



Dear 9th Grade Students & Families,

The 9th Grade Team would like to welcome you and briefly introduce our expectations for the upcoming school year. We look forward to guiding and supporting students through this important transition into high school. When we meet in August, teachers will provide detailed course information, classroom procedures, and instructions for accessing assignments and resources through individual course syllabi. In the meantime, this packet includes important information and supply lists for each of your student's core academic classes and potential elective courses.

General Expectations

- **It's high school!** While it is important to leave your middle school experience behind, we encourage you to carry forward the lessons and skills you developed as you begin this new journey. High school brings expanded opportunities and freedoms, but it also comes with increased responsibilities. Your freshman year lays the foundation for the remainder of your high school experience, so establishing strong habits early is essential.
- **Communication is key.** Students are expected to take an active role in communication between home and school. Learning to advocate for themselves, ask questions, seek assistance, and stay informed are important skills that will contribute to their success.
- **Organization matters.** As students become more independent learners, maintaining organized physical and digital materials will be increasingly important. Developing effective organizational systems will help students manage assignments, meet deadlines, and stay on track academically.

We are excited to partner with students and families during this important year and look forward to a successful and rewarding ninth-grade experience at FSI.

Infinite Campus (IC) will be our primary source for nearly all course assignments and resources. It is strongly advised for parents/guardians to sign up through the Infinite Campus parent 'smartphone app' to guide their child in tracking due dates and grades. Students will also be encouraged to download a student smartphone app (and we'll teach you all how!).

Crew is a unique and essential part of the Franklin School of Innovation experience. It serves as each student's "home base"—a place where students build lasting relationships with their Crew Leader and fellow Crewmates while developing a strong sense of belonging within the school community. Throughout the year, students participate in and often help plan activities, discussions, service-learning opportunities, team-building experiences, and community celebrations.

Crew also provides time to develop **Habits of Scholarship**, strengthen social-emotional skills, set academic and personal goals, and prepare for life beyond high school. At FSI, we believe that **Crew is more than a class—it is a community where everyone is known, supported, and encouraged to grow together.**

General Fees: The Franklin School of Innovation collects a one-time \$15.00 Consumables Fee for all students. This fee helps cover the cost of instructional materials used throughout the school year, including expedition supplies, science laboratory materials, supplemental reading books, workbooks, and other classroom resources. Like many schools across North Carolina, we continue to face limited funding for instructional resources. Your ongoing support throughout the school year will help us provide creative, engaging, and well-structured supplemental materials, hands-on learning experiences, and enriching classroom activities for our students.

Field trips may require an additional fee. Information about each field trip, including the cost, itinerary, and payment deadline, will be provided as opportunities are scheduled. Families will receive an email with the trip details, and any applicable fees will be invoiced through MySchoolBucks. Payments may be made online through MySchoolBucks or by cash or check at the school.

One of the highlights of the 9th grade experience at The Franklin School of Innovation is our traditional **9th Grade Crew Adventure**, an overnight trip designed to build relationships, foster teamwork, and strengthen our school community. Later in the school year, students will also participate in a Learning Expedition that includes multiple field experiences connected to classroom learning. Additional details about these experiences, including itineraries, permission forms, and expectations, will be shared as the dates approach.

Our first field experience, the **9th Grade Crew Adventure**, is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 23, through Friday, September 25**. You should have received an email earlier from Michelle Vruwink with some details about the camping trip a few weeks ago.

The total cost of the trip is **\$250**, which will be divided into two invoices:

- **\$125 due by August 20**
- **\$125 due by September 18**

If your family needs financial assistance with field trip expenses, please contact the school as early as possible. Scholarships are available, and we are committed to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to participate.

Meet the Teacher: We can't wait to welcome everyone back to campus on Monday, August 24! Before the first day of school, we hope you'll join us for 'Meet the Teachers' on Thursday, August 20 (Middle School: 5:00–6:00 p.m.; High School: 6:00–7:00 p.m.). It's a great opportunity to meet your teachers, explore the campus, and get ready for an outstanding school year!

