



Franklin County Schools welcomes students back

Special to the Times
By Dr. Rhonda Schuhler
Superintendent,
Franklin County Schools

Last year's recognition of students who demonstrated exemplary character was truly inspiring,

truly reflects our community's needs and aspirations.

continuation of our free meal program.

commitment to upholding the highest standards of equity and non-discrimination, ensuring a fair and inclusive environment for all our students.

long-term facility needs.

This committee's work will begin this fall, with school site visits planned to assess and address our critical facilities requirements.

As the Superintendent of Franklin County Schools, it is with great excitement and anticipation that I welcome our students, families, and staff back for the 2024-25 school year.



Superintendent Rhonda Schuhler

The start of a new academic year always brings a sense of renewed energy and optimism, and this year is no exception.

Our schools have already hit the ground running, and we are eager to embark on this journey with you.

This year, our theme, "The Power of Family," reflects our commitment to fostering a strong, supportive community within Franklin County Schools.

Building on last year's theme, "The Power of Us," which celebrated teamwork and collaboration, we are now turning our focus inward to emphasize the essential role of family in our students' success.

By engaging families in meaningful ways, we aim to strengthen our collective bond and create a nurturing environment that supports every child's growth and development.

I am also proud of the school family that we have in our district, and of the collective commitment of all of our employees to the success of the students we serve.

Character education continues to be a cornerstone of our district's mission.

This year, we will spotlight different character traits each month, reinforcing the values that help our students thrive both academically and personally.

and we are eager to continue this tradition, celebrating the qualities that define good character and encourage positive behavior.

Our current strategic plan is in effect through the 2024-25 school year, with a focus on four key areas: college and career readiness, academics, safe, orderly and caring schools, and recruitment and retention of high quality staff.

We have a number of strategies in place to drive our work in meeting these goals, and we reassess regularly to make adjustments along the way. We are pleased with the level of progress that we continue to make in all areas.

As we enter the last year of our current strategic plan, we are already looking ahead to the development of a new plan for the 2025-26 school year.

Your input will be vital in shaping this future direction. In October, we will launch a survey and this winter we will hold zonal town halls to gather your thoughts and feedback.

Your participation in these efforts will help us create a strategic plan that

In our ongoing effort to support parents and guardians, we have introduced a new resource: the "Parent's Guide to Student Achievement."

This comprehensive guide, linked to our student handbook, is designed to provide valuable information and support to families. We encourage all parents to review this guide and participate in our opening meetings, where you can connect with school staff and address any questions or concerns.

One of the most gratifying updates this year is the

We are excited to offer breakfast and lunch at no cost to all FCS students. This initiative ensures that every child has access to nutritious meals and removes a potential barrier to learning.

I urge parents to encourage their children to take full advantage of this benefit.

I am also pleased to share that Franklin County Schools has met all obligations under the Federal desegregation order that has guided our district since 1967.

With the order now dissolved, we reaffirm our

commitment to upholding the highest standards of equity and non-discrimination, ensuring a fair and inclusive environment for all our students.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate that we have received full funding for our local current expense budget request, which includes a longevity retention bonus for our dedicated staff.

This bonus is critical to our efforts to recruit and retain a high quality workforce.

Additionally, a joint Capital Committee, formed by the Board of Education and Board of Commissioners, will be addressing our

As we embark on this new school year, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to each member of the Franklin County Schools community.

Together, we have the power to create an enriching and supportive environment for our students. Let us embrace the "Power of Family" and work collaboratively to make this year one of growth, achievement, and lasting impact.

Study tips for a strong start in school

Studying is vital to academic performance. At the dawn of a new school year, students get a fresh start to improve upon or continue strong their study habits. Teachers will be rolling out their curricula, and that may feel overwhelming. However, optimizing study skills can boost confidence in school and in areas outside of the classroom. These study tips can put students on a path for success.

- Find your optimal study space. The ideal study spot varies from student to student. Some need a quiet nook in the library, while others may prefer the sounds of nature while seated on a park bench. There's no one-size-fits-all study location, so students may need to experiment with what works best for them. Also, The Princeton Review says that a student doesn't need just one study space. He or she may find a change of scenery can prompt the brain to retain information better.

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- Devise a study plan. Setting goals and a plan of attack allows students to space out their studying over several days. This can reduce stress and make the task seem less cumbersome.

- Avoid cram sessions. Devising a study plan is better than cramming the night before a test. The American Psychological Association says students may perform well on a test for which they've crammed, but that doesn't mean they've truly learned the material. Studying with a goal of retaining the material long-term is important.



GOOD STUDY HABITS. Start the year off right by following these study tips.

