredericksburg community, as well as social and emotional health providers. Through the

interests and collaboration of this committee, a Family Needs Assessment Survey has been created to address specific needs of the families and students in our community. As of August 19, we have had 431 families complete the survey. Visit the following link for more information: tinyurl.com/y5dcpweb

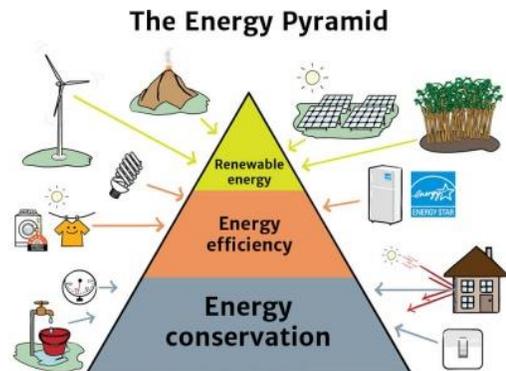
In addition, the COC has reached out to the Fredericksburg community with a How Can I Help Survey. This survey assists with the collection of local services, resources and donations to support our families. Matching our family's needs with the resources from the community survey allows our school administrators and the COVID Response Team in each building to provide support and make connections with the students and families during this very difficult time. If you or your organization is interested in volunteering your services to support our families, please visit the following link for more information: <https://tinyurl.com/y2kzyktm>

Facilities and Operations Energy Usage/Conservation

FCPS continues to investigate facility costs by school/building to gather a better understanding of usage over time. We have data that goes back about 15 years but are particularly interested in the last three years. A preliminary analysis suggests room for improvement in each building with regard to water and sewer, natural gas, and electric based on square footage costs. Our goal is to reduce usage by conserving energy. To do that, we are asking ourselves these questions:

- What can individuals do to reduce usage?
- What can we do organizationally to reduce usage?
- What can we plan for to reduce usage?

Reduced energy consumption is good for the environment. More importantly, reduced energy costs will afford us the opportunity reallocate those facility dollars to areas that enhance teaching and learning.



Please let Dr. Eberhardt know if you are interested in collaborating on this issue to develop plans for conservation, efficiency, and renewable energy.

I thank you for your continued support and patience as we do the critical and challenging work of transitioning a traditional school environment into distance learning. As we continue to move forward and upward leading at the speed of change, we continue to promote equity, empowerment, and excellence in education.

Please stay tuned for next week's, "Message from the Superintendent".

Sincerely,

Dr. Marceline Catlett
Superintendent