



From the Director

Dear Franklin families,

Happy new year! I hope everyone has enjoyed a wonderful winter break, and is ready to return with renewed energy and commitment. The end of the old and start of a new year is a natural time for reflection and goal-setting, and many of us set lofty goals for our new year. My hope for each of us this year is that we take the time to reflect on our successes, and our "not yet's" for the prior year, and then commit to small, achievable steps and strategies that will bring us ever closer to our goals. And maybe - if you are up for it - add one crazy ambitious "not yet" that you've never dared to take on -and give it your best go!

As a school, we are constantly balancing those incremental strategies and the crazy ambitious "not yet's". Often, when we think we've taken on too much, somehow, our community steps in and gets us over the hump and on the path to success. It is truly the idea of "Crew" - we all succeed together.

In the spirit of Crew, I'm asking for your help in a goal that is both incremental and ambitious, all at the same time. From the very start, the vision for our school was to grow to around 100 students in every grade level, about 700 students in total. This wasn't just a random number. We settled on 100 students per grade for a number of reasons. We heard from many students who attended the smaller k-8 charter schools in our area that by middle and high school - they were ready to be part of something bigger. Our planned size of 100 students per grade provides a natural "team" for each grade level, with a core teacher for each subject. And while both the middle and the high schools remain small enough for a principal to get to know every student - the size provides enough students to support the more full social experience students want - with sports, arts, clubs, and social events to give everyone a chance to engage.

So our incremental and ambitious goal this year is to grow by about 100 students for next year. We've been on a steady growth plan ever since our start, and this year's goal is important to support our new building. This year's goal is ambitious, but we know we can reach it together.

We're asking families to help out! With the idea of "Each one, reach one" - we will achieve this goal. Not sure how you can help? Here are a few easy strategies that have proven successful. Pick one, or try them all!

"Each One Reach One" strategies:

1. Are you a Facebook user? Share our posts on your own FB feed! "Likes" are great but not enough- share our posts and events to keep your friends and families in the know!
2. Invite a friend to an Info Session or school tour (you are welcome to come along!) Dates and sign up forms are on our website: [FSI admissions - prospective students](#)
3. Stop by the office and ask for copies of flyers or other marketing material to share with your friends. We're happy to provide whatever information you need!

4. Email your friends and invite them to sign up to learn more. Here's a little blurb you can cut and paste to share with friends:

Dear _____,

I'm sure you've heard me talk about my child's school, The Franklin School of Innovation. It's a tuition-free, public charter school open to students in grades 5 - 12. They follow an EL Education model, where teachers have more freedom to design creative curriculum, and students do more project-based learning. Every student is assigned to a Crew, which is a small group of students that meets daily with a faculty Crew leader. Crew is a time to work on building relationships, developing social and emotional skills, and just making sure that every student has an adult and a group of peers who know them well. It's been a good fit for my child - you should check it out! Open Enrollment for next year is going on right now - January 1 through March 30. Here's the school website, <https://www.franklinschoolofinnovation.org/>. You can also sign up for their emails to learn more - [email signup form](#).

I'm grateful to be part of a community that embraces the true idea of Crew. Together we are building a great school.

Warmly,

Michelle

Upcoming Events

Stay in the loop! Our community calendar is posted on the website: [Community Calendar](#)

January Community Events

Tues, Jan 1 - March 30: Open Enrollment for NEW Students (not returning students)

Wed, Jan 2: NO SCHOOL for students - Teacher Work Day

Thurs, Jan 3: Classes resume

Tues, Jan 8:

-9 am: School Tour for Prospective Families

- 6 pm: Board of Directors Meeting (Parks building)

Thurs, Jan 10

-8:15 am: Parent "Crew" meeting, Einstein 12. Come meet other parent volunteers and learn how to get involved!

-6:30 pm: Parent Workshop: "Talking with your teens"

Fri, Jan 11

-4 - 6 pm: Movie Night @ Franklin. "The Goonies" for MS/"Napoleon Dynamite" for HS. Tickets \$5 at the door; concessions available for sale

-4 - 8 pm: FSI Night at [Sideways Farm & Brewery](#), 62 Eade Road, Etowah. Sideways Farm & Brewery is an FSI family-owned business - head on down this weekend & support our school & our community!

