



Florida School for the Deaf & the Blind

Do More. Be More. Achieve More.

July 14, 2020

Dear New and Returning FSDB Families,

Welcome to the 2020-21 school year! Our campus community is pleased that you have chosen FSDB to educate your child. It is our commitment to partner with you to meet the individualized educational needs of your child. Our historic campus offers a safe and comfortable learning environment for students to do more, be more and achieve more as they develop the knowledge and skills for lifelong success.

Nothing we have been through these past several months was in a training manual nor in our life experience to date, and certainly not faced by the entire education system. Our administrative team appreciates the input and grace you have extended to us as we've worked to develop guidance to reopen the FSDB campus with safety of our staff and students as our top priority.

Given the many procedures we're putting in place to allow for social distancing as well as increased cleaning and sanitation measures, I have made the decision to **postpone the start of school by one week – FSDB classes will now start Monday, Aug. 17, 2020**. Please know we will maintain our small-class sizes with teacher to student ratios of 1:6 at the elementary level, 1:8 at the middle school level, and 1:10 at the high school level – to ensure quality, equity, and inclusive learning for all students. We are modifying classrooms, dormitory rooms and shared student spaces. Details about the numerous health and safety protocols we are putting in place are detailed in the FSDB Reopening Plan 2020-21, details of which are available on the [FSDB website](#).

The [FSDB 2020-21 Parent-Student Handbook](#) has important information about your child's school experience. It includes the Code of Student Conduct as well as Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students, parents/legal guardians, and staff members are expected to have a shared understanding of this handbook and ensure compliance with school policies.

To help us get ready for the new school year and ensure your child's information is up to date, we request that you complete your 2020-21 Annual Information Update and sign-off on the forms online via [Skyward Family Access](#). We will also mail packets home with a postage-paid return envelope so that you can complete and return forms with your and your child's physician signatures by or before the deadline of Monday, Aug. 3, 2020. **All required forms must be completed by the deadline so we can prepare for Family Open House on Sunday, Aug. 16, 2020, and the start of school the next day.**

The 2020-21 school year will be filled with numerous changes and challenges, not only due to the pandemic, but also our transition in leadership that will be taking place at the end of the month. Please know that despite these unique times, the health, safety and well-being of your child(ren) is our highest priority. The eight years through which I have served the students and staff members of FSDB have been a very meaningful part of my career. I have full confidence our administrative and academic teams will lead FSDB with excellence and integrity until my successor is named by the FSDB Board of Trustees.

Should you have any questions about the annual information update process or our re-opening plans, please contact your child's assistant principal, listed below:

- ELC Director Gail Strassel — (904) 827-2835/(904) 201-4529 or strasselg@fsdbk12.org
- DES Assistant Principal Dr. Heidi Jordan—(904) 827-2520/-4505 VP or jordanh@fsdbk12.org
- DMS Assistant Principal Karen Newton—(904) 827-2530/-4525 VP or newtonk@fsdbk12.org
- DHS Assistant Principal Dina Padden—(904) 201-2550/-4490 VP or paddend@fsdbk12.org
- BEMS Assistant Principal Ellen Fertsch—(904) 827-2739 or fertsche@fsdbk12.org
- BHS Assistant Principal Justin Cosgrove—(904) 827-2716 or cosgrovej@fsdbk12.org

On behalf of our FSDB faculty and staff members, I extend our warm welcome to new and returning students for an academic year filled with many achievements! I will miss your bright and shining faces and I wish you all an amazing year ahead.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeanne Glidden Prickett
President