



09/17/2026

# FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY FAMILY NEWS

*Striving to Be the Best Students and Citizens*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT**  
**THURSDAY, SEPT 24**  
**@ 6:00 PM**

**APPLE PICKING with the PTA**  
**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27**

**SCHOOL PICTURE DAY**  
**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30**

**PARENT-TEACHER  
CONFERENCES**  
**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19**

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

### Building Reading Habits

Our young learners are building strong independent reading routines this month. Support your child at home by setting aside 15–20 minutes each night to read a favorite book together.

### Focusing on Screen-Free Learning

This year, we are minimizing screen time during the school day for our young students. We are prioritizing hands-on learning, interactive play, and offline activities to keep them fully engaged and focused in class.

## WELCOME BACK TO A BRIGHT NEW SCHOOL YEAR!

We are off to a wonderful start to the school year, and I want to thank you for helping make the first few weeks such a success. The excitement in the building has been contagious. Our students have come in ready to learn and take on new challenges, and our staff has worked incredibly hard to set a positive tone for the months ahead.

We are also looking forward to Back-to-School Night, which is just around the corner. This evening is a chance for families to meet teachers, learn more about the curriculum in each grade, and hear about the routines and goals for the year. More importantly, it is a time to strengthen the connection between home and school. We hope you will join us. It is always a highlight of the fall and a great opportunity to come together as a community.

Warm regards,  
Laurie Flower, Principal



## REPORTING ABSENCES & CHANGES IN DISMISSAL

### STUDENT ABSENCE

**Call 413-269-4466**  
**Press 5 for the School Nurse**

If your student will be absent,  
please call and press 5 when  
prompted to reach the school nurse.  
Alternatively, email [gterry@frrsd.org](mailto:gterry@frrsd.org).

### CHANGE IN DISMISSAL

**Call 413-269-4466**  
**Press 1 for the Front Office**

If you need to change your student's  
dismissal plan, please call and press  
1 when prompted to reach the front  
office. Alternatively, email  
[frontoffice@frrsd.org](mailto:frontoffice@frrsd.org) before 2:30pm.

**PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE WITH YOUR STUDENT'S NAME AND  
INFORMATION ABOUT THE ABSENCE OR DISMISSAL CHANGE. PLEASE  
DO NOT EMAIL CAROLINE STAMM WITH DISMISSAL CHANGES.**

## KICKING OFF A GREAT SCHOOL YEAR!

We are off to a wonderful start at Farmington River! Our Meet & Greet gave students and families a chance to reconnect, meet teachers, and get excited for the new school year.

At our opening assembly, students talked about what school is really for while imagining what the best school can look and feel like.

We also kicked off our Dragon Egg Positive Behavior Program, with a special focus on respect. Students can earn Dragon Eggs when staff members notice them making positive choices and showing respect for others and our school.



## FARMINGTON FACES: MEET THE MAN BEHIND THE MEALS



We're excited to introduce you to **Nathan Normandin**, Farmington River's new Food Service Director. Working alongside Ms. Sam (Gale), Nathan brings a healthy breakfast and delicious, nutritious lunch to our students 5 days a week!

While he's new to FRES, Nathan learned to ski and snowboard at Otis Ridge and grew up swimming in Otis Reservoir. He studied culinary science at Johnson & Wales University, and went on to serve thousands (millions?) of meals as a catering chef and at local restaurants like Gedney Farm.



He studied culinary science at Johnson & Wales University, and went on to serve thousands (millions?) of meals as a catering chef and at local restaurants like Gedney Farm. He loves to try new foods and is excited to get to know our students and our kitchen. When he's not baking muffins and stocking the salad bar, Nathan loves to hike, kayak and fish, and even has a list of over XX different species of fish he's caught! He's a passionate lego builder and collector, and a dedicated uncle and cousin.

Nathan can be reached at [NNormandin@frrsd.org](mailto:NNormandin@frrsd.org) if you want to say hi, share lego stories, or see cool pictures of fish. 



Students in grades 3rd-6th grade kick started their year in the Music Room practicing instrument care and working as a team through using Boomwhacker Play-Alongs. Boomwhackers are lightweight, color-coded plastic tubes tuned to specific musical pitches that produce distinct notes when tapped against a hand, desk, or floor. Everyone had a blast making music together!



