

Newberry Elementary School
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Principal, Mrs. Vicki McAlhany



Dear Newberry Elementary Students and Families,

Greetings! On behalf of the Newberry Elementary faculty and staff, I want to welcome you to the 2021-2022 school year! A new school year is always an exciting time to reconnect with friends and welcome new friends. At Newberry Elementary, we are delighted to welcome those students and families who are new to our school community. I hope that you and your family have enjoyed a well deserved summer break that included rest, relaxation, and joy!

Please join me in welcoming the following teachers and staff to our panther family:

- Ms. Tiffany Poster, Teacher of Blended Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten**
- Ms. Kathy Dukes, Teacher of Grade 1 (*long term substitute*)**
- Ms. Mackenzie Grawcock, Teacher of Grade 1**
- Ms. Alicia Espriella, Teacher of Grade 3**
- Ms. Brittnie Sanderson, Teacher of Inclusion**
- Ms. Jenna Dampier, Teacher of Grade 2 (*long term substitute*)**
- Ms. Patricia Phillips, Teacher of Media**
- Deputy Jack Huffman, ASO School Resource Deputy**
- Ms. Christina Vinsion, Classroom Aide within our Blended Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten**

At this time, I am excited to share that we are inviting our families back into the building as we have done prior to the pandemic. Parents will be able to walk their child(ren) to class, volunteer on campus, and eat lunch with their child(ren). I am especially delighted in this because I strongly believe that family and community engagement within our school is an essential part of the growth and achievement of our students. We will continue to teach and reinforce regular hand washing or the use of hand sanitizer if (hand washing is not possible). Also, wearing of face coverings will be ***optional*** for students, teachers, and staff unless otherwise directed by the School Board.

Newberry Elementary remains committed to the academic success of all students. Our dedicated teachers will continue to provide high quality instruction in a supportive classroom environment. Beginning this school year, students in grades Kindergarten through 2nd will be learning a new set of Florida Standards in English Language Arts called the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking or the B.E.S.T Standards. The B.E.S.T. standards are built on the following principles:

- English Language Arts is not a discrete set of skills, but a **rich discipline** with meaningful **significant content**
- The standards are **clear** and **concise** so they are easily understood
- The **texts** students read are **meaningful** and thought-provoking
- Standards should **not stand alone** as a separate focus for instruction, but should be **combined purposefully**

Our students in Grades 3 and 4 will transition from the Florida Standards to the B.E.S.T Standards beginning the 2022-2023 school year. Our district has adopted a new English Language Arts curriculum, Benchmark Advance K-5, that aligns to the Florida B.E.S.T Standards. Our teachers across grade levels will receive ongoing support and professional development regarding standard implementation throughout this year and next.

Safety of our students, teachers, staff, and campus remains our top priority. Our new safety protocol beginning the 2021-2022 school year will be the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) developed by the I LOVE U Guys Foundation (<https://iloveuguys.org>). Therefore, we will no longer be using the A.L.I.C.E. protocol as we have done historically. Deputies from Alachua County Sheriff's Office will be providing training to our faculty and staff during pre-planning. The foundation provides elementary student friendly teaching materials including literature, colorful visuals, videos, and a clear common language. Although this change is new for our students, I am confident that they will quickly become knowledgeable, as they have shown multiple times that they understand the most important job they have in any safety situation is that they listen to their teacher and follow directions right away. Our panther students make us so proud!

Newberry Elementary is truly a wonderful school! I am overjoyed to begin my third year serving among some of the most committed, relational, genuine, and creative professionals! It is my hope that through communication, collaboration, and a strong partnership with families, Newberry Elementary will continue to be a school of academic excellence for all of our students. We have so much to be proud of as a school and community. I look forward to a wonderful year ahead! Go Panthers!

Your Proud Panther Principal,
Vicki McAlhany