

# HURRICANE WATCH



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF FIRST BAPTIST SCHOOL

September 2024

Monthly Newsletter



## WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

- Head of School Update
- September Calendar
- School Happenings
- PTO Updates
- Advancement
- Admissions
- High School Counseling

## Head of School Update

*By Dr. Justin Mitchell*

Greetings, First Baptist Community!

As we embrace the beginning of a new school year, I am reminded of the words from Proverbs 16:3, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans." This verse resonates deeply with our mission here at First Baptist School: "Academic Excellence with a Christian Perspective." It's a reminder that when we

*Continued on Page 2...*

place our trust in God and seek His guidance, He will lead us on the path to success both academically and spiritually.

This year is particularly special as we celebrate our 75th Anniversary of serving the Charleston community. For 75 years, First Baptist School has been a beacon of Christian education, shaping the minds and hearts of countless students. As we look back with gratitude, we also look forward with excitement, knowing that God's hand has been upon our school for generations and will continue to guide us into the future.

We have had an exceptional start to the school year! With 570 students filling our halls, we have reached a 25-year high in enrollment. This milestone is not only a testament to the dedication and commitment of our faculty, staff, and families but also a reflection of God's blessings on our school community.

To accommodate our growing student body, we have embarked on a significant construction project at our James Island campus. Six new classrooms are being built to alleviate space limitations, ensuring that our students continue to learn in an environment that fosters both academic and spiritual growth. These new spaces will allow us to better serve our students, providing them with the room they need to thrive.

In addition to expanding our facilities, we are excited to announce that we have continued to increase our course offerings. Middle school students now have access to a broader selection of electives, allowing them to explore their interests and talents. For our high school students, we have added more dual credit courses, providing them with the opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school. These enhancements are in line with our commitment to providing "Academic Excellence with a Christian Perspective," equipping our students with the tools they need to succeed in their academic pursuits and beyond.

Our Hurricane Athletic department celebrates the accomplishments of James Tyler who opened the Cross Country season with a first-place finish at the Pinewood Invitational. James set a school record as the first student to run a 5K in less than 15 minutes. Both our girls' and boys' teams are set for continued success. Our girls' golf team is preparing for region matches, and the cheer team is gearing up for fall competitions. While football faced a challenging start, the team is focused on a strong regional comeback. Middle School football is back at FBS, building our future talent. The tennis team is ready to compete after early weather delays, and several swimmers have already met state qualifying times. Volleyball is progressing through a tough early schedule, with region play ahead, and our middle school teams are starting their season with record participation. We look forward to seeing you at Homecoming on October 4th and the annual Hurricane 5K on October 5th!

As we move forward into this school year, I encourage each of you to join us in prayer for our students, faculty, and staff. Let us commit all that we do to the Lord, trusting that He will guide our steps and establish our plans according to His will.

Thank you for being a vital part of the First Baptist School community. I look forward to all that God has in store for us this year.

We invite you to stay up-to-date with current events by following First Baptist School's social media and our school webpage. #WeAreFB

Be blessed,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



# CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2024

2	Labor Day - No School	
9	PTO Meeting (DT Fellowship Hall)	8:30 am
16	Prof. Development - No School	
18	Charleston Wrap Fundraiser Kick-Off	
27	PTO Dress Down Day	



[View Athletic Calendar](#)



# IN THE KNOW

## school happenings



### Lower School Night

K-6th grade families are invited to Lower School Night on Friday, October 18th beginning at 5:30 pm before the FBS home game against Clear Dot Charter! There will be jump castles, Kona ice, free face painting, and more!

### Football Buddies

Football Buddies is making a return to FBS! For those interested, 1-4 graders will be paired up with a varsity football player. It's a fun time of fellowship and a great way to bridge our two campuses. If interested, please fill out [this form](#).



### Legacy Breakfast

Any current FBS family that is alumni and their child(ren) is invited to a breakfast on September 17th at 7am in the Fellowship Hall. If you are an alum, but did not receive the invitation to RSVP, please reach out to Dr. Leonard Kupersmith at [kupersmith@fbschool.org](mailto:kupersmith@fbschool.org).

## FIRST BAPTIST SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow along with our daily happenings on our social media pages! Below are the official school social media pages.

### SCHOOL



### FINE ARTS



### ATHLETICS



WANT TO SHARE YOUR PHOTOS WITH US? BE SURE TO TAG US AND USE OUR SCHOOL HASHTAG!

#WeAreFB



**ATHLETICS**

# HURRICANES



## **Join the Hurricane Association!**

The Hurricane Association promotes, encourages, and enhances the ideals of sportsmanship and competitive spirit in First Baptist School's athletic programs. Each member or supporter of the Hurricane Association sustains every athletic program and athletic activity through financial donations and voluntarism, and our major goals are as follows:

1. To provide items that will benefit multiple athletic programs or a large number of student athletes.
2. To assist in facilitating and funding athletic facility improvements for athletes, parents, visitors, and the school community.
3. To provide awards and recognition to student athletes.

