



This is our 21st year and we will celebrate at some point this winter--maybe a crazy ice

Kingfisher Academy News & Notes

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Vol. 21 No. 1
August 2020

Lots of News

School happens in 29 more days and I am getting ready. I'm setting up extracurricular activities and making plans for each of the classrooms. Also, we are thinking about making the breezeway more beautiful and welcoming (and more useful). We have tables and chairs out there and may actually conduct classes out there at times so the kids can get fresh air and if we distance properly, they can take a short break from the mask wearing.

This year, there will be times when I will be out because I am getting more involved in my city, Clarkston, and their plans for the future. I'm also taking some coursework in environmental education. I'm bringing back all kinds of fun ideas and am also able to more fully integrate the national standards into our science curriculum. I was startled to discover that we were ahead of the grade level standards in the bird and plant units. That was a great realization for me.

We exchanged Covid Plans with a couple of other small private schools and got some ideas to add to ours. I'm still waiting on some guidance about how to handle a class that gets a positive Covid test from one child. My understanding right

now (it changes daily) is that if one child gets sick and/or tests positive, then that classroom moves to virtual learning for seven days. The child that is a patient must stay out for seven more days and can return to school after three consecutive days without a fever. What if a child tests positive but still doesn't have symptoms? They must still be out fourteen days, but they can do virtual school during that time. The lag time between testing and getting results makes all of this a bit vague. Many people can be actually sick with Covid symptoms, but test negative. It's a puzzle. We're learning more every day.

BACK TO SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE for parents is different this year. As always, we have a time set aside before the school year cranks up to talk about the plans, to hand out information, to set up dates for special events. This is most useful for new families, but this year, it will be especially useful because we'll be showing off our new air purifiers and desks and explaining our system of using the POD method to keep the children safe. So, I think we'll set this up over three days (August 25, 26, and 27th) from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. I'll send out invitations closer to that time and we'll figure out if we should do appointments or just take small groups at a time.

Also, we will be setting up for the **extracurricular classes** being offered and parents will get a chance to sign their children up for these classes. Some of them we will pay for, some of them will be paid for by families, and some of them we'll split the cost on. We did this last year with the tennis and it worked well. These classes generally happen during the school day and I'll have flyers to hand out but will not be inviting them to come talk with you. We will offer tennis, piano lessons, dance, and kids will go to book clubs or chess at the library.

Last, during the meeting, I will also have clipboards set up for **parent help**—I'll need families to provide a delivered lunch a couple times this year, when I'm overwhelmed. I'll need help one Saturday morning painting two walls in classrooms. We also would love to have someone help me find discounts for the teachers around town—that requires some phone calls to restaurants, etc. We couldn't have Kingfisher without parent help.



Reading Classes are Powerful

Most of our students enjoy reading, but often fall into the trap of only reading one genre of book—mysteries or true fact books or dinosaur or dragon books, etc. This year, we are going to assign a type of book for the book reports. For example, maybe a biography will be assigned that goes with the social studies unit and we'll look for biographies of famous

Georgians or famous southern historic figures. Maybe when we study environmental science, we'll look for true fact type books on animals or on physical features of the South. There are many genres of books that kids never delve into—historical fiction/fantasy/realistic fiction/biographies/fairy tales or legends/classical books/Americana type books/books on other cultures/etc. etc. The goal is to not only broaden their base of reading knowledge, but to increase their interest in the world around them. One deterrent to this idea is that often the Tucker library has a really limited collection of these books. I will be putting a list together for each genre and ordering some of the books from Decatur or Mason Mill and/or we will go there when we need to get something specific. I don't want the searching for the book to be the focus, just the **reading** of it.

I have found that Barnes and Noble are carrying less and less of the books we need for school—I talked to them about it at the Edgewood store and the lady told me that they have dropped out of the race with Amazon for certain types of books—particularly science and children' books. I was really surprised to know that—so I will be seeking a store out for that sort of thing and ordering some books through Eagle Eye or ½ Price.

What Kind of Clothes???

With so many sales on kids' clothing right now, it's hard to figure out what will work best for school. Look for sturdy clothes that will tolerate frequent washing—we are an active school and sometimes kids get pretty grubby. Buy sneakers and sturdy sandals—we don't allow crocs due to insurance rules or flip flops. In the first month of school, send them in light weight clothes due to the heat and we will likely spray insect repellent, so probably you'll have to wash everything before wearing it again. Since kids grow pretty fast, I hope folks will buy clothes that are sturdy, but not too expensive. Save the Land's End clothes for special occasions. In terms of winter coats, try to avoid coats with difficult zippers that kids cannot zip themselves—we encourage everyone to manage their own clothing. Test drive the coats and sweaters—can your child put it on and take it off? Can he button and/or zip it? Can she manage a removable lining? Don't

invest in coats that will drive everyone crazy all winter. The removable linings in most coats for kids end up causing all kinds of trouble—twisting up, getting jammed up in the sleeve, etc. Often, we just take the lining out and hang it in the cubbies to go home. It is rarely cold enough here in Atlanta to justify the extra thick linings. We used to push for Velcro shoes, but with children's narrow feet, sometimes it is hard to get a good fit. Don't put a lot of little beads and jewelry on the shoe strings of sneakers, it makes them hard to tie and kids remove those and can put them in their mouths. We will tie-dye shirts again for school and are also making a mass order of polo shirts with the school name on the front pocket. The polo shirts will probably run about \$12 and they'll come in early in October. They'll be bright blue and orange.