## JOIN OUR TEAM!

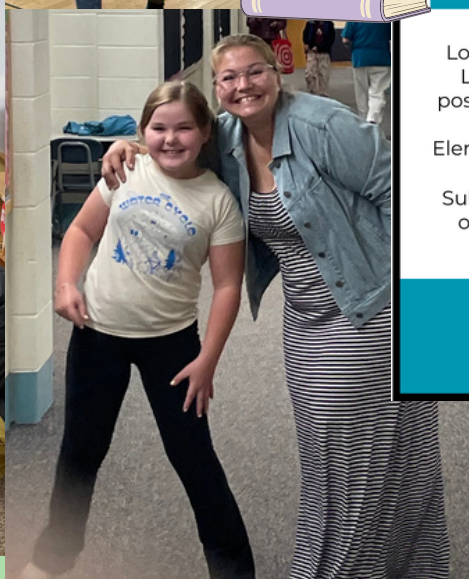
**Farmington River  
Elementary Substitute  
Teachers**



Love the Farmington River Community?  
Love being in a happy building with a  
positive working environment? Love kids?  
Join the team at Farmington River  
Elementary School as a substitute teacher!

Substitutes work on a per-diem / on call basis for either a whole  
or half day; requirements include a high school diploma and  
successful background checks. Rates start at \$120/day.

Interested applicants should visit  
[www.frrsd.org/district-information/employment/](http://www.frrsd.org/district-information/employment/)  
or call **(413) 269-4466**



### THANK YOU, JANE GLEASON

On Monday, September 14, the Farmington River Regional School Committee honored Jane Gleason as she retired from her role as Treasurer of the school district. In her almost 35 years of service with FRRSD, Jane held various roles and supported the education of thousands of students from Otis, Sandisfield, and neighboring towns. **Thanks, Jane!**

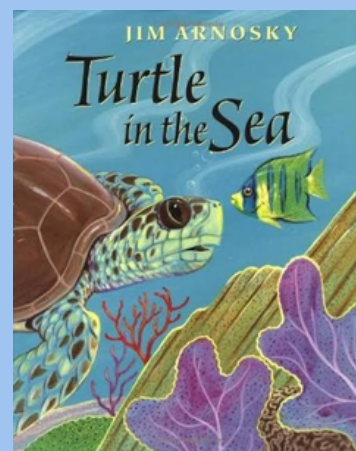
### OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLANNING

The Farmington River community is invited to take a brief survey (*5 minutes is all it takes!*) to help determine how recreational and open space is developed and allocated. While the survey is specific to the town of Sandisfield, everyone is welcome to take the survey and have their input counted.

Click [Here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SNDOSRP) to take the survey or visit:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SNDOSRP>

### DON'T MISS THE STORY WALK!

Stop by the Farmington River Trail, behind St. Mary's Church in Otis, to experience ***Turtle in the Sea***, by Jim Arnosky. Enjoy this moving story as you walk the path along the river during the month of September. And keep your eyes peeled for turtles and more along the path!



# SAVE THE DATE: BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT!

Join us on **Thursday, September 24 at 6:00 PM for Back-to-School Night**, a tradition in Massachusetts schools designed to help families learn about the year ahead. At this event, you'll meet your child's teacher, see the classroom, and discover how instruction reflects the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks standards that ensure every student across the state shares access to a high-quality education. Curriculum Night is a great way to see how learning standards come alive in our classrooms and how you can support your child's success this year.

**THURS.  
SEPT. 24  
6:00 PM**

## EVERY DAY COUNTS: THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE



Did you know that missing just 2 days a month can add up to over 18 days a year, putting a student in the chronically absent category? Missing school can create gaps in learning that are hard to catch up on, even with extra homework. That's why we encourage families to schedule appointments, family trips, and vacations outside of school days whenever possible.

Being in school every day helps students succeed academically, build friendships, and fully enjoy all that school has to offer. Let's make every day count!

### ★ State-Recognized Attendance Improvement! ★

Thanks to our amazing families, our overall attendance improved by 10%! Help us keep up the great work.

## RIDING THE BUS SAFELY



Riding the school bus is a privilege and an important part of the school day. To keep everyone safe and comfortable we ask all students to follow these rules:

- **Stay seated while the bus is moving**
- **Keep hands feet and belongings to yourself**
- **Use a quiet voice so the driver can focus on the road**
- **No eating or drinking on the bus**
- **Follow the driver's instructions at all times**
- **Be respectful to other students and the bus driver**

If the school receives a behavior report we will investigate it. If the behavior is substantiated it could result in a bus suspension. If the behaviors continue it could ultimately result in removal from the bus. Following these rules helps everyone have a safe and on-time ride

## WELCOME BACK TO TEACHEREASE!

As we begin our second year with TeacherEase, please help us keep records accurate. **Returning families:** Log in to review and update your contact information. **New families:** Follow the registration link sent to your email to activate your account. Use the portal to check attendance, view grades, and receive updates from the school and your student(s) teachers.