Every fundraiser and action of the Hurricane Association directly benefits student athletes by enabling them to have superior athletic experiences, top-notch athletic facilities, and athletic equipment and gear. We invite anyone who is interested in joining the Hurricane Association to complete a membership request form and to contact the Hurricane Association at [hurricaneassociation@fbschool.org](mailto:hurricaneassociation@fbschool.org).



**Grab your Tailgate Spot for the 2024 season here!**

Membership includes two cards for the family to share, which allows members free admission into home games for all JV and Varsity sporting events. This is excluding any tournaments, B-team sporting events, Lower School sporting events and all Post Season events.

## **Membership Form**



FBS FRIENDS & FAMILY

# OYSTER *Roast*

Save the date for the FBS Friends & Family Oyster Roast at The Island House on Johns Island!

**October 20, 2024**

Ticket information coming soon!



# Parent Teacher Organization



Let's make this the *best* year ever.

On behalf of the PTO, I wanted to take a moment and welcome the new families to First Baptist School, and welcome back all of the returning families!

For those who may not know or need a refresher, the FBS Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) uses its resources (both manpower and monetary) to support the efforts of the faculty and staff, and to provide learning and enrichment opportunities for our children.

Due to the success of the PTO over the past several years, during the 2023-2024 school year, we were able to provide funding for supplemental reading and educational materials, School Pass Emergency Attendance software, professional development meals for the faculty and staff, and more!

I am very excited to experience all that the 2024-2025 school year has in store.

**New this year:** PTO Membership and Dress Down Day payments are now all electronic! Please utilize [this link](#) to complete your PTO membership information and payment.

A few quick items for your to-do list:

- The **first PTO Meeting** of the school year is scheduled for Monday, September 9th at 8:30 a.m. in the Downtown Campus Fellowship Hall! Please plan to attend.
- The **Charleston Wrap fundraiser** is set to kick-off on September 18th! Be on the lookout for more information soon.
- The **first Dress Down Day** of the school year is scheduled for Friday, September 27th.

Looking forward to a wonderful year!

*Lindsay Loewer*

PTO President

## Committee Chairs

This year, we will have some new Committees this year, and are looking for Committee Chairs to lead each of the following initiatives:

- Charleston Wrap Fundraiser
- FBS Boosterthon Fun Run
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Field Days
- Used Uniform Sales

Please send a message to the [PTO e-mail box](#) if you are interested in Chairing one of these Committees.

# See Our Garden Grow

Dear First Baptist Families,

As some of you may or may not know, three years ago, we were lucky enough to launch a garden here at First Baptist. Mrs. Brooks was very influential in selecting the space and we were off to planning, mapping out the preliminary positioning of raised beds, all scientifically based on the amount of sunlight for each specific bed throughout the day. This garden was blessed by many prayers, many hands, and many hours of labor. It has brought abundant JOY to all who get to care for it, harvest from it, and enjoy it throughout each fruitful season.

In this brief, but flourishing time, so many memories have been made with so many little hands in the dirt since day one of filling the beds. This past summer, time was spent creating more peaceful, purposeful options for students when they visit the garden. Fairy gardens, tic-tac toe tree stumps, hopping stones and more were added to the garden to enhance the senses and engagement of children, offering additional ways to be creatively driven in this peaceful, outdoor space.

While the ideas will continue to evolve to help beautify our precious garden, we would love your help along the way. If you would like to get more involved with the garden, please let your child's homeroom teacher know (K3, K4, K5, and 1st graders).. An amazon wish list has been created, as well as a Lowes "wish cart". Recycled supplies are always welcomed, too. Thank you in advance for supporting and nurturing the joyful learning that continues to take place in our garden.

Elliot Locklear  
1st Grade Teacher



## How you can help!

[Amazon Wish List](#)

[Lowes Wish List](#)

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow."

