



September 8, 2009

Dear Parents,

For those of you who are new to our school we would like to welcome you to Farmington Woods International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme Elementary School. For those of you returning to our school we enthusiastically welcome you back to campus and are happy to see you with us again. For all of our students and families we hope that you and your children have settled into the routine of the school year and that you have high expectations for the learning experiences the children will receive this coming year at our school.

We have had a smooth start to the beginning of the school year, even with the changes to our schedule on Wednesdays. Enrollment for our school is approximately 815 students. At this writing, we have six classes per grade in K-2, seven Grade 3 classes and five classes in 4th and 5th Grade. Since the State of North Carolina did not settle its budget or legislative requirements to schools (i.e. make final decisions regarding class size) until late in the summer, it was a challenging summer to prepare our school for the children and teachers. As a result of decreased funding, our class size is a bit larger than we had wanted, but all are within state and WCPSS guidelines. Allotment formulas were adjusted, thus five teacher assistant positions were eliminated. Teacher assistants are assigned to kindergarten classes and first grade classes, one teacher assistant is assigned to work with six second grade classes.

At the start of each new school year, carpool and busses move more slowly as many children are familiarizing themselves with new routines. It is helpful for each student to have committed to memory either their carpool number or their bus number and stop location. In addition, maintaining current contact information with the office is helpful when the office needs to contact parents regarding transportation.

Early Dismissal Wednesdays are here. Wake County Schools is following the lead of many school districts across the country by investing time into Professional Learning Teams. Professional Learning Teams primarily focus on improving student learning outcomes by providing time for teachers to evaluate and improve practice through collaborative planning. The first two hours of PLT meetings have centered around using 08-09 data to target areas of instruction that need to be strengthened. Beyond the classroom, specialists have been meeting to discuss how they can help strengthen core academics through their course content.

New school years always bring new staff. Although there was not a need to hire new classroom teachers for the 09-10 school year, we have added several part time staff members and two full time staff members. Most part time staff members are shared with other Wake County Schools: Ms. Tina Chadwick (Cedar Fork) has joined us as half-time counselor, Ms. Paula Clark (Hilburn) and Ms. Jennifer Riggert (York) are part-time music teachers, Mr. Rob Weidenburner (Davis) is teaching PE with Mr. Eller, Ms. Laura Dow (Hilburn) teaches CCR, Ms. Rosario Gravino is teaching Spanish full-time and Ms. Iris Gomez is teaching Spanish four days per week. Jennifer Thakur joined us last Thursday as full-time counselor. Ms. Thakur was employed as the full-time Intervention Counselor at Daniels Middle School during the 2008-2009 school year. An old friend has also returned to us; Ms. Charity Schmiedl, formerly a first grade teacher at Farmington Woods IB/PYP has returned, one a day a week, to help teachers roll out the new Promethean Boards, we are utilizing in six classrooms.

We would like you to have additional information about what your child will be learning this year. Please plan to join us on September 24, 2009 for Open House. Open House begins with a PTA meeting at 7:00 pm followed by two 30 minute information sessions with your child's classroom teacher. The two sessions are identical; the second 30 minute session provides an opportunity for parents to attend sessions for more than one of their children. The



focus of Open House is the sharing of curricular information. Drop-in visits with our specialists and special area teachers are encouraged. During this time, all teachers welcome your visits to their classrooms. This evening is established for teacher presentations to parents. Please make outside child care arrangements, for the evening of Open House.

There has been much in the news recently about H1N1 Swine Flu. The Wake County School System works closely with Wake County Human Services on any cases of communicable diseases or viruses. WCPSS and Wake County Human Services are carefully monitoring the situation and will keep parents and the public updated. The CDC recommends that people with influenza-like illness remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications). As with any virus or cold, students and staff with these symptoms: cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, fever or feverishness, tiredness, body aches, chills, diarrhea and vomiting, should stay home from school/work until they have recovered.

The CDC and County Health Dept. reminds us of simple steps we can take to protect our health:

- Stay home from school or work if you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash hands with soap and water frequently or use alcohol-based hand cleaners if soap and water are not available.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.

Additional advice provided by the National Association from School Nurses includes the following tips: remain calm and reassuring. Your children will react to and follow your verbal and non-verbal reactions. What you say about the flu virus and current prevention efforts can either increase or decrease your child's anxiety. Let your child talk about their feelings and help put their concerns into the appropriate perspective. Remind children that you and the adults at their school are there to keep them safe and healthy. More information is available on the www.wcpss.net/swineflu.

Sincerely,

Frances Venezia
Principal

Mark Beamish
Assistant Principal

We ask that your child's means of transportation home remains the same each day. Please do not call the office to leave a message for your child, changing the way they will go home unless it is an **emergency**. It is a safety concern for all of us. Calls with changes, make dismissal difficult for all concerned, the clerks, your child's teacher and your child.

Please dress your children in shoes and sandals with backs. They increase safety on our playground equipment, in the gym and outside play. In addition, as we exit the building quickly for drills, shoes or sandals without backs sometimes become a safety hazard.