## Otis & Sandisfield Vaccine Clinics



| DATE                 | TIME        | LOCATION                                                              |
|----------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday<br>Oct. 9th   | 11 am-1 pm  | <b>Sandisfield Old Town Hall</b><br>3 Silverbrook Rd, Sandisfield, MA |
| Monday<br>Oct. 19th  | 11 am-1 pm  | <b>Otis Town Hall</b><br>1 N Main Rd, Otis, MA                        |
| Tuesday<br>Oct. 20th | 3 pm - 5 pm | <b>Farmington River School</b><br>555 N Main Rd., Otis, MA            |

### Pre-Registration Required

[home.color.com/vaccine/register/tritown](https://home.color.com/vaccine/register/tritown)  
or call 413-243-5540 x 109



For more info and the full fall schedule, visit:  
[www.southernberkshirehealth.com](https://www.southernberkshirehealth.com)

FLU: Regular (6 months+) &  
Senior dose (65+)

COVID: 65+ & High Risk

At-Home or In Office  
Appointments Available  
call 413-243-5540 x 109

Please Bring Insurance Card





## SEPTEMBER TIP: ESTABLISHING ROUTINES:

The transition back to early mornings can be tough! You can help ease back-to-school anxiety by keeping morning and bedtime routines as consistent as possible. Involving your child in small choices, like picking out clothes or packing their backpack the night before, gives them a sense of control and reduces morning stress.

## Welcome to a New School Year from Your School Counselor!

Hello Farmington River Elementary families! My name is Ms. Terri, and I am thrilled to be your School Counselor for the 26-27 school year. As a school counselor, my goal is to support every student's academic success, social-emotional development, and overall well-being. Throughout the year, I work with students through classroom guidance lessons, small group activities, and short-term individual check-ins.

### How I Can Help Your Child & Family:

- Navigating back-to-school transitions, anxiety, or school jitters
- Building friendships, conflict resolution, and social skills
- Developing healthy routines, organization, and problem-solving strategies
- Connecting families with community resources when extra support is needed

Please feel free to reach out if you have questions or concerns about your child. I am looking forward to a fantastic year together!

### Contact Information:

Email: [tdigrigoli@frrsd.org](mailto:tdigrigoli@frrsd.org) Phone: 413-269-4466 ext. 141



At school, we are always looking for opportunities to recognize students when they are making positive choices and showing the behaviors that help make our school a respectful, welcoming place. Students may earn a Dragon Egg when they are "Caught Being Respectful!" This might be through showing kindness to a classmate, using respectful words and actions, helping someone, following expectations, or simply making a great choice when it matters.

### When a student earns a Dragon Egg:

- A teacher will explain to the student why they earned it.
- The student will pick a dragon egg to place in the "tube"
- The student will receive a Dragon Certificate to bring home, signed by the principal.
- Families are encouraged to ask their child, "How did you earn your Dragon Certificate?"

Each Dragon Egg helps fill our Dragon Tube! When we fill the tube, our whole school will celebrate with a fun incentive. For this first celebration, students will earn EXTRA RECESS!

# 26-27 DRAGON'S DEN:

## AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

MONDAY - THURSDAY

3:00 - 5:00 PM

KINDERGARTEN-6TH

Call 413-564-9842 to reach the  
Dragon's Den program  
after 3:00 PM

**HOMEWORK HELP  
ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES  
SNACKS PROVIDED  
GAMES & RECREATION**



**SUPPORTING  
WORKING FAMILIES**

This program will start on **Tuesday, September 29, 2026**. It will follow the district calendar and conclude on **June 8th, 2026**.

The Dragon's Den After School Program will be canceled for Staff Meetings and holidays

Oct. 28<sup>th</sup>   Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>   Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>   Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup>   Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>   Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>   Mar. 10<sup>th</sup>   Apr. 14<sup>th</sup>   May 12<sup>th</sup>

Please register your child for the days that you regularly need after-school programming. This helps us plan staffing and activities for our students. Farmington River also offers a variety of academic and athletic clubs for students in Kindergarten through Grade 6. Generally, clubs run from 3:00 - 4:00 PM. Students may transition from a club into Dragons Den and remain until 5:00 PM. Please pack a water bottle, as these are not provided. Dragon's Den is open to students in K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Dragon's Den Applications are due by Wednesday, September 23rd**

## DRAGON'S DEN APPLICATION

I give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ in Grade to attend Dragon's Den, requesting the following:

\_\_\_ **Monday:** \_\_\_ 4:00PM \_\_\_ 4:30 PM \_\_\_ 5:00 PM    \_\_\_ **Wednesday:** \_\_\_ 4:00 PM \_\_\_ 4:30 PM \_\_\_ 5:00 PM  
\_\_\_ **Tuesday:** \_\_\_ 4:00PM \_\_\_ 4:30 PM \_\_\_ 5:00 PM    \_\_\_ **Thursday:** \_\_\_ 4:00 PM \_\_\_ 4:30 PM \_\_\_ 5:00 PM

I agree to pick up my student promptly at the selected time. Attendance is taken each day. I understand that late pickups may affect my child's continued participation in Dragons Den. If my student's schedule changes and they need to be dismissed at the regular dismissal time, I will contact the school as soon as possible.