1 Corinthians 3

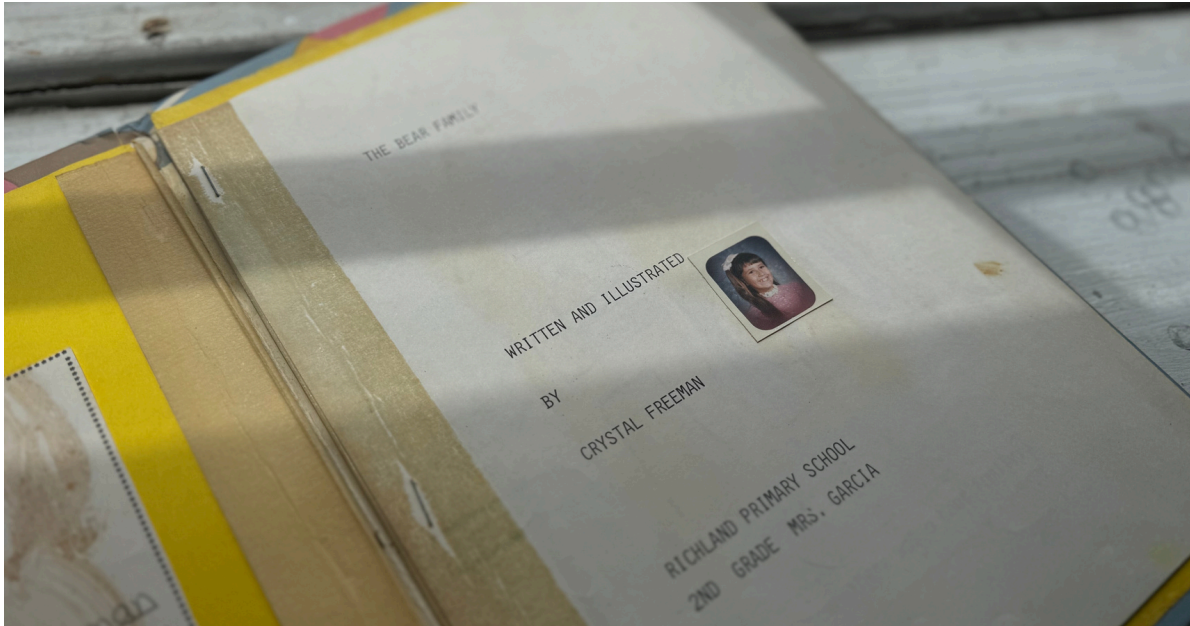




# The Teacher Who Made Me a Writer

AND THE YEAR THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

by Crystal Hawkins, Lower School Spanish



School was not on the top of my parents' priority list when I was young. Actually, neither was I. My parents loved me, sure. I can't quite remember it now, but I knew it then. Unfortunately, my parents were heroin addicts and alcoholics.

I attended kindergarten only when I spent the night with my cousins and rode the bus to school with them. I attended first grade only when I could wake my dad up from his stupor and convince him to walk me to school. Needless to say, by the time I got to second grade, I could not read or write like my classmates. Written words were a mystery to me, and I wondered if I was dumb because I could not understand them. Shortly after second grade began, my dad got arrested for writing fraudulent checks and was incarcerated for a year. My mom was nowhere to be found, so I went to live with my grandparents.

Mrs. Garcia, my second grade teacher, wasted no time. She was convinced that I was not in actuality dumb, but that I had never been given the opportunity to learn. She collaborated with my grandma, and together they came up with a plan.

At the time, I wasn't very appreciative of the plan. Each day when I got home from school, I had extra work to do. My grandma bought a desktop chalkboard. I spent my after school hours tediously practicing writing on the chalkboard until my hand hurt. When I asked if I could be done, my grandma would tell me to erase it and start again.

My grandma also bought a subscription to the Weekly Readers

Club and Highlights Magazine. Each week, I received a new book in the mail. Each month, I received a new magazine in the mail. I was pouring over the new books and magazines without much coercion because of how much fun it was to receive them in the mail. At first, I could not read them on my own. By the end of the year, because of tutoring help from my grandma and Mrs. Garcia, I was reading independently.

At the end of the year, Mrs. Garcia assigned a book making project. Interestingly enough, I wrote a story called The Bear Family that was about a baby bear whose parents were too busy setting up a picnic to notice her crawling into a dangerous river. It was a passer-by-bear who had to pull the drowning baby out of the river to save her. No doubt, this was symbolism for what was happening in my own life before I understood symbolism. Regardless, I was so proud to write and read my own story. Mrs. Garcia had officially made me an author.

My second grade year changed the course of my future. Without the extra help, love, and attention, I would have continued my education assuming I was dumb. Instead, I spent the rest of my education excelling in school and was even able to earn academic scholarships for college.

I will forever be indebted to my grandma and Mrs. Garcia. They gave me the tools I needed to succeed. Mrs. Garcia not only inspired me to be a teacher (another post for another time), but she made me an author. Without The Bear Family, there would be no When the Secret Keepers are Gone. My heart is forever bound to hers.

# College Counseling

SHANNON ROY  
COLLEGE COUNSELOR

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

The 2024-2025 school year is already underway, and I hope the transition back to school has been smooth for everyone. I'm sure the summer flew by, and like many of you, I'm excited to dive into the new academic year. To those of you who are new to FBS School, welcome! We are thrilled to have you join our community.