See STUDY, page 15

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BACK TO SCHOOL Safety

Review these safety tips with your kids

1. Opt for a backpack with wide, padded shoulder straps and keep it light. You may want to consider a rolling backpack for heavy books.
2. At the bus stop, wait for the bus to reach a complete stop before approaching it.
3. Stay seated on the school bus until it arrives at your stop, and remember to wear your seatbelt. Always keep your head and arms inside the bus.
4. Use the handrail when exiting the bus, and cross in front of the bus so the driver can see you. Remember to check both ways for traffic before crossing the street.
5. If you walk to school, go with a buddy, and avoid crossing through any empty lots or fields along the way.
6. If you ride a bike or scooter to school, remember to always wear your helmet.
7. Don't talk to strangers, and never accept gifts or rides from strangers.
8. Cross the street only at designated crosswalks, and obey school crossing guards.
9. If you're bullied or see somebody being bullied, tell a teacher or trusted adult.
10. Memorize your home address and phone number. In case of an emergency, call 911.

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Eight healthy snack ideas kids will love

Parents know that growing children need a lot of food. According to pediatric dietitian Hanna Leikin, MS, RD, CSP, LD, kids need a higher calorie demand per body weight compared to adults to support bone development, muscle growth and other bodily functions. Perhaps that's why it seems like a stocked refrigerator or pantry can become barren in just a few days when kids are in the house.

Children are frequently looking for snacks between meals, which means that parents need to have a variety of snack foods at the ready for their youngsters. But it can be a struggle to find healthy snacks children will eat. With that in mind, parents can consider these eight healthy alternatives to less nutritional fare like chips or sugary treats.

1. Fruit on a stick: It seems any food enjoyed on a stick is fun to eat. This is

certainly an item for older kids, as parents won't want to worry about younger children getting injured with the pointy wooden skewers. Simply slide a variety of chopped or sliced fruit onto the skewers and make a healthy, colorful snack. For an added bonus, include a small cup of low-fat vanilla yogurt for a fruit dip.

2. Baby carrots and hummus: Who can resist baby carrots? After all, they seem tailor-made for kids' small fingers. Pair with a homemade or store-bought hummus, which is full of protein and fiber. You can even find dessert hummus, which may prove particularly appealing to children's palates.

3. Crackers and cheese: Choose whole-grain crackers and a low-fat cheese. This provides the crunch of chips without the fat and calories. In addition, cheese adds protein and the ben-

efits of calcium and other nutrients found in dairy.

4. Nut butters and pretzels: Kids need unsaturated fats to spur brain growth and overall development. Nuts and nut butters offer these good fats. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases says peanut butter can be given to kids as young as four months old, and that early exposure may prevent peanut allergies. Additional nut butters include almond and cashew. Let kids dip pretzels into the nut butter for a filling snack.

5. Overnight oats creations: Let kids take part in building jars or containers of overnight oats with their favorite ingredients. When old fashioned rolled oats are mixed with low-fat milk (or dairy alternatives), raisins, granola, fresh fruit, chia seeds, and even low-fat yogurt and left to sit overnight, the result is a

spoonable treat that's ideal for meals and snacks. Plus the fiber in oatmeal will help keep children feeling fuller longer.

6. Frozen smoothie bowl: This is a great alternative to ice cream. Simply blend your child's favorite frozen fruits (and toss in a few veggies) with low-fat Greek yogurt. Serve in a bowl with toppings like granola, finely chopped nuts or coconut flakes.

7. Energy balls or bars: Mix dates, nuts, seeds, and rolled oats and press into bar shapes or roll into bite-sized balls when kids need a sweet and energizing snack.

8. Turkey and cheese roll-ups: Ensure that kids are getting enough protein by offering a lean protein source like sliced turkey. Roll up a slice of turkey or sliced chicken breast around a cheese stick for a portable and fun snack.

Healthy snacks for chil-



EATING HEALTHY. Parents can consider these eight healthy alternatives to less nutritional fare like chips or sugary treats.

dren are easier to dream up than one may think. It can take children several times of seeing a new food on his or her plate before being inclined to try it, so parents should stay the course with healthy snacks even if kids are initially reluctant to try them.

Academic performance can be affected by eyesight

Many variables affect students' academic performance. These include a willingness to learn, students' attentiveness, having a great teacher, and kids' commitment to studying and doing homework. One component of academic performance can be easily overlooked: eyesight.

The M.M. Joshi Eye Institute in India says vision problems in children

can affect studies and restrict students' academic development. Academic performance is directly linked to the ability to see clearly, as vision affects reading, writing, comprehension, and classroom participation. Clarendon Vision Development Center of Illinois advises that a substantial part of a child's education is acquired through visual processing. When that

vision is impaired, it can hinder the ability to learn and absorb information effectively.

Impaired eyesight may cause students to struggle and fall behind. This ultimately can lead to a lack of engagement in classwork and ultimately make them consider giving up, particularly when a student is unaware that it is eyesight and not another factor affecting their ability to learn. Furthermore, poor grades may cause parents to mistakenly conclude a child has a learning disability or is slacking off.

The relationship between eyesight and education underscores the significance of routine

eye exams. Intervention can help prevent poor academic performance. Infants often get their first comprehensive eye exams around zero to six months of age. By age three, children should have a second eye exam, says Medical Optometry America. Around age five or six, children should receive a third comprehensive eye exam, just before entering school. Eye exams should then be scheduled at least every two years. These guidelines can be adjusted if any vision problems are detected and more frequent exams are needed.

