

June 15, 2018

Dear Freedom Hill Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

And we have arrived...the last week of school! First some business – students are dismissed at 2:05 on Friday. Not sure if you agree, but I feel this year seemed to fly right by! I am so proud of our students, staff, and community for making the year another successful one for FHES. We continue to evolve in our work to ensure our students are equipped with the skills and knowledge that will allow them to contribute in the most positive way to our world. Providing opportunities for students to collaborate, communicate, and problem solve is critical and has been deeply embedded in our work. Our blended learning approach leverages technology to enhance student learning and engagement. As the world rapidly changes and we recognize we are preparing students for jobs that don't even exist yet, we will continue to evolve in our practices as well.

Our theme, Kindness is our Superpower, kept a focus on the importance of community in our classrooms and school. Next year we will introduce the Positivity Project (<https://posproject.org/>), teaching students positive psychology's 24 character strengths with the motto #otherpeoplematter. This character education resource is now present in many FCPS schools and is a powerful addition to our Responsive Classroom (<https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/>) practices that focus on classroom community.

Our preliminary SOL results are indicative of our hard work. FHES will continue to be fully accredited by the Virginia Department of Education. Individual student SOL reports will be mailed home from the central office in August.

Friday afternoon I will be found waving our Freedom Hill flag on the sidewalk as students depart one last time to close out a year of learning and growing together. It's an emotional moment for us all! I wish everyone a memorable last week of school and a fun-filled summer with family and friends. If you need anything during the summer, please reach out to me. More to come about what lies ahead for FHES, but for now let's celebrate our many accomplishments!

As we close one school year, it is a perfect time to remind everyone of a few details for next. They are as follows:

- School begins for students on Tuesday, August 28th.
- Open House will be held on Friday, August 24th from 10:00-11:00. At that time students may visit their classroom and meet their new teacher. If you are unable to attend the Open House, staff members will be available to direct your child on the first day of school.

- Classroom assignment letters will be mailed near the end of August, prior to Open House.
- Bus route information will be available at the Open House. This information will also be sent home on the first day of school.
- School hours will remain the same for the 2018-19 school year which is 9:20-4:05. Students will be marked tardy after 9:20.
- Back to School Night will be held on Thursday, September 6, 2014 at 6:00 PM.
- Summer Office hours are 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM, and by appointment. Please call the office (703)506-7800 prior to arriving.
- Updated school supply lists will be posted on the school website soon.
- The cost of lunch is \$3.00 and breakfast is \$1.50. Separate water can be purchased for \$0.75 and milk \$0.60. Free and reduced lunch/breakfast applications need to be resubmitted by a date to be determined.
- Be sure to visit Freedom Hill's website (<http://www.fcps.edu/FreedomHillES>) regularly for the most current information for the upcoming school year as well as Twitter (<https://twitter.com/FreedomHillES>) and our blog (<http://hillhighlights.edublogs.org/>).

Please see the attached document regarding student placement in grades 3-6. This information can also be found in my most recent newsletter sent via email on Sunday, June 10th.

August will be here before we know it, and as always, we will be ready for another exciting school year at Freedom Hill! I have one request for our students while school is out – READ, READ, READ!!! I wish you all a fun and relaxing summer.

Sincerely,



Scott E. Bloom

Principal

From Freedom Hill's News You Choose Sunday Newsletter (Principal's Message):

Trust. Trust is essential to our work. It came to my attention Friday that a few parents received some inaccurate information about our upper grade (3-6) student homeroom placement procedures for next year, specifically with what we refer to as the "AAP homeroom". We are committed to addressing ongoing concerns with equity and opportunity for our students brought by both teachers and parents. Here is how we will do that. First, we differentiate to meet the needs of all students, regardless of classroom because every student has different strengths and areas of need. Here are some essential points you need to be aware of that will guide our placement decisions moving forward in grades 3-6 to ensure equity and opportunity:

- All AAP Level 4 students will be placed in the same classroom and only level 4 students are guaranteed this placement (FCPS expectation).
- Non-level 4 students with a history of placement in the "AAP homeroom" may be placed in a different homeroom next year and placement of non-level 4 students will remain fluid from year to year.
- FHES will support a parent's decision to refer their child to the central screening committee for AAP services in 2nd grade and beyond.
- All teachers, as best practice, will access and integrate AAP curriculum and resources as appropriate and grade levels plan closely together to plan and deliver rigorous core instruction to all students.
- All classrooms will have academic and social peer groups, including above grade level academic peer groups (supported by research) – we are working diligently to ensure that no student will be isolated academically or socially.
- We flexibly group across the grade for accelerated math based on a variety of data, including the Beginning of the Year assessment, meaning homeroom placement has no correlation to math placement.
- We will maintain the rigor and pacing in our "AAP homeroom" and students placed into this room will be done intentionally.
- Class size will not be overly inflated in the "AAP homeroom" as a result of parents and teachers advocating for placement of non-level 4 students (FCPS has class size regulations) - the increased number of students being recommended for the "AAP homeroom" is requiring us to think deeply about how we meet the needs of students across the grade.
- We strive to create a strong sense of community at FHES and value decisions that help nurture that as well as positive mindsets for our students, and with a more fluid model we help eliminate an increasing concern heard from some students of "smart class, dumb class".
- The majority of our instruction in all classrooms, K-6, will continue to occur in small group based on need and levels (workshop model).

Thank you for reading. Again, our goal is to ensure equity and opportunity for all students and meet their needs regardless of placement.