I'd like to take a moment to explain my role here at FBS JI Campus. As the college counselor, I work with ALL students from 9th through 12th grade. Typically, in the fall semester, my focus is on seniors and freshmen. I ensure that seniors are well-prepared for their college applications, while freshmen get to know me and learn about the importance of their high school transcript and life beyond high school.

After Christmas break, my attention shifts to juniors and sophomores. For juniors, we begin the preparation process for life after high school and you as a parent/guardian are invited and encouraged to be part of that process, while sophomores explore their purpose and potential careers through the YouScience aptitude assessment.

My goal is for every student in our building to meet with me at least once a year. If you, as a parent or caregiver, have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me via phone or email. Please also remember to regularly check the school calendar for important dates and events throughout the year. Staying informed will help ensure that students are well-prepared and able to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them.

Looking forward to a great year together!

Warm regards,



College Counselor  
First Baptist High School

# ADVANCEMENT

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## UPDATES

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Dr. Leonard Kupersmith  
Director of Advancement

We will be distributing an electronic edition of the 2023-24 FBS Annual Report in the next couple of weeks. The document recounts the financial condition of the school at the end of our fiscal year, on May 31, 2024. It highlights the abundance of human accomplishments of students and employees that the revenue streams, principally tuition, underwrite. It also reports the philanthropic activity contributing to the ability of the school to make its Mission a reality.

Annual Giving plugs the gap between the coverage of net tuition income and the cost of operating the school. FBS has worked diligently on raising teacher salaries. An analysis of 25 salaries of teachers who have served FBS from 2019-2024 reveals that those salaries rose 22% over the last three years. Intentions are good. However, the reality is that the public sector, which relies on taxation, is ramping up salaries far in excess of the generous raises that we have conferred. My justification for

becoming more aggressive with teacher salaries is a fairness principle, not the threat of losing teachers to the state-funded competition. With rare exceptions, FBS doesn't lose teachers to the CCSD or the other non-public schools. Our teachers are committed to our faith-based experience and to the culture of belonging that FBS promotes.

Once the Annual Report is out, we will focus on maximizing gifts to the Annual Fund. The benchmark for annual giving as a percentage of income among non-public schools is 4%; our annual giving last year came to \$40,400, or a tad under .5% of our income. Our goal for 24-25 is \$100,000, or about 1.3% of our projected income. We have invested in adding teachers to reduce class size and enrich curricular offerings. I would note that our tuition is 40% of that of Ashley Hall and Porter-Gaud, both K-12 day schools with whom we maintain a collegial bond. Many of our seniors graduate with enough credits through our partnership with Trident Technical College that they

# ADVANCEMENT

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## UPDATES

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enter college as sophomores or beyond, saving their families a healthy five-figure sum.

The collateral focus this year of my office is energizing our alumni base. We are hosting a breakfast on September 17 for alumni and their children who currently attend FBS. We will embark on several other conventional events to build solidarity among the generations of our alumni: the establishment of an alumni board with representations across the decades and other events to attract alumni participation and pride.

Please place the environment that reinforces your values and instills the necessary knowledge and skills for young people to thrive in higher education and their vocations at or near the apex of your charitable priorities.



# Admissions Updates



Welcome back! As we all settle in for the 2024-2025 school year, the Admissions Office is planning for the 2025-2026 school year. If you have a sibling of a current student that would like to apply for the upcoming school year, and have not yet completed an **INQUIRY FORM**, please take a moment to do so. This information is helpful for planning purposes. As always, feel free to contact us at the respective campuses.

## **Sally Casias**

Lower and Middle School Campus

[casiass@fbschool.org](mailto:casiass@fbschool.org)

843-722-6646, extension 1206

## **Beth Switzer**

High School Campus

[switzerb@fbschool.org](mailto:switzerb@fbschool.org)

843-410-1606, extension 1107



# Around Campus



FIRST BAPTIST SCHOOL

# RESOURCES



FACTS  
LOGIN



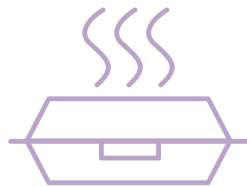
STUDENT  
HANDBOOK

## PTO

PARENT TEACHER  
ORGANIZATION(PTO)



SMART TUITION  
LOGIN



SCHOOLHOUSE  
FARE LUNCH



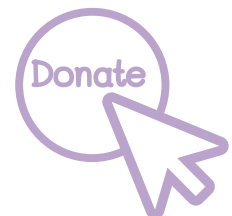
DRESS CODE



FACULTY/STAFF  
DIRECTORY



ACADEMIC  
CALENDAR



ONLINE  
GIVING

These resources can always be found on the [Resources](#) page of our website.