



September 6, 2019

Dear Fairview families:

It is with great enthusiasm that we announce our official launch of becoming a Place-Based school! As many of you are already aware, there was a great deal of media attention last year that shared the [news](#) that Fairview would incrementally become a Place-Based school starting this school year. In considering our location ([proximity to Fairview Park, Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary, the Audubon Society, etc.](#)), our possession of two [bee hives](#), and the arrival of our [chickens](#), district and building leaders agreed that making Fairview a Place-Based school would greatly benefit our students. 4th and 5th grades are piloting the change this school year, and the plan is to bring on other grade levels with each progressing school year.

You may be wondering: What is Place-Based Education? According to the [Teton Science School](#) (Jackson, WY), “Place-Based Education is an approach that connects learning and communities with the primary goals of increasing student engagement, boosting academic outcomes, impacting communities and promoting understanding of the world around us.” Simply put, our teachers are going to use the space around us as our context for teaching and learning. Instead of 1st graders only reading about aquatic life, for example, students may travel to the pond in the middle of Fairview Park to make observations and compare noticings. Instead of 4th graders calculating the area of a rectangle, they may measure the length and width of the prairie area behind our school to determine its area. The possibilities are endless, and our teachers are working tirelessly to plan learning units that will allow them to integrate subject matter while using our location to help engage and personalize learning for our children. In fact, all of our teachers’ professional development endeavors this year will focus on them growing as Place-Based teachers. All of them will receive training throughout the year from our Teton Science School colleagues!

One of the most critical steps in being a Place-Based school means that our teachers are planning many learning activities to take place outside. As a result, we need your help in making sure that your child is prepared at any moment to be a learner outside of the classroom. For this, our mantra is: The Fairview Big 3--

tennis shoes, appropriate outerwear, and water bottle. Ensuring that your child has the Big 3 every day will guarantee that he or she is ready to be a learner in all settings. Although my expectation is that teachers communicate the occurrence of outside excursions to families before they happen, some experiences, like receiving [record-breaking snowfall](#), happen with little notice and require us to take advantage of those teachable moments! Adhering to the Big 3 will ensure that your child is ready to learn regardless of the weather elements.

It is our hope that the change to Place-Based will positively impact current and future Fairview Falcons. Undoubtedly, your child will come home and mention some of the different places they may have visited on a particular day. To help families better understand which location(s) their child is referring to, a descriptive list of “FVE Places” follows this letter and will be included on our [school’s homepage](#). These places lend themselves to a plethora of activities and experiences, and your child’s teacher will communicate the specific learning happenings that took place on a regular basis. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Thank you for taking this journey with us! Fairview has *always* had one of the [most supportive groups of families in Columbia](#). We would not be in this position without your unwavering encouragement, trust, and willingness to partner alongside us in everything that we do. Truly: THANK YOU. You help to make Fairview our favorite place!

Fairview Elementary School Staff