Sat, Jan 12, 12 - 8 pm: FSI Day at [Sideways Farm & Brewery](#), 62 Eade Road, Etowah.

Tues, Jan 15, 6 pm: High School Information Night for current 8th grade students & families.

Join us for a special Info Night to learn how FSI's high school program prepares students for college and life! Meet our HS principal, teachers, college counselor, and HS students, and learn about courses, clubs, and activities, Meet & mingle starting at 6 pm; presentation will start at 6:45 pm.

Thurs, Jan 17

-8 am: SMILE Dentist Program at FSI. (see more info below)

-5:30 pm: Info Session for Prospective Families. Invite your friends to this session!

Fri, Jan 18, 8 am: SMILE Dentist program at FSI.

Mon, Jan 21 - NO SCHOOL - MLK Day

Thurs, Jan 24

-8:15 - 9:15 am: Coffee & Chat with the Director, Einstein building. Join us to learn more about the EL Education model! Open to all parents/guardians.

-4 - 5 pm: School Improvement Team meeting

-6 pm: 8th Grade Theatre Performance, "10 Ways to Survive the end of the World" - Drama Room

Fri, Jan 25 - NO SCHOOL - Teacher Work Day - End of Quarter 2 - FSI Family Ski Trip

Sat, Jan 26

-5 - 7pm: MS Franklin Flurries Dance @ Fairview Community Center

-7:30 - 9 pm: HS Franklin Flurries Dance @ Fairview Community Center

Tues, Jan 29, 9 am: School Tour for Prospective Families

Wed, Jan 30 - FULL DAY - 3:10/3:30 Release

January Athletics Events

Tues, Jan 8, 4:15 pm: MS Bball vs NCA @ AVL Neurology

Tues, Jan 15, 4:15 pm: MS Bball vs Evergreen @ Evergreen

Tues, Jan 22, 4:15 pm: MS Bball vs Odyssey @ Foster Church

Tues, Jan 29, 4:15 pm: MS Bball vs Francine Delany @ Reid Center

School News

Open Enrollment is Jan 1 - March 30

Open Enrollment for new students runs January 1 - March 30. Our next two Info Sessions are January 17 and February 7 at 5:30 pm, in the Carver Building.

We will hold a special evening for parents and students who will be entering 9th grade next year. The Freshman info night is Tuesday, January 15, 6 pm, and is open to current FSI 8th graders as well as prospective new students. This is a great opportunity to come learn more about our high school program. Bring a friend!

Sibling Enrollment - enroll today!

If you plan to enroll a sibling next year, you need to submit an application during Open Enrollment. Siblings receive preference in our lottery, but only if the applications are submitted during Open Enrollment.

Returning Students - Re-Enrollment

We will begin re-enrollment in February. You do not need to submit a new application for returning students. Like last year, we will complete re-enrollment through SchoolMint, the online enrollment program.

Helping Students Prepare for College - Every Day

On February 20, public school students all across North Carolina will take the ACT. This test, along with the SAT, remains an important part of the college acceptance process, playing a key role not only in access to specific colleges and universities, but also in the awarding of scholarship funds.

This will be the 3rd year students at Franklin will participate in the ACT. While overall, our students have outperformed students in district school, we want to support our students in achieving stronger scores. Across the country, and especially in private schools and wealthy school districts, students often take the ACT multiple times, and participate in expensive private tutoring, giving students a real advantage on the tests. This year, the 11th grade teaching team, in coordination with our high school counselors, has arranged for all students to complete a practice ACT test during school. The practice test will take place next week, and teachers and students together will assess results to identify areas of individual strength and room for growth. Students will then have the opportunity to target areas of growth. Teachers are working to incorporate instruction that will support student success on the ACT, as well as help them become better writers, readers, scientists, and mathematicians. Students can take advantage of free, online ACT practice and preparation - learn more on the [ACT website](#).

Across all high school grades, students will be digging into college and career readiness materials. With the support of our college and high school counselor and Crew leaders, students will be reviewing their GPA, courses, and extracurricular activities (and why these matter!), setting up accounts on the College Foundation of North Carolina site (CFNC.org), completing interest profiles, and exploring post-high school options. The specific activities are targeted to each grade level, with a more exploratory focus in 9th grade; preparing resumes and portfolios in 10th grade; digging into college and career search in 11th grade; and polishing up resumes, practicing interviews, and learning about the ins and outs of college life in 12th grade.