~COURSEWORK~

English I with Ms. Riley Tickle: This foundational high school course provides a survey of World Literature. Students will develop a greater understanding of various literary styles and genres, with a focus on reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. Honors work will consist of an increased level of complex assignments, projects, analysis, and writing. Honors students will also be expected to read two additional books outside of class in addition to the novels all students read.

Math I with Mr. Chris Kollack: Math I introduces students to foundational concepts in algebra, functions, statistics, and probability while building problem-solving and analytical skills. Students will explore topics including linear functions, quadratic functions, exponential functions, systems of linear equations, and statistical analysis. Through the use of various technological tools, students will model, solve, and analyze real-world problems while developing a deeper understanding of the properties and characteristics of different types of functions. By the end of the course, students will be able to apply mathematical reasoning to solve problems involving concepts such as finding slope, writing and interpreting linear equations, analyzing exponential growth and decay, and solving quadratic equations. As required, students will take the Math I End-of-Course (EOC) assessment, which will count as 20% of the student's final course grade.

Math II with Mr. Jeff Readman: In Math 2, students continue to deepen their study of quadratic expressions, equations, and functions; comparing their characteristics and behavior to those of linear and exponential relationships from Math 1. The concept of quadratics is generalized with the introduction of higher degree polynomials. New methods for solving quadratic and exponential equations are developed. The characteristics of advanced types of functions are investigated (including power, inverse variation, radical, absolute value, piecewise-defined, and simple trigonometric functions). The link between probability and data is explored through conditional probability and counting methods. Students explore more complex geometric situations and deepen their explanations of geometric relationships, moving towards formal mathematical arguments.

Earth & Environmental Science with Ms. Alea Rosinblum: Environmental Science focuses on understanding and analyzing the natural world through the study of earth's environmental systems. Students will explore the complexity of ecological systems, investigate real-world environmental issues, and develop evidence-based perspectives on the challenges facing our planet. Through case studies, scientific investigations, and hands-on learning experiences, students will apply the scientific method to explore the interactions between humans and the environment while developing skills in observation, analysis, and problem-solving. Throughout the course, students will examine a variety of environmental topics, including:

- The Scientific Method
- Astronomy
- Atmospheric Science
- Climate Science
- Geology and Soil Science
- Ecology

By the end of the course, students will have a deeper understanding of Earth's systems and the scientific processes used to analyze environmental challenges and make informed decisions about the world around them.

World History with Mr. Jerry Lubos: World History explores the key events and global historical developments since classical antiquity that have shaped the world we live in today. The scope of World History touches on many aspects of the human experience: economics, science, religion, philosophy, politics & law, military conflict, literature & the arts. The course will build connections between our lives and those of our ancestors around the world. Students will uncover patterns of behavior, identify historical trends and themes, explore historical movements and concepts, and test theories. Students will refine their ability to read for comprehension and critical analysis; summarize, categorize, compare, and evaluate information; write clearly and convincingly; express facts and opinions orally; and use technology appropriately to present information. As one of your 9th grade teachers, we will spend time learning and practicing effective note-taking strategies, proper researching and citing of sources, and participation in class discussions on global issues and local topics. I will prepare you for high school and beyond!

~ REQUIRED MATERIALS & SUPPLY LIST ~

English I	Math I / II	Earth & Environmental Science	World History
❖ 3 ring binder ❖ Loose Leaf Paper ❖ Pink, Yellow and Orange Highlighter	Math 2 ❖ Composition notebook (either lined or graphed) Notebook should only be used for Math 2. ❖ Pencils ❖ Graphing Calculator **(TI 83 or TI 84)	❖ Composition notebook ❖ Pen or pencils ❖ Tape/glue sticks (optional but helpful) ❖ Colored pencils (optional but helpful) ❖ Highlighters (optional but helpful)	❖ Composition journal (for note-taking and studying) ❖ 3-ring binder with at least three dividers (and can be used to house other classes) ❖ Miscellaneous supplies (highlighters, colored pencils, glue sticks, etc.)

