



# FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY FAMILY NEWS

04/30/2026

Dear Farmington River Families,

As we come to the close of April, I've been thinking a lot about just how much has been happening in our school. It's been a full, busy month in the best possible way.

This time of year also feels like a good moment to share our story more broadly. Farmington River Elementary School is open to School Choice students in grades K-5, and we truly welcome new families into our community. We are actively working to spread the word about our school and encourage more families to consider joining us.

When people ask what makes our school special, it's honestly hard to point to just one thing. It's the feeling you get when you walk through the doors. Our small class sizes make a big difference. Teachers really know their students, not just as learners, but as people, and that shows in the way they support and challenge them every day. Our staff brings a lot of experience, but just as important, they bring care, patience, and a genuine belief in each child.

There is also so much happening beyond the regular school day. Students have opportunities to participate in after-school programs, including sports, arts, music, theatre, foreign language, and more, along with field trips and other experiences that give them a chance to explore new interests and build confidence. These opportunities matter and often end up being the things students remember most.

What stands out to me the most, though, is the sense of community. Families are involved, staff work closely together, and our community members in Sandisfield and Otis show up for us in so many ways and are incredibly generous with their time and support. There's a shared commitment to making sure students feel comfortable, supported, and excited to come to school. It's something you can feel, not just describe.

As we head into the final stretch of the school year, I'm really proud of our students and grateful for the partnership we have with our families. If you know someone who might be considering School Choice, I hope you'll encourage them to learn more about our school and help us continue to grow this wonderful community.

Sincerely,  
Laurie Flower, *Principal*

**"The future of the world is in my classroom today."**

**— Ivan Welton Fitzwater**

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**GREENAGERS VISITING GR. 3**  
Friday, May 1



**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MTG**  
7:00 PM  
Monday, May 4



**GR. 3 FIELD TRIP:**  
**STORROWTOWN VILLAGE**  
Tuesday, May 5

**MCAS MATH GRADES 3-6**  
MON., MAY 11 THRU  
THURS., MAY 14

**GR. K FIELD TRIP:**  
**LUPA ZOO**  
Wednesday, May 20



**HALF-DAY OF SCHOOL**  
Friday, May 22

PK/EK Dismissal @ 11:30 AM  
Gr. K-6 Dismissal @ 11:45 AM

**MEMORIAL DAY**  
**NO SCHOOL**  
Monday, May 25th



**GR. 1 & 2 FIELD TRIP:**  
**CT SCIENCE CENTER**  
Friday, May 29





# GATEWAY MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND VISITS FARMINGTON RIVER!



The Gateway Middle School Band recently visited Farmington River and brought incredible energy with them. They performed several pieces that had our students fully engaged from the start. What made the visit even more special was that four of our own students practiced ahead of time and joined them for a few songs. Watching them perform alongside middle school musicians was a powerful moment for everyone in the audience. You could feel the pride and excitement in the room as their hard work paid off. Thank you to the Otis Cultural Council for their generous grant that made this program possible, and to Miss Jeri for writing the grant and teaching our students. We hope this experience inspires even more students to take music lessons next year.



# MCAS SCHEDULE

Thank you for helping students arrive well-rested and on time during testing days.

MCAS Dates:	Gr. 3	Gr. 4	Gr. 5	Gr. 6
Mathematics	May 13-14	May 13-14	May 11-12	May 11-12
Science	-	-	May 18-19	-

## 7 MCAS TESTING TIPS FOR FAMILIES:

Preparing for the MCAS can be a team effort! Here are some ways families can help students feel confident and ready for testing:

- 1. Prioritize Sleep** – Ensure your child gets plenty of rest, especially the night before testing. A well-rested brain performs better!
- 2. Eat a Healthy Breakfast** – A nutritious breakfast fuels focus and energy. Choose protein-rich foods and avoid too much sugar.
- 3. Arrive on Time** – A calm and punctual morning helps students start the day with confidence and without added stress.
- 4. Encourage a Positive Mindset** – Remind your child that effort matters most. A confident attitude can make a big difference.
- 5. Ensure Daily Attendance** – Consistent school attendance leading up to the test helps students stay on track with learning.
- 6. Encourage Reading Every Day** – Strong reading skills support success across all subjects. Make reading a daily habit!
- 7. Celebrate Effort, Not Just Scores** – Praise your child for their hard work and perseverance, no matter the outcome.

With support from home, students can approach the MCAS feeling prepared and confident!

Save the Date!

class of

2026

## GRADUATION CEREMONY



Tuesday, June 16th, 2026  
1:00 PM



Farmington River Elementary School  
555 North Main Road, Otis, MA 01255

We hope to see you there to celebrate with us!