Our high school counselors and teachers are working hard to ensure that college acceptance is a real opportunity for all students. Well done high school Crew!

Parents of rising 9th graders - come learn more about our high school program on Tuesday, Jan 15, 6 pm!

Construction & Calendar Updates

Despite a record rainy year, construction has continued at a fast pace, and we are still on target for completion in time for an August 2019 move-in. We are working closely with Vannoy as we develop the calendar for the 2019-2020 school year. While the calendar is not yet finalized, we anticipate a starting date for next year in the week of August 19, with the school year ending the 1st week of June. We will post the calendar as soon as it has been reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors. This is an earlier start than recent years, largely due to calendar changes by both Buncombe County and Asheville City schools. Many families have students in FSI and those districts, and we do our best to align our calendar. However, as an independent school, our calendar reflects our priorities for things like teacher development and collaborative planning time, and will not directly match district calendars. Stay tuned - and plan to be back in school sometime the 3rd week of August.

Next week, 8th and 9th grade students will be moved out of the Parks and Johnson buildings temporarily, while walls are set immediately behind those buildings. The grade level teams are working on plans for field work off-campus. The 8th grade will be off-campus January 8 and 9; 9th grade will be gone January 10 and 11.

Finally, we will have school on Friday, June 7. Thursday, June 6 will be a regular release day (this was previously scheduled as an early release). We are waiting to see what January brings for weather before determining any other changes to this year's calendar. The high school graduation date (June 7) and 8th grade moving-up ceremony date (June 5) will remain as scheduled. Note that our original calendar includes June 7, 10, and 11 as possible weather make up dates - please keep this in mind as you begin your summer planning. It looks like we will continue with a very wet weather pattern for this winter!

SMILE Dental Program

Great news! Our school has partnered with Smile Programs...the mobile dentists to offer in-school dental care. Sign up your child today at www.myschooldentist.com or return the permission form that has been sent home with your student. The mobile dentist will be on campus on January 17th.

Even better, dental care is usually at no cost to you. All insurance is accepted including Medicaid and CHIP. For those without insurance, a low cost self-pay option is available.

Volunteer Corner

Spotlight on LeAnn Moffitt



Want to meet more parents at FSI, and connect to the community? Looking for a way to show your child that you think school is important? Volunteering is a wonderful way to do this! We have lots of fun ways for you to get involved this fall. This month, we're shining the spotlight on LeAnn Moffitt, parent of Lily (9th grade) and Owen (5th grade).

LeAnn and her husband, Bryan, have been involved with Franklin since before we opened. Bryan has volunteered many hours of support through our building projects, even when the projects were well outside his usual line of work (does anyone really like working on modular building projects?). LeAnn's involvement goes back to our very earliest days as well. She has been involved in our parent marketing team, distributing flyers all around town, doing outreach, and generally being an all-around wonderful advocate and ambassador for Franklin.

Two years ago, LeAnn took a big leap and accepted the role of serving as the coach for our cross-country team. Though she had experience as a cross-country athlete, accepting the coaching role was a little outside her comfort zone! LeAnn's

reason for stepping in is simple - she believes that parent involvement is a big key to student achievement. The picture above captures LeAnn's view on her role perfectly - you'll never see her out front. You'll always see her on the sidelines, clipboard in hand, making sure everything is in place. Here's what LeAnn says about volunteering:

My motivation to be a part of the FSI parent "crew" begins with my own two kids. I've always believed their best academic experiences are dependent on steady parent involvement. Some days parent involvement can be as easy as discussing a current topic at the dinner table. Other days parent involvement can become as demanding as coaching to keep a program going. But every day of being a new charter school has given my kids the chance to appreciate every step it takes to build a quality school community. When I am in there building with them, hopefully it is a win for their school as well as a win for my kids as they develop great respect for the thing we are building together.

We are so grateful for parents like LeAnn and Bryan and all the other parent volunteers who are working so hard to create a great school community! Our athletic program depends on parent and teacher coaches and volunteers - we couldn't do it without the help of all of you!

The Parent "Crew" meets the 2nd Thursday of each month - this month's meeting will be Thursday, Jan 10, 8:15 am in Einstein 12. This is a great opportunity to meet other parents and to learn how to get involved! To help us communicate effectively about volunteer opportunities (meaning fewer, more targeted emails!) - please complete this short survey! [Volunteer Survey](#)

Reminders - Check here for info you may have missed!