******** A helpful tip for finding an affordable graphing calculator is to go to pawn shops or second hand stores/websites. Students will often sell them once they have completed courses for which the calculators were required.

NOTE: Because elective classes may possibly teach all high school grades, supply lists may differ. You will meet your teachers during the first few days to gather the specific materials you need for each elective class.

Other Crew Leaders: In addition to your core teachers who are also Crew Leaders, three other FSI staff members serve as our 9th grade Crew Leaders.

- **Molly Wagner:** Ms. Wagner is the 9th Grade Exceptional Children (EC) Teacher. You may see her supporting students in their core academic classes, working with students in her classroom, or busy behind the scenes completing paperwork and coordinating services. Ms. Wagner works closely with students, families, and teachers to ensure that students receive the academic support and accommodations they need to be successful. She is also a trusted adult who is available to provide encouragement, guidance, and support throughout the school year. Whether students need help navigating a challenge, advocating for themselves, or achieving their academic goals, Ms. Wagner is an important member of the 9th Grade Team and is here to help students thrive.
- **Connor Dalton:** Connor Dalton is joining the 9th Grade Team after serving as a Middle School Crew Leader during the 2025–2026 school year. They have a dual role at FSI, working with both the Middle School and High School communities. Connor is the High School Theater Teacher, with a classroom located near the 9th Grade hallway, making them a familiar and accessible presence for our students. They bring creativity, enthusiasm, and a collaborative spirit to the team while encouraging students to build confidence, develop leadership skills, and express themselves through the performing arts. Committed to fostering both academic and personal growth, Connor works to create an inclusive and engaging learning environment where students are challenged to think creatively, work effectively with others, and achieve success both in and out of the classroom.
- **Jessica “JP” Potter-Bowers:** JP serves as the High School Behavior Specialist and the 9th Grade Team Lead. As a key member of the High School Administrative Support Team, she works closely with students and staff to foster a safe, supportive, and positive school environment. JP is a trusted adult students can turn to when they are feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, or simply need someone to talk to. She is committed to helping students develop the skills and strategies they need to navigate challenges and be successful both academically and personally. In addition to leading a 9th Grade Crew, JP teaches Adventure Education, an elective that emphasizes teamwork, outdoor exploration, leadership, and survival skills. Most class sessions take place outdoors, providing students with hands-on opportunities to build confidence, resilience, and a connection to the natural world. JP also facilitates student support groups, co-sponsors the Outdoor Club, and helps organize school-wide events that strengthen our community. She plays an important role in making FSI a fun, welcoming, and engaging place to learn while encouraging students to take responsibility for their choices and remain accountable for their actions. Whether she's leading an outdoor adventure, checking in with a student, or supporting a school event, JP is dedicated to helping every student feel connected, challenged, and successful.

~ SUMMER PREPARATIONS & ASSIGNMENTS ~

Mr. Lubos - World History:

Get organized and stay organized. It's my #1 tip for this course and a general tip for navigating all aspects of life.

Think of these as strong suggestions as you practice organization::

- ❖ Physically - Set up a workspace in your house where you will regularly do your schoolwork. Arrange office supplies and materials where they are accessible and easy to find. Clean your room once in a while and offer to organize a room at your house. Do this occasionally until it becomes a habit without your parent/guardian asking you to do so. The classroom is similar.
- ❖ Mentally - Take inventory of the things you enjoy doing, your strengths and weaknesses, and short-term and long-term goals. Remind yourself what motivates you and what is still challenging that you want to someday overcome. This will translate to a lot of the mental work we do in class.
- ❖ Socially - Think about your circle of family and friends. How did you meet your friends? How often do you interact with them? How do you keep up with communication with your family? What ways do you strengthen your bonds with each? What ways do you resolve conflicts? You'll be collaborating a lot with peers you know and peers you don't know well (yet). With everyone coming from different backgrounds, we'll create our own unique community within the classroom.

We look forward to teaching your child and working together with families this year and beyond. Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
FSI 9th Grade Team

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