Welcome back

For all of us in the field of education, we view September as a very important month that serves to define an entire school year. Our students, your children, are becoming more and more familiar with daily routines, programming, and the type of classroom instruction that they will experience over the course of the 2011-2012 academic year. We begin each year with a renewed commitment to your child’s success at school that is both unconditional and unrelenting. We will provide them with the fundamentals that will enable them to access the curriculum and achieve many personal milestones.

Important to state, we also recognize the importance that parents and guardians serve in the academic and social development of our students. As a result, we are making every effort to develop a strong school to home partnership that will better enable them to successfully meet the academic and social demands of middle school. At the very core of our partnership with parents and guardians exists our need for communication. We have already begun to set the stage for this within the first three weeks of school. A summer newsletter, student packet, and agenda book that addressed a wide range of school topics went home prior to the conclusion of our first week back.

Many on our faculty have already begun to speak directly with parents to either initiate dialogue or respond to calls they have received. We have offered a series of orientation/curriculum nights this month that were intended to help familiarize and assist parents in becoming acquainted with teachers, curriculum, programming, and the expectations of John F. Kennedy Middle School. It was very nice to see that these nights were very well attended, and that a healthy number of parents were also present at our first PTO meeting. Lastly, you are receiving your second of many monthly newsletters of the school year. We will be posting these newsletters on our school website in the event that they do not make it to the kitchen table for your review.

On a final note, we have received a lot of positive feedback regarding our school to home communication this year. Additionally, our parent involvement has been quite promising. I look forward to sustaining the level of communication and involvement we have experienced since the start of the school year. To do so would require a commitment on both of our parts, of which the end result will certainly justify the effort.

I would like to formally thank the faculty and staff at JFK Middle for their significant efforts in preparing for the 2011-2012 school year. There were many room assignment changes; as well as, over thirty new teachers moving in over the months of July and August. Thousands of boxes that were filled with instructional programming and classroom materials were carefully packed, moved, and then thoughtfully arranged in such a way that would support student learning. Our successful start can be attributed to the professionalism and commitment of each member of our staff.

A special thank you is in order to our new PTO executive board. The following individuals will be serving as our PTO leadership for the 2011-2012 school year.

Susan Ketchale (President)
Lisa Rogers (6th Grade Vice President)
Rebecca Kalagher (7th Grade Vice President)
Sharon Hart (8th Grade Vice President)
Laura Montigny (Secretary)
Jay Montigny (Treasurer)

Our PTO meetings are scheduled for the first Thursday of the month. Additional information regarding PTO happenings can be found the PTO Webpage. To access a link to this page, you can log onto our John F. Kennedy Middle School webpage under Parent/Student Information (PTO News). Important to note, our first fundraiser begins September 27th.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate that I am looking forward to an excellent school year with all members of our John F. Kennedy Middle School learning community. I encourage you to remain active in our school happenings and to develop strong partnerships with our faculty and staff. Please call on me if I can be of assistance to you.

Sincerely,

Timothy M. Van Tasel, Principal
**From the Nurse’s Desk...**

The State of Connecticut Law requires scoliosis screening of all grade 6, 7, and 8 students. These screenings are done by the JFK nurses during Physical Education classes. Any student who is not enrolled in P.E. will be screened in the spring in the nurse’s office. Referral letters for students with known scoliosis will be mailed home in October so the doctor can reevaluate the students.

Additionally, law requires that all 8th grade students be screened for hearing. The screening will be in November in the nurse’s office. Referral letters for students with known hearing problems will be mailed home in November.

Sixth grade students must also be screened for vision and hearing. This will be scheduled for the month of January.

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**“Cash on Account” in the Cafeteria**

**Cash On Account** – a “Cash Account” is created by making a payment of a certain dollar amount ($5.00, $10.00, $15.00 etc.) to the cafeteria. These funds are then available to your child when purchasing lunch or à la carte items in the cafeteria. There are no limitations as to what may be purchased or how many purchases can be made. The account balance simply decreases as purchasing takes place.

A detailed student account activity and/or balance will be provided upon request.

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**PTO Fundraiser**

Once again the JFK PTO is sponsoring a fall Jeannine sale to raise funds for a wide variety of student activities. This year’s fundraiser begins at the end of September, with a kick-off assembly to explain the sale, the prize program, and all important fundraiser dates. Because students reap tremendous benefits from these sales, the PTO asks that everyone support their efforts.