Stay Informed - Where to find what you need to know

Homework, sports, social events, and more -keeping up with family schedules takes some serious organization! We want to help you find all the information you need to know, when you need it!

Here are the ways you will hear from us, and some helpful links when you're looking for something and just not sure where to find it:

Monthly Newsletter: This newsletter will be sent the 1st week of each month. The newsletter highlights activities taking place at school, as well as some of why we do what we do. The newsletters are published on our website - on the Parent page - in case you ever miss an issue, or want to go back and read it again.

Community Calendar: Find our online calendar on our website! The Community Calendar is the place to find all daily/weekly events taking place at Franklin.

Facebook Page: Franklin maintains a school-wide Facebook page. We'll post about events, topics of interest, and general happenings. Like us and follow us!

Carpooling Group: Find other Franklin parents looking for rideshares and carpooling on this closed Facebook group. You'll be asked to answer a couple questions before you join.

Bolts Athletics: Our Athletics Program has a Facebook page as well - follow it to keep up with our teams. We hope to see lots of fans on the sideline this year!

FSI Website: You'll find lots of information on our website! Check the Parent tab for the calendar, forms, our handbook, archived copies of our newsletter, and more!

Who do I go to when....

Whether you are new or returning to Franklin, we know you will have questions, and we want to help you find the best person to answer them, quickly and efficiently. We hope this little guide will help you navigate!

I have a question about my child's grade, an assignment, or something specific to one class:

Start with your child - what do they know? Then, the classroom teacher

I'm worried about my child's overall progress, or progress in multiple classes: Your child's

Crew advisor can help coordinate a team response or meeting

My child seems anxious, sad, or unhappy: [Lindsey Foster](#) is our middle school counselor, and [Katherine Becker](#) is our high school counselor

I think my child is being bullied, or other behavior/discipline concerns: [Walter Plotkin](#), Middle School Principal or [Sarah Jean Smith](#), High School Principal

My child will miss school: For short-term absences (illness, doctor's appointments, etc), send an email to attendance@thefsi.us, or bring a written note to the front office. Educational leave requests require prior approval from the Executive Director, [Michelle Vruwink](#).

I've contacted a teacher, but the problem isn't resolved: Your child's Principal

I think my child may need special education services or accommodations: [Donnie Stahlke](#), Director of Special Services

My child has an IEP, and I have questions about the services provided: Your child's Exceptional Children teacher is your first contact:

- Grades 5 - 6: [Tammy Leahy](#)
- Grades 7 - 8: [Meagan Barnhard](#)
- Grade 9: [Lindsay Furst](#)
- Grade 10: [Jennifer Nathanson](#)
- Grades 11 -12: [Serena Campbell](#)

I have questions about sports: [Kim Burke](#), Athletic Director

I want to know more about after or before-school services: [McKenzie Eury](#), Beyond the Bell Coordinator

I want to know more about your band program: [Chris Wilson](#), Band Director

I have questions about your school bus: [Deeana Bennett](#), Director of Operations

I am interested in carpooling/ride-sharing: Check out our carpool facebook group (you need to request to join):

I want to know more about college planning, including advanced courses like AP and Dual Enrollment, financial aid, or the college application process: [JaneAnne Tager](#), College & Career Counselor

I have high level concerns or questions about the school, such as a problem that hasn't been resolved through my principal, an immediate school safety concern, or more general questions about the school's philosophy, approach, or plans for the future: [Michelle Vruwink](#), Executive Director

Directory

Executive Director, Michelle Vruwink: mvruwink@thefsi.us
HS Principal, Sarah Jean Smith: sjsmith@thefsi.us
MS Principal, Walter Plotkin: wplotkin@thefsi.us
EC Director, Donnie Stahlke: dstahlke@thefsi.us
College Counselor, JaneAnne Tager: jtager@thefsi.us
HS Counselor, Katherine Becker: kbecker@thefsi.us
MS Counselor, Lindsey Foster: lfoster@thefsi.us
Director of Operations, Deeana Bennett: dbennett@thefsi.us
Student Services Coordinator, Erinn Otten: eotten@thefsi.us