Eyesight plays a key role in a child's ability to learn and excel in school.



CHECK YOUR VISION. One component of academic performance can be easily overlooked: eyesight.

Come and Join the Adventure of Scouting



Cub Scout Pack 510 and Boy Scout Troop 555 will have **Join Scouting Nights** on Mondays at 7 pm in the Fellowship Hall of Louisburg United Methodist Church. There will be a special Join Scouting Night on **September 30th**. All boys ages 5-17 are invited to join the adventure of Scouting. Come and join in the fun and bring a friend. For more information, questions or to sign up visit www.BeAScout.org or call **Charles Fenske at 919-496-2760**.

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STUDY

Continued from page 14

- Learn how to actively study. Some students think that studying requires reading over the material or highlighting text. Active studying involves engaging with the material and constructing meaning from the text. One way to engage with the material is to try acting as the teacher and explaining concepts to another person. Creating a study guide or even concept maps also helps one actively study.
- Balance intensity with laid-back study approaches. Students may procrastinate with their studying because they don't want to devote a lot of time to the task. Instead, they can do shorter sessions mixed with longer sessions of studying. In fact, The Learning Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill says shorter, intensive study time can be more effective than drawn-out studying.
- Ask for help. Asking a teacher or another student for help is not a sign of weakness. It's a good strategy to develop early on. The longer one waits, the more difficult it may be to catch up on material. Asking for help goes hand-in-hand with setting up a buddy system for studying. Study groups enable students to go over material together, which can provide different perspectives and help the material resonate more effectively.

Students will spend a lot of time studying while in school. Learning how to do it effectively is vital to fulfilling one's academic potential.

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Play It **SAFE** this school year by following these smart tips!

- Make sure you know your full name, street address and phone number including area code. If you can't remember all of these things, carry them on a piece of paper. In case of emergency, call 911.
- Know how to use the telephone for help in case of an emergency.
- Never get into anyone's car without your parents' permission.
- Always tell your par-

- ents if you are going somewhere after school.
- Cross streets only at corners or crosswalks, and always look both ways before crossing.
- Observe and obey traffic signals as well as crossing guards.
- Walk, don't run, across streets. If you are riding a bike, walk it across the street. Always wear a helmet when you ride your bike or scooter.

- If you are walking where there are no sidewalks, walk on the shoulder of the left side of the road, so you are facing oncoming traffic.
- When walking to school, stay away from parks, vacant lots, fields and other places where there aren't many people around. Always walk with a buddy. Follow a familiar route to school. Never talk to strangers along the way.

- Exercise caution with unfamiliar animals you may see on your way to school. Remember, not every animal is friendly.

- When waiting for the school bus, stay away from the bus until it comes to a complete stop and the driver signals you to enter. Use the handrail to enter and exit the bus.

- Seat belts should always be worn, even on the bus. Never get out of your seat while the bus is moving.

- When leaving the bus, walk ten giant steps away from the bus before crossing in front of it. Never cross behind the bus.

- Tell your parents, teacher or another trusted



adult if somebody at school is making you feel uneasy or doing something you think is wrong.

- If you're bullied or see somebody being bullied, tell a teacher or trusted adult.

- Don't talk to strangers, and never accept gifts or rides from strangers.

- If you are home alone after school, be sure to lock the door and call a parent as soon as you arrive. Never open the door for anyone you don't know well and trust.



- Instructions during fire drills should be followed carefully. This way you'll know what to do in a real fire.
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What parents can do to be more involved at school

Parents can make every effort to encourage children to make the most of the school experience, including academics and extracurricular activities. Though students' level of engagement is ultimately up to them, parental involvement at school can be crucial for students' success.

According to the National Education Council, when parents get involved in their children's education, those children are more likely to do better in school and be more positive about the school experience. They also may be well-behaved. Parents wondering what they can do to assist at the school level can consider these possibilities.

Attend school board meetings

Many community school boards are comprised entirely of volunteers who work with superintendents and other personnel to advocate for policies and procedures for students. Decisions typically are up for vote, and parents can run for school board positions or simply attend meetings each month and let their voices be heard about various issues.

Attend open houses and conferences

Parents can make every effort to get to know teachers and other staff. Putting faces to names can help parents develop a connec-

tion to teachers and vice versa. Most schools have back to school nights, meet the coaches opportunities, open houses, and parent-teacher conferences. Parents can take part in these events.

Open lines of communication

Parents can ask teachers and other staff how they prefer to communicate. Some teachers want students to take the lead and reach out first, with parents providing support if need be. Adults can be responsive when teachers reach out.

Attend school events

Families can make it a point to support students in all endeavors. Whenever the opportunity to visit the school comes up — whether for a concert, sports game, trivia night, or fundraiser — parents can make an effort to attend.

Volunteer

When parents want to be involved even further, they can head committees at school or volunteer with the PTA or PTO. They also can help out in the cafeteria, library or in the main office. Parents who have particular skills may volunteer to provide tutoring or mentoring as needed. Furthermore, parents can volunteer in school-sanctioned extracurriculars, such as Scouts BSA or as sports coaches.

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