# THE SPRING BOOK FAIR IS COMING MAY 7<sup>TH</sup> FROM 3:00 - 5:45 PM!

## SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR

Coming soon to your school!

**USE THIS FLYER AS YOUR WISH LIST**  
Mark the books you want to find at the Fair!

### PICTURE BOOKS

**BUFFALO BUFFALO** \$3.99  
**GRIMPY MONKEY** \$3.99  
**That's Not Funny, Dinosaur!** \$3.99  
**NEAR & FARTERS** \$3.99

**HOT DEALS**  
3 for \$10 (any 3)

### DOG TALES

**I AM GRID** \$3.99  
**PUG** \$3.99

### FAVORITE CHARACTERS

**Pete Cat** \$3.99  
**Shrek** \$3.99  
**Barney** \$3.99  
**Bluey** \$3.99

### GAME ON

**MINECRAFT** \$3.99  
**LEGO** \$3.99

### THRILLS & CHILLS

**KNOW WHAT I SAID?** \$3.99  
**MAX BEAST** \$3.99

### GRAPHIC NOVELS

**MIXED** \$3.99  
**THE BIRTHDAY PARTY** \$3.99

### LAUGH OUT LOUD

**MEME KINGS** \$3.99  
**FUNNIEST JOKE BOOK EVER** \$3.99

### DRAGON'S DEN

**WINGS OF FIRE** \$3.99  
**DRAGON GIRLS** \$3.99  
**WITH A DRAGON** \$3.99

### GROWN-UPS: PREPARE FOR THE FAIR!

**SHARE FAIR** \$3.99  
**DEEP SECRETS** \$3.99

## SAVE THE DATE!

# Spring Concert

Thursday, May 7th, 2026

PreK, EK, & K @ 9:00AM  
Grades 1-6 @ 6:00 PM

## TRIMESTER 2 AWARDS CEREMONY

Our grades 3-6 students came together for our 2nd trimester awards assembly, and we're so excited about the progress they've made. It was great to see how supportive and genuinely happy they were for one another as classmates were recognized.

## SPRING CONCERT:

The evening concert on May 7th will begin at 6 pm and is showcasing musical talent of students in grades 1-6. The EK, PK, and K concert is scheduled for Thursday morning at 9:00 am. The preK, EK or K classes will NOT be performing at the evening concert, however, you are welcome to come with your children to watch the other classes perform!

Children may like to take the opportunity to dress up a bit for the event, and this is encouraged, though not required. Appropriate and neat school attire is fine.

## Eat Smart To Play Hard

Use MyPlate to help you fuel up with foods from each food group.

Choose **MyPlate.gov**

### FRUITS Fuel Up With Fruits at Meals or Snacks

Oranges, pears, berries, watermelon, peaches, raisins, and applesauce (without extra sugar) are just a few of the great choices. Make sure your juice is 100% fruit juice.

### VEGETABLES Color Your Plate With Great-Tasting Veggies

Try to eat more dark-green, red, and orange vegetables, and beans and peas.

### GRAINS Make at Least Half Your Grains Whole Grains

Choose whole-grain foods, such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, whole-wheat tortillas, brown rice, and light popcorn, more often.

### PROTEIN Vary Your Protein Foods

Try fish, shellfish, beans, and peas more often. Some tasty ways include a bean burrito, hummus, veggie chili, fish taco, shrimp or tofu stir-fry, or grilled salmon.

### DAIRY Get Your Calcium-Rich Foods

Choose fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese at meals or snacks. Dairy foods contain calcium for strong bones and healthy teeth.

### Know Your "Sometimes" Foods

Look out for foods with added sugars or solid fats. They fill you up so that you don't have room for the foods that help you eat smart and play hard.

**Keep on Moving!**  
You need at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Whether that's skateboarding, tossing a ball, or playing tag, every little bit counts!

# SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

Greetings to the FRRSD Community!

Warmer weather has arrived, and as another school year approaches its end, I'd like to pass along some school district news.

The 2026-2027 FRRSD Budget has passed through the school committee and public hearing phases and is on its way to town meetings in May. This was a challenging budget year as the district responded to significant cost increases in insurance and other areas while also preparing for declining levels of state education support in areas like transportation, rural aid, and Title I. Last year's budget utilized a balance of \$100,000 from the regional transportation revolving fund which helped keep assessment increases low. Unfortunately, this year we did not have a transportation revolving fund balance to use as an offset in preparing the 2026-2027 budget.