Faculty:

5th Grade

Katie Lapinski, ELA & Social Studies: klapinski@thefsi.us

Peggy McKay, Science & Math: pmckay@thefsi.us

6th Grade

Tony Freeman, ELA & Social Studies: tfreeman@thefsi.us

Charlie Keller, Math & Social Studies: ckeller@thefsi.us

Samuel "Latt" Berry Foster, Science & Social Studies: sfoster@thefsi.us

7th Grade

Ethan Burns, ELA: eburns@thefsi.us

Bryan Clendenin, Social Studies: bclendenin@thefsi.us

Judy Carhart, Math: jcarhart@thefsi.us

Nick Liu, Science: nliu@thefsi.us

8th Grade

Dan Torrington, ELA: & Social Studies: dtorrington@thefsi.us

Lucas Myers, Math: lmyers@thefsi.us

Elizabeth Post, Science & Social Studies: epost@thefsi.us

9th Grade

Drew Fowler, ELA: dfowler@thefsi.us

Jerry Lubos, World History: jlubos@thefsi.us

Austin Proctor, Math 1: aproctor@thefsi.us

Taylor Jenkins, Math 1: tjenkins@thefsi.us

Jill Padfield, Math 2: jpadfield@thefsi.us

Chris DeFiore, Earth Science: cdefiore@thefsi.us

10th Grade

Carly Connor, ELA: cconnor@thefsi.us

Matt Reynolds, Civics & Economics: mreynolds@thefsi.us

Jill Padfield, Math 2: jpadfield@thefsi.us

Teshale Byan, Math 3 & Calculus: tbyan@thefsi.us

Jessica Bragdon, Biology: jbragdon@thefsi.us

11th Grade

Katie Washburn, English III & AP Lang: kwashburn@thefsi.us

Meghan Moore-Hubbard, American History I: mmoorehubbard@thefsi.us

Teshale Byan, Math 3 & Calculus: tbyan@thefsi.us

Taylor Jenkins, PreCalc: tjenkins@thefsi.us

Melissa Kee (formerly Parton), Chemistry & Conceptual Physics: mparton@thefsi.us

12th Grade

Laura Walton (formerly Bubacz,) English IV & AP Lit: lwalton@thefsi.us

Tess Barnes Dunn, American History II: tbarnesdunn@thefsi.us

Teshale Byan, Calculus: tbyan@thefsi.us

Taylor Jenkins, PreCalc & Discrete Math: tjenkins@thefsi.us

Melissa Kee (formerly Parton), Conceptual Physics: mparton@thefsi.us

Austin Proctor, Physics: aproctor@thefsi.us

Elective Teachers:

MS PE: Kendra Parks (formerly Orians), korians@thefsi.us

HS PE & Athletic Director: Kimberly Burke, kburke@thefsi.us

MS Art: Diane Strazzer, dstrazzer@thefsi.us

HS Art: Kati Robbins, krobbins@thefsi.us

MS Lit Lab: Hannah Allen, hallen@thefsi.us

MS Tech: Matt Mikulski, mmikulski@thefsi.us

MS Guidance (and counselor): Lindsey Foster, lfoster@thefsi.us

Music: Cary Cooper, ccooper@thefsi.us

Theatre: Chris Martin, cmartin@thefsi.us

French: Stephanie Hellert, shellert@thefsi.us

Spanish: Heather Kabat, hkabat@thefsi.us

Spanish: Alfredo Herrero Debon, aherrerodebon@thefsi.us

ASL: Desiree Delbert, ddelbert@thefsi.us

Support Teachers

5th/6th grade EC: Tammy Leahy, [tleahy@thefsi.us](mailto:t Leahy@thefsi.us)

7th/8th grade EC: Meagan Barnhard, mbarnhard@thefsi.us

MS EC Intensive: Meaghann Denkenberger, mdenkenberger@thefsi.us

9th grade EC: Lindsay Furst, lfurst@thefsi.us

10th grade EC: Jennifer Nathanson, jnathanson@thefsi.us

11th/12th grade EC: Serena Campbell, scampbell@thefsi.us

MS EC Assistant: Diana Schofield, dschofield@thefsi.us

HS EC Assistant: Paul Szumski, pszumski@thefsi.us

Behavior Specialist: Kyle Hancock, khancock@thefsi.us