

## **Looking Ahead: Early Release Collaboration Wednesdays for Elementary Schools**

The Francis Howell School District will begin implementing Early Release Collaboration Wednesdays next school year at all elementary schools in the District. On most Wednesdays throughout the school year, students will be released approximately one hour early so that teachers can plan and collaborate together. This is our current practice at the middle and high schools, and elementary schools will move to the Early Release Collaboration Wednesday model beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

While our teams are still working out specific release times and other logistics, we have assembled some information to help families begin to prepare for this change. Please see the Early Release Wednesday FAQ below.

### **ACTION REQUIRED**

The District plans to offer childcare via its Vacation Station program for families who need care on Early Release Wednesdays. We are asking parents/guardians of elementary students to complete [this survey](#) by March 19, 2021, to help the District understand your childcare needs for Early Release Collaboration Wednesdays next school year.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why is the District moving to Early Release Collaboration Wednesdays at the elementary level now?**

To help address a multi-year budget deficit, the Francis Howell Board of Education recently approved a staffing plan that eliminates the Recess Paraprofessional position at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. This change necessitates the implementation of Early Release Wednesdays for all elementary schools in the District beginning next school year. The new system will result in annual savings of approximately \$500,000, while offering teachers time to plan and collaborate together.

### **Who will supervise students during recess next year?**

Classroom teachers and other school personnel will supervise students during recess.

### **What time will schools be dismissed?**

Elementary students will be dismissed approximately one hour early on Early Release Wednesdays. The exact dismissal times will be determined in the coming weeks.

### **When will a calendar be released?**

A new calendar with early release dates will be released this spring. Families can plan for approximately 28 early release days for the 2021-2022 school year; the elementary dates will align with the secondary early release dates already on the calendar.

**Will after care be provided?**

Families will have the option of registering their child for Vacation Station for just early release Wednesdays, if needed.

**What much will after care cost?**

The cost associated with childcare on Early Release Wednesdays has not been determined, but will be sent out soon to families needing this option. The cost will be in-line with our current Vacation Station fees.

**If my child goes to after care, how will they get home?**

Unfortunately, the District cannot provide bus transportation for after care. Parents would need to pick up their children from Vacation Station.