I understand that the first 30 minutes of Dragon's Den is for homework or reading. If my child has no homework, they are expected to bring a book to read. I understand that computers and electronic devices are not allowed in the after-school program. I understand that all school rules apply.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number #1: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that the first 30 minutes of Dragon's Den is for homework or reading. I understand that if I have no homework, I am expected to bring a book to read. I understand that computers and electronic devices are not allowed in the after-school program. I agree to follow all school rules according to the Student/Parent Handbook.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## WHAT'S NEW WITH THE PTA

A new school year is here, and the PTA is ready for another year of fun! On September 24th, come **visit us at Back-to-School Night!** We'll be **in the cafeteria at 5 PM with pastries**, ready to share a little about what the PTA does, like the Otis Ridge Ski and Snowboard program, one of the most fun things we do! (Watch your email for a signup, coming in early October!)

And speaking of fun... **Apple Picking is September 27th at 10 AM!** This is a **member-only event**, so keep an eye out for PTA membership forms coming home soon. **We'd love to have you join us!**

October 6 is the **Chili Cook-Off** – whether you cook or vote, everyone is a winner! Then, mark your calendars for our next PTA Meeting, October 8th at 7 PM on Zoom. Watch your email for the link. And lastly, as the leaves begin to fall, so does the clutter in our closets! Our **Fall Clothing Swap is October 25th**. Bring your clean, gently used clothing to the collection bin by the school entrance. **We're looking forward to a great year together!**



**FARMINGTON RIVER PTA**  
presents a  
**CHILI COOK-OFF!**  
A FUNDRAISER

click here for more info & tickets

Good food. Great people. A stronger FRES community!

Join us for a fun, family-friendly evening full of spicy competition, great food, and community spirit! All proceeds benefit Farmington River PTA programs and initiatives.

Everyone is welcome!

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2026  
5:00 PM – 8:00 PM

THE KNOX TRAIL INN  
1898 East Otis Road  
East Otis, MA 01253

GREAT FOOD  
GREAT COMPANY  
GREAT CAUSE!

More than just chili!  
SALADS, CORNBREAD, AND DESSERTS  
will be served!

Calling All Youth Entrepreneurs

**POP UP MARKET**  
FOR YOUTH-LED BUSINESSES

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2026  
11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Already have a youth-led business or want to promote your crafts, products, or services? Apply to be a free vendor at Lee's Family Fun Day as part of Lee Founders Weekend!

Apply at <https://leema.gov/youth-commission>.  
Sponsored by the Lee Youth Commission.

**A FOREST LANGUAGE**  
Words That Illuminate the Astonishing World of Trees

See FRES parent and local author Hannah Fries at The Bookstore in Lenox  
Wed.10/14 @ 5pm

HANNAH FRIES  
foreword by MARIA POPOVA

**THE FARM**  
NEW MARLBOROUGH

**Harvest Festival**

LOCAL FOOD • HAY RIDES  
LIVE MUSIC • LOCAL VENDORS

SATURDAY SEPT 19<sup>TH</sup> 12PM - 8PM

343 NEW MARLBORO-SOUTHFIELD ROAD  
NEW MARLBOROUGH MA  
[WWW.THEFARMNM.COM](http://WWW.THEFARMNM.COM)  
@THEFARMNM

FREE ENTRY

**Yard Sale!**

Fri, Sept 18 9 am - 5 pm  
Sat, Sept 19 9 am - 4 pm

New Boston Congregational Church  
4 Sandisfield Road

Antiques & better quality household & garden items & equipment, furniture, artwork, crafts, jewelry, plants & much more!

Baked goods, hotdogs, popcorn and beverages available for purchase.

"Ring the Church Bell" for a \$5 Donation

FREE Show Saturday at 3 pm:  
Ali "Dame of Flames" Fire Performer

[www.newbostoncongregationalchurch.org](http://www.newbostoncongregationalchurch.org)

FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY PTA

**Fall CLOTHING SWAP**

GIVE. SHARE. SAVE. ♥ OUR COMMUNITY.

SUNDAY OCTOBER 25, 2026  
11:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
FRES GYM

A community event to exchange gently used fall and winter items and help our families!

ITEMS ACCEPTED  
Clothes Shoes Bags Hats & Gloves Jackets  
All items should be gently used and in clean condition.

Cleaned items can be dropped off ahead of time in the bin near the front door of the school.

Strong Families  
TOGETHER, WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Questions? Email us! [pta@frrsd.org](mailto:pta@frrsd.org)