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**Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent teacher conferences have been scheduled for the following dates:

- November 9 (Grade 6 only)
- November 10 (Grade 7, 8, and ½ of 6)
- November 16 (Grade 7, 8, and ½ of 6)

A notice and form will be sent home on October 7th, attached to your child’s progress report. If you would like to exercise your option to schedule a Parent/Teacher conference with a member of your child’s academic team, please complete the form and return it to your child’s House office by October 17.

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**Lifetouch Pictures**

Our initial picture taking took place the first two weeks of school. All students who were present in school had their picture taken for our school identification process. The picture make-up day is scheduled for Monday, October 17th.

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**JFK Yearbook Sales 2011/2012**

This year JFK will be selling yearbooks online. Sales are starting now and will continue through April 28th, 2012. Cost of the yearbook will be $18.00 and if you would like to add personalization the cost will be an additional $5.00. Go to [www.yearbooks.biz](http://www.yearbooks.biz). Click on ‘Buy Your Yearbook’ and follow the directions.

Yearbooks will also be sold during the school year in person. Dates will be announced during the year.

Yearbooks will be distributed next June. If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Kowalenko at (860)763-8885.

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**JFK Cell Phone Policy**

If a student needs to bring a cell phone to school it should be turned off and placed in the student’s locker for safekeeping. Should the student need to use a phone, each house office has a student house phone available for use. Also, should the parent/guardian need to get a message to their child, simply call JFK and we will make sure your child receives the message. The best number to call is 860-763-8855.

If a student has a cell phone with them (in class, hallways, café), or is using a cell phone during the school day, it will be confiscated and will be left in the main office safe to be picked up by a parent/guardian. We have this policy in place because cell phones (texting, calls, games, etc.) have become a disruption to the learning process during the day. Thank you for your understanding and assistance in this matter, it’s appreciated!
**Late Busses**

We are still in the process of coordinating late busses for after-school activities. It is our hope to be able to provide transportation for students receiving academic support or participating in a school club or organization.

**Morning Drop Off Procedures**

The drop off area for students is located at the White Wing entrance. Cars will need to enter the lot from the South Entrance, near four corners. Please drive along the edges of the lot (near the tennis courts) and then turn left to drop off students along the new drop off crosswalk. Students will walk forward in the painted crosswalk and enter via the White House doors. Cars will proceed and exit the parking lot.

**Afternoon Pick Up Procedures**

The pick up area for students is located at the White Wing entrance. Cars will need to enter the lot from the North Entrance across from Twin Rinks. Please line up along the perimeter of the parking lot, stopping at the corner of the basketball courts. Once all the busses have departed, cars are to proceed around the back of the school building where your children will be waiting. Vehicles turning left onto Raffia are encouraged to turn left at the tennis courts and leave from our farthest south lot exit near four corners. Vehicles turning right should enter Raffia Road from our exit closest to the main entrance of the building.

Please use EXTREME CAUTION when passing through our parking lots.

**Absence from School**

If a student is absent from school, parents are requested to call the school absentee line before 9:00 A.M. to report the absence. Dial 860-763-8855, press 1, then press 1 if the homeroom is in the Red House or rooms 31, 34, or 40 in the Black Wing; press 2 if the homeroom is in the White House or room 35 in the Black Wing or LG – 1; press 3 if the homeroom is in the Blue House or rooms 36, 37, or 38 in the Black Wing. (This number can be called 24 hours a day.) You must state your child’s first and last name, homeroom and reason for absence.

This is to be followed with a written excuse to the homeroom teacher. This note is to be brought to school on the day the student returns from his/her absence. The note must include your child’s first and last name, homeroom, the date(s) of absence, reason for the absence, and the parent’s signature.

Every effort is made to verify absences that have not been called in on the

**Behavior Expectations**

John F. Kennedy Middle School is a community of learners. All communities need rules and guidelines for appropriate behavior. Our core expectations at JFK are that students will:

- Follow staff directions the first time they are given.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Use appropriate language at all times. No swearing, shouting, taunting, or teasing.

Specific behavior expectations in classrooms, in the lab, and in the auditorium, for example, may be more detailed. This is by no means an exhaustive list. These core expectations provide the foundation for all rules and procedures at JFK Middle.

*Be Respectful. Be Responsible. Be Safe.*

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Don’t forget to check out the JFK website. [www.enfieldschools.org](http://www.enfieldschools.org)

Choose our schools → Choose JFK Middle School

All school newsletters will be posted on our school website!