



FIRST FRIDAY LETTER FROM PRINCIPAL JOHN JORDAN

AUGUST 2011

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We hope that you are enjoying a restful summer break and would like to share some important information regarding the upcoming academic year. The beginning of a new school year is filled with excitement and perhaps some jitters. This letter is intended to provide information and answer questions that you or your child may have about the opening of school.

During the week of August 22, we will be mailing a packet of information to all families. In the packet, there will be a letter from me with a student-placement information label at the top of the page. The label will indicate your child's team assignment and community (homeroom) teacher. Our incoming sixth-grade students and parents are invited to visit their community teacher and tour their team classrooms on Thursday, September 1, from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Please note that Tuesday, September 6 will be the first day of school for the 2011-2012 school year. On Tues., Sept. 6 (Day 1) students will follow a special schedule. All students should report to their community teacher and the classroom indicated on the label promptly at 8:30 a.m. Dismissal will be at 2:15 p.m. On Wed., Sept. 7 (Day 2) students will begin their regular yearlong schedule. The Brown calendar and school schedule for the upcoming school year are available on the school web site, so that you may note the daily schedule rotation, as well as, six-day cycle.

Some key features of our 2011-2012 school schedule include the following:

- A common six-day rotation cycle at all four middle schools.
- At Brown, there are six periods daily that rotate from day-to-day.
- We will continue with an 8:30 a.m. starting time and 3:00 p.m. dismissal time. Please note that the Tuesday dismissal time is at 2:15 p.m.
- We will continue to have three trimester report card marking periods.
- Our "Extension" period will occur in the middle of the school day. At that time, elective offerings will remain mostly the same. Sixth grade students will have a choice of their performing ensembles in band, orchestra or chorus. Seventh and eighth grade students will have a choice of taking Latin, band, chorus, or orchestra. For some students, special education services and English language learner classes will also be scheduled during the extension periods.
- Students will continue to report directly to their first period class which starts at 8:30 a.m. Attendance and the daily announcements will take place there. There will be a "Community" period, in which team teachers have an opportunity to connect with students in developmentally responsive ways. This period allows the opportunity for teams to do community service projects, focus on common skills, e.g. organizational skills, hold assemblies together, review individual's academic progress, and more.

For the first week of school, your child will need only a pencil or pen and \$3.25 if she/he wishes to buy lunch in the cafeteria. On the first day of school, every student will receive a Brown Assignment Notebook. A list of school supplies is posted on the Brown web site. Students will receive specific school supply information during the first week of school.

Teams & Curriculum With an anticipated total school enrollment of approximately 690 students for the upcoming school year, we will continue to have nine teams school-wide. The [team structure](#) will be similar to this past school year. Sixth grade (Orange, Red and Yellow); Seventh Grade (Blue, Green and Teal); and Eighth Grade (Indigo Maroon, and Violet). In sixth grade, there will continue to be three teams (2-four teacher teams and 1-two teacher team). In seventh grade, there will be three teams (2-four teacher teams and 1-team w/three teachers). In eighth grade, there will be three teams (2-four teacher teams and 1- team w/three teachers). We will be mixing student team placements. Mixing students team assignment helps to provide many students with a fresh start and an opportunity to foster social and emotional growth. Given the complexities involved in creating student schedules, we are not able to honor individual student placement requests. Our goal is to be fair and equitable to all students, as we deal with the many variables involved in placing students. Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

We are eager to help our new students at all grade levels feel comfortable. During the first few days of school, students will participate in team building activities designed to help students become familiar with the school building, schedule, daily routines, their teachers, and each other.

In addition to their core subjects-English, mathematics, science, social studies, world language, fine and applied arts, and physical education, students may take elective courses. Students who wish to participate in a [musical performing group](#) (chorus, band and orchestra) should plan to see Mr. Doctor during the first two weeks of school. We are very proud of our musical ensembles, and we welcome all students with an interest in music to join one of these performing groups. Latin is an elective offered to students in seventh and eighth grade. Students interested in studying Latin will sign-up during the first week of school.