By budgeting responsibly and by applying significant offsetting revenues we have managed to create a conservative yet comprehensive budget. Despite repeated "pencil sharpening," our towns will still see a higher year over year assessment increase than they have in recent years. For Otis we project an increase of 7.53% and for Sandisfield 4.85%. These increases are on-par or even a bit lower than those being proposed for other surrounding towns and school districts. This FRRSD budget continues on a path forward with all initiatives and the reduction of only one paraprofessional position. As town meetings approach, we ask for your support of our school and our school district budget.

Looking ahead to next year I would also like to spread the word about a few employment opportunities we project for the 2026-2027 school year. A district position connected with the business office, District Treasurer will be available for the start of the next fiscal year July. This is a very part-time but very important position charged with oversight of the district's accounts. FRES seeks a qualified Music Teacher to work with our amazing students teaching general and some instrumental and ensemble music. We also are looking for some part-time limited-term Cafeteria Worker to cover a leave from the beginning of the school year through December. Additionally, FRES seeks individuals to serve as substitute teachers in the coming year. To learn more about these opportunities, please go to our website.

As plans to expand aftercare options in the coming year, our partner agency (the Lee Youth Association, LYA) is seeking individuals to staff the LYA afterschool care program at FRES. LYA seeks a Site Coordinator and Support Staff. The Site Coordinator should have a minimum of a high school diploma, be CPR and First Aid certified (LYA will train) and have a minimum of one year experience working with children. The Support Staff should be 16 or older and have an interest in working with children. High school students looking for afterschool employment are encouraged to inquire. If you are interested in working in this program in either position, please contact Sharon Terry at the LYA at 413-243-5535 x1 or Sharon.lya@verizon.net

Thanks for reading and have a great day!

Timothy Lee, FRRSD Superintendent



## BIG JOE STORYTELLER

Big Joe visited our school and put on two shows, one for our PreK-3 students and another for grades 4-6. From the moment he started, students were hooked, laughing and joining in the whole time. His humor and high energy made it easy for everyone to connect and stay engaged. Big Joe is a longtime performer and educator who brings years of experience working with schools and children to his programs. It was a fun experience, our students are still talking about.



# ART WITH MS. CAT!

As the school year comes to a close, the FRRSD artists are enjoying some of their favorite projects, including sculptures with boxes (4th grade) and "bedazzling" gift boxes for Mother's Day (grades 1 and 2). The 6th graders have completed a workshop with Michael O'Rourke on creating computer generated animation, and are now working on yearbook cover and inside illustrations. Earlier this month 4th graders finished their portrait paintings using acrylic paint while 1st and 2nd graders created "legendary dragon" portraits on scrolls which will be on display at the end of the month through the rest of the school year.

"EARTH without ART would just be "EH"....  
Make some art today!!



## ART CLUB!

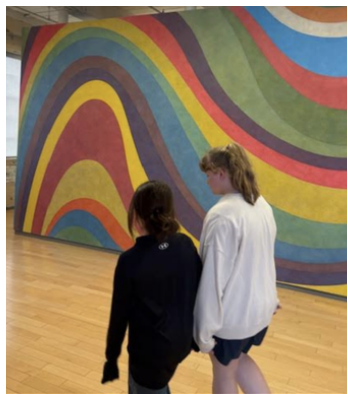
Art Club with Ms. Caroline has officially booted up just in time for some creative last-minute after-school projects! Our K-1st graders kicked things off by crafting vibrant, jeweled jellyfish using air-dry clay, colorful pipe cleaners, and sparkling beads. Next up is Grades 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> who are making Fuse Bead Art and Clay! It was a wonderful way to spend some extra time after school exploring our imaginations and getting a little messy!



# 6TH GRADE FIELD TRIP TO MASS MOCA

Our sixth graders recently visited MASS MoCA, where they explored the intersection of technology and art. Students engaged with interactive exhibits that used light, sound, and digital media, encouraging them to think creatively about modern artistic expression. Throughout the visit, they practiced observation and discussion skills while reflecting on how artists use technology to communicate ideas. It was an engaging and educational experience that sparked curiosity and thoughtful conversations.

Thank you to the Berkshire Taconic Fire Fund for making this after



Enrolling children entering grades 1 – 8  
Counselors in Training going into 9th grade

## LYA SUMMER CAMP

June – August 2026  
8am to 5pm  
(early dropoff at 6:30am available)



### Camp Highlights:

- Outdoor Adventures
- Creative Arts & Crafts
- Field Trips
- Pizza Fridays

Lee Youth Association Summer Day Camp focuses on building friendships and seeking adventure this 2026 season. Our mission is to create a safe and inclusive environment where children can play, grow, and learn. We will be exploring nature and building confidence, while enjoying games, encouraging teamwork and making memories!

