



Franklin Public Schools

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Reopening of Schools 2020-2021

Status Update
November 6, 2020

Health Metrics -- Past Three Weeks of Data

	Franklin				Norfolk County				MA			
Report Date DPH	Avg Daily Cases per 100,000	Trend	% +	Trend	Avg Daily Cases per 100,000	Trend	% +	Trend	Avg Daily Cases per 100,000	Trend	% +	Trend
10/22	7.2	Higher	1.54	Higher	6.51	Higher	1.05	No change	9.2	Higher	1.24	Higher
10/29	5.7	Lower	1.45	No change	7.3	Higher	1.20	Higher	11.8	Higher	1.55	Higher
11/5	TBD											

Teaching and Learning

- Transfer Requests.** As case numbers increase across the state and nation, we have seen some requests from families to go to the Virtual Learning Academy and out of the hybrid model in grades K-5. We have asked families to commit through the first trimester (12/12/2020). Exceptions may be made for extenuating circumstances (medical).
 - Planned action: remind families of transfer request process and deadline (11/13/2020). Use information to plan next steps.
 - Implications: large swings from hybrid to VLA or vice versa will be hard for us to adjust to given current class sections and staffing. See class size numbers in packet. While we have a few seats in each, we are reluctant to make changes now when we do not necessarily know all of the requests to come.
- Kindergarten and Grade 1.** Requests from numerous families for the district to develop a plan to bring youngest learners into school full-time.
 - Action taken: Discussion with elementary principals during administrative meeting (October 28, 2020).
 - Implications: The ability to bring students into school full time and in person varies widely across all 6 elementary schools. As identified in the feasibility study, we can accommodate students at 3 feet of distance in all schools. At 6 feet of distance, it is not possible to bring students back full and in person in all six schools. There are not

enough alternative spaces for us to pursue, in some schools. Additionally, we are concerned about having enough staffing to accommodate additional students.

Many of the districts to which we are compared (Holliston, Medway) have students full and in person at the youngest grades and have only one school per grade span. We are still exploring models from other schools who are larger and accomplishing this.

Some districts are pursuing using 3 foot distance requirements. Altering the current standard would mean an increase in the identification of close contacts and individuals in the school setting needing to quarantine.

For Franklin we are now exploring the implications of a half-days for Kindergarten and grade 1. The 2 biggest implications that we see are the need for re-scheduling (particularly specials) and transportation.

Digital Learning/Technology

1. Select teacher laptops need to be replaced in order to accommodate processing speed required for video conferencing.
 - a. Action taken: ~300 laptops ordered. Due date: To be distributed over the next few weeks.
2. We anticipate a greater need for bandwidth with video conferencing at the high school in a hybrid setting.
 - a. Action taken: Initiated process to upgrade bandwidth from 2 GB to 10 GB. Due date: This is in the provisioning stage of the project which will be followed by a site survey.

Whole Child Supports

Personnel

1. **Staffing.** Having enough staff to supervise students in the hybrid setting is, perhaps, our top concern. We do not have enough substitute teachers, activity monitors, Educational Support Professionals who want to work in the in person, physical setting. We have a few vacancies at the high school with sections being covered by other teachers (this happens every year but is more of a concern this year). We have been able to recruit some people to work remotely and assist the Virtual Learning Academy students.
 - a. Actions taken: We continue to try to recruit individuals to work in the schools. We have increased the rate of pay for substitute teachers. We are allowing staff who may be quarantining to work from home, if at all possible. We are looking to relocate and combine class sections into larger spaces (with distancing) with a smaller number of supervisors in the event of teacher absence.
 - b. Implications: This will be an ongoing concern. We are not alone - most districts are concerned about having enough staff. As cases increase and more individuals need to quarantine, we are worried we may need to pivot to remote learning (like Milton) if we are unable to appropriately supervise students.

2. **Staff Stress and Well-being.** The demands on educators and support staff are greater today than ever before. Many are reporting high levels of stress and burnout. This will be an ongoing issue.
 - a. Actions taken: Prioritizing planning time during professional development, while also providing educators with choice about new learning opportunities (especially Digital Learning). Additional planning time added to Wednesdays at middle school. Would like to expand this to high school in the coming weeks.
 - b. Implications: We have received several positive emails about how the PD time was structured on November 3, 2020.

Health and Safety

1. **Behavior/Halloween Party.** It was painful to close the HS to hybrid and move back to remote learning due to a party where health and safety practices were not followed. It also has been very difficult to tell students that their beloved activities are off-limits.
 - a. Actions taken: We quickly developed a process and mobilized efforts to have students “cleared” to play.
 - b. Implications: The mobilization of a testing provider serves as a pilot for the district/town on using COVID testing as a screening tool.
2. **Responding to Governor Baker’s Latest Orders.** Governor Baker’s latest executive order exempts schools from gather size limits, as has always been the case. The change to the mask wearing requirement has an implication for public schools: we may now require medical documentation for mask wearing exemptions. Mask breaks will continue to occur, outside wherever possible.
3. **COVID Communications.** We continue to communicate about COVID-positive cases within the school community which they have occurred.
 - a. Actions taken: Reached out to other districts to understand more about their communication methods, which vary. Registered for a legal webinar on staff and student privacy during COVID.
 - b. Implications: Striving to communicate accurate and informative information in order to assist the school community in keeping safe. Need to balance that with privacy/confidentiality.

Recently Resolved Issues

New Chromebooks	Delivered and distributed	Week of 10/26/2020