Brown Resource Handbook Academic excellence, respect, and responsibility are the core values at Brown Middle School. As a community of young adolescent and adult learners, we hold high expectations for ourselves. We intend for Brown to be a safe and comfortable place in which all students and teachers may learn and grow. A full explanation of academic and behavioral expectations is contained in the [Brown Resource Handbook](#). Another important document is the "Students' Rights and Responsibilities Handbook" of the Newton Public Schools that will be distributed to all students in September. We ask parents and guardians to review the information in these publications with students, and we hold students accountable for knowing policies and procedures regarding academics and behavior.

Afterschool Activities We believe that student involvement in extra-curricular activities enhances their middle school experience. The [Triple E Program](#) (Enrichment, Exploration, and Excellence) takes place between 3:00 and 4:15 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Triple E activities begin at the end of September. Information about these activities is disseminated at school on the morning announcements, Brown web site, and the "First Friday Letter." Please encourage your child to become involved in one or more of these activities. During the middle school years, many students develop interests that become life-long pursuits. The extra-curricular activities offered at Brown give students an opportunity to develop leadership skills, to be part of a group, and to make new friends.

There are many ways in which you can support your child during these sometimes confusing years of early adolescence. Being aware of adjustment to the new school year and "checking in" about academic work will help your child get a good start. Please call or email your child's teacher or guidance counselor immediately if you have any questions or concerns.

Getting to/from School We encourage all of our students who are eligible for bus service to ride the bus to school. Traffic is very heavy in the Brown/Oak Hill/Newton South area in the morning and at dismissal time. We expect all students to ride in a safe and courteous manner.

If you drive your child to school, please drive very slowly in the school zone and observe all posted signs. Students may be dropped off and picked up only in the areas on Wheeler and Meadowbrook Roads marked with blue signs and/or blue curbs. All traffic is expected to flow around the roundabout. No stopping or parking is allowed in the roundabout, and students should not be dropped off or picked up in the roundabout. Also for their safety, students may not be dropped off or picked up in the parking lot or in the circular driveway in front of Brown. Crosswalks are clearly marked and we urge everyone to cross in the marked crosswalks. If you are picking up or dropping off your child after 9:00 a.m. and before 2:00 p.m., you may drive up to the front entrance. If you need to make special arrangements for your child's transportation, please see one of the administrators. Thank you for your cooperation in supporting our efforts to ensure the safety of all students.

Communications We believe that success at Brown for each student is achieved through the combined efforts of students, parents, teachers, counselors, staff, coaches, and administrators. We believe that each student is unique and an integral member of the school community. [The Brown PTO](#) is an active organization that supports the school in many ways and provides opportunities for parents to come together and become involved in the school community. We join the PTO presidents in encouraging frequent and specific home/school communication. Good communication between home and school is essential to a student's success.

The PTO publishes a newsletter twice monthly that is emailed home and posted to [the PTO web site](#). Please sign up for the email version of the newsletter. If you do not have an email address, please contact the main office at 617-559-6900. The principal's "First Friday" letter is sent home via email message on the first Friday of every month. The First Friday letter will also be posted on the [Brown School web site](#).

Our PTO presidents are planning several programs and activities during this school year where parents can meet and talk with one another. Teams will also be inviting parents to participate in special activities. Please know that you are welcome at Brown at all times and that we value and appreciate your thoughts and suggestions. Brown is an excellent school, but there is always room for improvement. Our telephone number is (617) 559-6900.

It is with great anticipation that I look forward to the beginning of the school year. I hope to see all of you on or before Tuesday, September 6. Please mark your calendar for our Brown Back-to-School Night scheduled for Tuesday, September 20 and School Picture Day to be held on Wednesday, September 14. Also, please note that there will be no school on Thursday, September 29 in observance of Rosh Hashanah.

Sincerely,
John F. Jordan
Principal

IMPORTANT DATES

Aug 22	Student Placement Mailed
Sept 1	6th Graders & Parents Visit
Sept 6	First Day of school (Dismissal at 2:15)
Sept 14	School Photo Day
Sept 20	Back-to-School Night
Sept 29	NO SCHOOL Rosh Hashanah