

Coates Families,

What a great year so far! I hope that your child is settled in and working hard, and I hope that you are closely connected to his/her teacher so far. If you're not already receiving your teacher's weekly communication (email or Remind text), ask him/her about it. When you have this little bit of information about what's going on in class, you can have better conversations with your child about his/her learning.

And speaking of your child's learning, check today's Thursday Folder for your child's first quarter **interim report**. All students receive one during the first quarter. The interim tells you how your child is performing in school at this half-way point of the quarter. If there's an area needing improvement, there's still time to make changes before quarter one progress reports ("report cards") come home in November. Talk to your child, follow the teacher's advice, and ask any questions. Please sign the interim and send it back with Thursday Folders so that the teacher knows that you've seen it.

Also, if you still do not have a **parent-teacher conference** scheduled for this quarter, please contact your teacher ASAP. Most conferences are held on the teacher workday on November 4, but many teachers have other times available. We want to meet with all parents around the end of the quarter so that we provide you with detailed information on your child's progress and we can help each other bring out the best in him/her.

Please read the rest of this newsletter carefully—so many important announcements! There is a lengthy section explaining our School Plan, which is an attempt to give you an insider's view of some of our priorities as a staff. Take a look.

As always, I'm proud to partner with you, serve your kids, and lead these awesome teachers. - *Jesse Kraft, Proud Principal*

AAP Parent Info Night

Tuesday, October 8
6-7:00 PM in the Coates Library

Find out about Advanced Academic Programs, levels of AAP services, and the FCPS eligibility process for Level 4 services. All interested parents welcome!

Principal's Coffee

Wednesday, October 9
9:15-10:15 in Room 115

Join Principal Kraft & reading specialist, Mrs. Puckett, to learn about how reading is taught in school, how we determine the just-right books to use for each child, and what you can do at home to help your child become a stronger reader.



Fall Festival

The PTA's biggest event is on
Saturday, October 19
10:00-2:00 on the Coates Field

Volunteer to help! Bring the family to play and support this great fundraiser, which offsets the cost of field trips and funds our PTA throughout the year! See flyer in Thursday Folder.



Contact Coates:

Front Office: (703) 713-3000
Attendance: (703) 713-3030

Jesse Kraft, Principal
jkraft@fcps.edu

Jessica Shroyer-King Ass't Principal
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Birthday Treats

Reminder to parents that we allow students with birthdays to bring in snacks for their classmates, but there are rules associated with this:

- Parents should inform the teacher in advance.
- Snacks must be something that is easy to distribute and does not require knives or forks (cookies, brownies, cupcakes work best. Please no cakes).
- Birthday snacks are to be distributed by the birthday child to his/her classmates in the cafeteria at lunch.
- Snacks may only be distributed to your child's classmates and teachers. No passing out to select students in other classes. This creates problems for other classes.
- Please no goodie bags, balloons, soda, gifts. School cannot host a party.
- If there is food allergy in your child's class, please be mindful of that when you send in a birthday snack.

Many elementary schools in FCPS have a no birthday snack rule in effect due to the disruptions this can cause. At Coates, we do not impose a rule like that. Birthdays are special, and if a family wants to share a snack with classmates on a child's birthday, we want to support that. Please note that the above rules will be enforced in all cases. They are also noted in the Coates Parent Handbook which you received at Back to School Night (and available on the Coates website).

Mark Your Calendar

- Oct. 3- Interim Reports sent home
- Oct. 8—AAP Parent Information Night 6:00 PM
- Oct. 9—Principal's Coffee 9:15-10:15AM
- Oct. 14- Teacher Work Day (Student Holiday)
- Oct. 19- Fall Festival 10-2:00 PM

Looking Ahead

- Nov. 1—End of First Quarter
- Nov. 4 & 5—Teacher Work Days (Student Holidays)
- Nov. 13- FLE Parent Preview 6:00 PM
Parent Night Equity Partnership 6:30PM
- Nov. 18- AAP Eligibility Process Parent Mtg
- Nov. 27-29-Thanksgiving Break

Positivity Project Update

We hope your child is talking to you about the character strengths they're learning about each week! Always watch Thursday Folders or Coates social media to find out what we're up to. PLEASE talk about the character strengths at home as a family. The more our kids learn about character, the better off we'll be! In our view, The Positivity Project is an attempt to end a worldwide trend of narcissism by explicitly teaching and modeling empathy ("other people matter") and other strengths that'll help our kids make the world a better place.



