



# BBK Bulletin

## Editor's Note

Hello Keller Families!

Welcome to the BBK Bulletin! We are thrilled to be sharing our exciting news of being the first Elementary Chapter of Best Buddies in the nation. Best Buddies International has agreed to form a partnership with Franklin Public Schools to pilot curriculum and timelines while keeping in mind the developmental level of typical elementary students.

The Best Buddies mission is to establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Franklin Public Schools was chosen due to the tremendous parent backing and outpouring of support in bringing awareness to the mission of social inclusion within the community as a whole.

For the rest of the 2014-2015 school year, FPS will be sending out a newsletter outlining next steps and giving parents important information regarding how to be a part of this sensational new endeavor.

In our next issue, we will be putting the spotlight on one of our Faculty Advisors. Thanks for reading and if you choose not to read, thanks for recycling!

Stephanie L. Geddes  
IEP Coordinator



## Definitions

According to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), an individual is considered to have intellectual disabilities based on the following three criteria: intellectual functioning level (IQ) is below 70-75; significant limitations exist in two or more adaptive skills areas, such as communication, self-care, home living, social skills, leisure, health and safety, self-direction, functional academics (reading, writing, basic math), community participation and employment; and the condition is present from childhood.

**Intellectual disabilities** can be caused by any condition that impairs development of the brain before birth, during birth, or during the childhood years. Several hundred causes have been discovered, but in about one-third of the people affected, the cause remains unknown. The three major known causes of intellectual disabilities are Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, and fragile X.

**Developmental Disabilities** are severe disabilities attributable to cognitive and/or physical impairments which appear before the age of 22 and are likely to be lifelong. They result in substantial limitations in three or more of the following areas: self-care, comprehension and language skills, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, economic self-sufficiency, and ability to function independently without coordinated services.

## SPOTLIGHT ON:

### How it came to be: The History of the First Elementary Chapter of Best Buddies

The Franklin Public Schools have been active participants in Best Buddies and have had a chapter at Franklin High School since 1997 and at the middle school level since 2004. FPS takes an active role in ensuring all of our students are integral members of their school community.

In the spring of 2014, a delegation of Franklin personnel traveled to Boston to speak with Senator Karen Spilka regarding the possibility of creating a Best Buddies chapter at the Helen Keller Elementary School (Keller). Franklin Public School's STRIVE Program, a district wide program for students who contend with significant cognitive and communication disabilities, is woven into the fabric of the Keller community and a Best Buddies chapter will assist in Franklin's endeavors to minimize the impact disability can have on students and maximize the opportunities for children with disabilities. In addition, it will continue to foster a school culture grounded in respect and tolerance for each unique individual.

A partnership has been created between Best Buddies International and Franklin Public Schools. The determination was made to begin our efforts with the 2014-2015 third and fourth graders, with plans to commence training at the end of this school year and into the 2015-2016 school year.

### A few requirements for Participants

As a Best Buddies participant:

- I understand that if I am matched in a one-to-one friendship, the commitment includes meeting together once a month and making weekly contact during the school year.
- I understand that I will attend chapter activities, assemblies, and Best Buddies International events and that my conduct should always promote the mission of Best Buddies.

## Trivia

1. True or False: Best Buddies International is available at the middle school, high school, and college level.
2. Best Buddies was created in what year?
  - a. 1997
  - b. 1989
  - c. 1899
  - d. 2001
3. What famous athlete participates in a Flag Football Challenge?
  - a. David Ortiz
  - b. Bobby Orr
  - c. Tom Brady
  - d. Larry Byrd

\*Answers can be found at the bottom of the page.