### Register Now!

*The number of campers per day will be limited so please get your registrations in ASAP - once we have reached that limit, we will not be able to take any more registrations*



## LYA HOOP CAMP

Skill Development - Teamwork - Coachability - Communication - Confidence  
Hard Work - Discipline - Responsibility - Sportsmanship

### 2026 Summer Basketball Camp Information

#### Boys & Girls entering grades K - 2

One Week: June 22 – June 26  
Boys & Girls: 9:00 – 11:30  
(Drop-off: 8:30 – 9:00)

#### Boys and Girls entering grades 3 - 8

Week #1: June 29 - July 2 (NoCamp on 7/3)  
Week #2: July 6 - July 10  
Boys & Girls: 8:30am - 11:30am (Coed)

### Camp Philosophy

The philosophy of theLYA basketball camp is to provide boys and girls the opportunity to learn about the game of basketball and the skills required to play it in an environment where they feel safe and have lots of fun. We stress to our campers the importance of individual growth as a basketball player. Consequently, a primary goal is to teach campers how to become better players. We will show them skills and drills that they can use to continue their improvement when they leave camp, and we will incorporate team building activities and games to help them learn how to work with others. We believe and emphasize that playing the game of basketball is a great way to learn important life skills, applicable both on and off the court, and build positive character.

### Facilities

TheLYABasketball Camp is held at the Lee Middle and High School Gymnasium.

### What to Bring

- Basketballsneakers, appropriate clothing (Shorts, t-shirt), a water bottle (labeled with name)

### Camp Director

- Dan Korte is directing the LYA Basketball Camp for the 18th year. He was the varsity boys basketball coach at Lee Middle and High School for nine years (2005-2014), the coordinator of the LYA youth basketball leagues for 11 years (2015-2025), and coached the varsity boys basketball team again this past season (2025-2026). Assisting at the camp will be local high school student-athletes.

#### Contact Information

- Coach Korte (413)329-1168 - [lyahoop@gmail.com](mailto:lyahoop@gmail.com)
- LYA (413)243-5535

### Registration

Registeronlineat [www.leeeyouthsports.com](http://www.leeeyouthsports.com). Enrollment in the camp may be limited, so please register early. \*\*\*RegisterbyJune1sttoreserveaLYAHoopCamp-shirt.T-shirtsmaynot beavailableforlaterregistrants\*\*\*

### Pricing:

Week #1= \$90, Week #2 = \$75, Week #3 = \$90, Week #2 & #3 = \$150

\*\*\*Familieswith3ormore childrenattending campget\$10offthe priceof each child's registration fee\*\*\*

**Documentation of a physical exam completed within the past 13 months is required by the first day of camp.**



## Registration is Open!

- February Vacation Camp: Feb. 17 to 20
- April Vacation Camp: April 21 to 24
- Eight weeks of Summer Sessions: June 22 to Aug. 17
- Monday through Friday, 9 a.m to 3 p.m



### For more information, visit:

[Berkshirebotanical.org/camp](http://Berkshirebotanical.org/camp)

### Berkshire Botanical Garden

5 West Stockbridge Rd, Stockbridge, MA

413-931-3194

[campinfo@berkshirebotanical.org](mailto:campinfo@berkshirebotanical.org)

# Berkshire Pulse

## Youth Summer Programs

July 6-10

### DANCE DISCOVERY (ages 8-13) - BEGINNER/INTERMEDIATE

This week-long program provides an introduction to dance forms including ballet, modern, African, and more.

July 13-17

### DANCE ADVENTURE (ages 4-7) - BEGINNER

This program for our youngest dancers invites them on an expedition into the exciting, engaging, and rewarding world of dance. Classes will include creative dance, tumbling, drumming, and more!

July 20-24

### HIP HOP & STREET STYLE (ages 10+) - ALL LEVELS

Learn foundational movements and techniques of hip-hop and street-style dance, alongside discussions about the cultural meaning and significance of these dance forms.

Adult participation welcome!

July 27 - August 1

### MUSICAL THEATER (ages 10+) - ALL LEVELS

Jump right into the world of musical theater with classes in tap, Broadway jazz, voice, acting, and improvisation.

August 3-7 and 10-14

### YOUNG DANCERS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS (ages 11+) - INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED

The 1st week will focus on interdisciplinary dance technique, including classes in ballet, modern, Simonson Jazz, African, Salsa and Flamenco. Week two This week will focus on contemporary forms, dance-making, dance filmmaking, improvisation, and partnering.

\*Older students have the option of choosing one of the weeks to participate instead of both.

Our offerings range in style and genre, from contemporary and choreography, to musical theater, hip hop, and more! Tuition assistance is available.

For more information and registration, please visit our website [berkshirepulse.org](http://berkshirepulse.org) or call 413-274-6624.



BERKSHIREPULSE.ORG  
413-274-6624