Be Safe in our Parking Lot

During arrival and dismissal, we've had some scary moments when parents walk their child through the main parking lot and pass between the idling buses. This is not a safe place for you or your child. If you park on River Birch Road or walk to school, please use the sidewalk lining the bus loop to get to the front door.

Hq n n q y #E q c v g u #
U q e k n #D g f k #

Check us out and follow us on
Facebook, Twitter & Instagram!



<https://www.facebook.com/coateselementary/>



<https://twitter.com/CoatesES>



<https://www.instagram.com/>

School Improvement Plan

Each year, all schools in FCPS are required to implement a School Improvement & Innovation Plan (SIIP). We analyze data from the previous year to determine strengths and weaknesses and consider school system priorities in the development of our SIIPs. This year's SIIP consists of the following goals:

1. **To decrease our rate of chronic absenteeism** – State accreditation is no longer based solely on SOL test scores. It now also includes other measures like absenteeism. Last year, Coates had about 9% of our student body with an excessive amount of school absences. We have a robust plan for monitoring absences and following up with families through our counselors, social worker, and attendance officer where needed.
2. **To decrease discipline referrals** – Coates is a great school with overall nice children and well-trained teachers. This goal is not about fixing a rampant problem but rather making our school climate as positive and well-structured as it can be. We're employing more proactive moves that prevent misbehaviors, responses to student misbehaviors that curtail negative patterns, and an ongoing analysis of consequences using an equity lens. This is not to say that consequences for misbehaviors will cease to be used (consequences are part of learning), but we want to maximize every system we have to get the best behaviors from every kid.
3. **To improve our reading scores with special education students** – FCPS has a commitment to closing achievement gaps. Therefore SOL test scores are provided to schools and broken down by subgroups. Coates has had a positive upward trend in our reading and math SOL pass rates in recent years, and last year was overall successful again. However, we did lose ground in our pass rate for students in special education programs in reading (we improved in math). We have plans in motion to audit and replace existing specialized reading programs, to better monitor reading progress for special ed students beyond the expectations of their IEPs, and to support our teachers with better training and collaborative planning opportunities to attack this problem.
4. **To improve access to AAP curricula and activities in grades K-2** – Our staff has always been great about having high academic expectations for our students and challenging them as learners. This is an effort to better analyze the grade level curriculum and determine where we can substitute classroom assignments with activities from the AAP units. The goal is about access. We may find that some students struggle with the activities and are not yet ready for that level of rigor, but we'll surely find that others can rise (including kids who might not have demonstrated higher level skills previously). To be clear, this is not about forcing all kids into AAP. Advanced Academic Programs meet a very real need, and it is not appropriate for everyone. This is about exposing kids to tough challenges (because that's part of our mission as a school) and ensuring that we aren't overlooking gifted kids who don't fit the traditional profile.

The four goals above are not the only initiatives we have this year, but they are our top priorities. I am confident that our staff will realize these goals, but we're going to need your help. Please ensure that your child attends school on time every day possible and teach self-control and good character at home. Back up the teacher if s/he tells you about a misbehavior at school (nip problems in the bud). Make sure your child reads at home, and promote high level thinking through intellectual conversations, board games, and sharing how you overcome challenges. We hope this explanation of our SIIP helps you better understand our priorities, and we look forward to partnering with you to continue to take care of Coates.

Lutie Lewis Coates Elementary School

VISION

To empower our children to become successful adults who make a difference.

MISSION

To nurture and expect all students to be strong individuals (who demonstrate high academic achievement, grit, and personal responsibility), collaborative teammates (who demonstrate effective communication skills and empathy), and bold thinkers (who engage in thoughtful risk-taking).

BELIEFS

- All students can achieve.
- The best teachers have high expectations, strong skills, and the ability to apply their skills so that goals for students are realized.
- Students must be exposed to challenging activities and situations in order to grow
- Skills and virtues that transcend the curriculum, like collaboration, critical thinking, grit, and empathy, must be taught explicitly and reinforced consistently.