parents that have visited want "in school" teaching, but we'll be flexible if the Covid numbers change to make virtual schooling more prudent. As always, we have more boys than girls coming and we have more kids from Tucker, Lilburn and Clarkston than we had last year. We will continue our system of having rolling enrollment, which means we'll have new students throughout the year. My goal is to end the year with 4 full classes (28-36 students) and we shall see how that desire is fulfilled.

Insurance for Accidents



Remember, we require a youth accident policy on the students at Kingfisher and you'll need to bring a check to the parent night for \$25 to cover this insurance. Last year we accepted checks all throughout the fall, but this year, we want the policy in place immediately. Make your checks out to Kingfisher and we'll make one big school check out for the policy.

How is Enrollment Looking for the New Year? School Starts August 31st!

We are opening the year with three or four distinct classes. We'll have an early elementary group of 4's through 7's, an 8 to 11 group and an 11-13 group. If we get a few more third graders, we'll add a 7-8 group. A class will be full with 9 children to 1 teacher and we will probably have one or less spaces in most classes. Last year, we started the first week with 25 kids and we ended the year with 29. Over time, people are hearing about us and we had more visitors in July and early August than we've ever had. Most



Parents who are investing time and money in finding just the right book bag, consider looking for a satchel-type bag. Often the kids cannot get their art projects and their lunch boxes into their book bags and they end up having to carry a lot of *stuff* in their hands and their backpack. An open-topped bag works well for the students because rolled up projects can fit and usually so can the lunch box. If it has pockets on the outside, the water bottle can fit in the pocket. It's easy to throw stuff into the open bag at the end of the day. I

know everyone loves their backpacks, but they are not very useful unless the child is old enough to know how to pack them.

School Hours This Year:

Doors open at 7:30 a.m.
School begins at 8:30 a.m.
School ends at 3:00 p.m.
Busriders leaving at 2:50.
NO AFTERSCHOOL THIS FALL



The School Bus will run a much shorter route this year, staying primarily in the Tucker Area—last year we spent lots of money on gas and mileage but never could break even on the bus routes. Also, as the traffic builds up, it is harder and harder to maneuver around the suburbs—trying to turn left in the bus is almost impossible. If you have a special circumstance, let me know and we'll work something out.

School Supplies—Don't spend too much!

Many parents worry that they need to spend money in great quantities to provide their kids with the school tools they need to succeed. Every year, we put out lists and often we get donations of some of that stuff from other non-profits who got overloaded. This year, the kids don't need scissors and they don't need notebook paper or pencils. That leaves some simple stuff—rulers

with metric and American measurements, pink and grey erasers, a ream of copy paper, and most important a good quality lunchbox and reusable water bottle. I always beg parents to buy shopping bag-style book satchels so they can fit everything in, but generally kids want the brand new, pocket-filled backpack. This year, make sure the backpack can hold the lunchbox and other school books, etc. Don't ask your child to carry both a backpack and a lunchbox and a water bottle out each day—spend a minute showing your kids how to pack the backpack so that they have a routine that will help them be successful. We have new planners and a new Friday folder set up to help everyone stay in touch.

Also, something that will save a lot of grief is buying a packet of RED envelopes. This way when you send money for anything, it goes into the red envelope and the kids get into a routine of handing me the red envelopes, rather than fishing around in their humongous book bags for the last few quarters. Third grade and up kids could use a simple calculator and I saw them for \$1 at Wal-mart yesterday. If you are shopping for shoes, please get a pair of sneakers with good sturdy soles—no flip-flops or backless shoes, due to insurance. No high-heeled sandals, due to the stairs. Kids at Kingfisher can dress comfortably. We are outside a part of every day, so super fancy dresses or \$100 shoes can get dirty pretty easily. Back to school shopping should include the things your child will need to be triumphant with doing homework—a good actual dictionary, a good desk lamp, decent paper and writing utensils—all of those things help when doing a writing assignment. I find a lot of kids like to have a timer for homework and they try to “beat the timer” in getting the work completed.

School supplies shopping is fun but it shouldn't “break the bank”. I bought everything on the elementary list last week at Dollar General for about \$11.00. The white erasers seem to only be at Staples this year and Staples has a GREAT sale on composition books.



