



Franklin Public Schools

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Reopening of Schools 2020-2021

Status Update
November 20, 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
11/5	4.6	Lower	1.40%	Lower	9.7	Higher	1.43%	Higher	15.3	Higher	1.8%4	Higher
11/12	13.3	Higher	2.64%	Higher	13.9	Higher	1.84%	Higher	20.7	Higher	2.29%	Higher
11/19	22.3	Higher	4.16%	Higher	18.2	Higher	2.26%	Higher	29.4	Higher	3.05%	Higher

Past Two Weeks of Cases in Franklin Public Schools

Positive Cases Week of November 9, 2020	Number of Students in Quarantine	Number of Staff in Quarantine due to self or children	Positive Cases Cumulative FPS (9/16/2020 to 11/13/2020)	Active Positive Cases Town of Franklin (11/10/2020)
9 Individuals	52	30	19	44

Positive Cases Week of November 16, 2020	Number of Students in Quarantine	Number of Staff in Quarantine due to self or children	Positive Cases Cumulative FPS (9/16/2020 to 11/18/2020)	Current Active Positive Cases Town of Franklin (11/18/2020)
6 Individuals	84	30	25	104

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's reported numbers will be lower as they report cases based on the presence of the individual in the school setting in the last seven days. Due to our remote and hybrid model as well as the pattern of cases, many individuals who test positive have already been in quarantine and may not have been present in school in the past seven days.

Open Questions

1. Will we be able to maintain enough staff in our schools to supervise in person learning as case counts climb and more staff members need to quarantine due to personal situations or school-related cases?
2. How can the district support staff to sustain the demands of teaching and learning in the hybrid and remote environments?

Teaching and Learning

1. **Specialists and Grading at Elementary Level.** The hybrid schedule is creating some challenges for our specialists in appropriately assessing our students towards skill development on the report card, due mid December. This is because the schedule does not allow the specialist teachers to see each student in person.
 - a. Actions taken: Students will be graded for participation in trimester 1. This grade will be more substantive than the Pass/No Pass system from the spring of 2020. This grade will account for attendance, participation, and effort towards skill development. It will not include a report on specific skills, as the educators do not feel that they are able to appropriately assess skills for each and every student. Other forms of feedback to students is expected.
2. **Extension of Quarter 1 at FHS.** Quarter 1 at Franklin High School was extended from November 19, 2020 to November 30, 2020 in recognition of the difficulties in assessing students in the remote setting. By extending the quarter, each cohort of students will be able to meet their teachers in person and use the time to make up any missed work. This has caused some concern among seniors applying to college, particularly early action.
 - a. Actions taken: FHS administrators and the HS guidance department are working with individual students/families and colleges to explain the situation and communicate a “snapshot” of grades at the point in time of the students’ application.

Digital Learning/Technology

1. **Bandwidth.** As noted in the 11/6/2020 status update, we anticipate a greater need for bandwidth with video conferencing at the high school in a hybrid setting. 11/20/2020 update: we qualitatively monitored the functionality of the bandwidth during the first week of hybrid at Franklin High School, representing a time when we would have maximum simultaneous video demands on our system.

During the Reopening Monitoring Team meeting, users reported blanking of screens at times.

During building walkthroughs, Google Meet use was observed being used successfully during the school day.

During an 8:00 AM administrative meeting on 11/19/2020, some issues were experienced for multiple users with connectivity during Google Meet at the beginning of the meeting. Issue seemed to improve as the meeting went on.

No issues were reported at the high school.

 - 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.

- b. Some issues may be related to older laptops and Chromebooks being used by educators. Some educators are using multiple devices at the same time, which adds demands to the Internet.
 - c. Action planned: We will continue to monitor over the coming weeks as new laptops are issued.
- 2. **Digital Learning Integrationists.** Our DLIs continue to provide ongoing support to faculty and staff through coaching on the implementation of technology in curriculum and instruction. They are providing newsletters and “drop in” sessions. They are also supporting families through specific sessions dedicated to them.
 - a. Action taken: The Technology Integration Specialist position at Franklin High School has remained vacant and did not generate a pool of candidates that we wish to pursue. We are exploring creative opportunities to support FHS faculty and staff.

Whole Child Supports

- 1. **Supports and Resources.** Student support teams are meeting to discuss students’ SEL needs and are collaborative problem-solving to provide supports and resources to children and families. For in person learning, the “calm zones” are being adapted to meet health and safety guidelines. We are continuing the Weekend Backpack program K-8 and delivering meals to families who require this service.
- 2. **Disengaged Students.** After several weeks of school, new students are emerging who are disengaged from their learning. Team members (counselors, School Resource Officers, administrators, and teacher) are working together to augment services to re-engage students in their learning and provide support.

Personnel

- 1. **Staff Stress and Well-being.** Educators continue to report high levels of stress working in the in-person school environment. Reports of stress are climbing as a result of increasing case numbers, particularly heading into holiday season.
 - a. Actions taken: Reminders have been sent to both faculty/staff and families about travel expectations. Additionally, the District has reinforced the Governor’s message about safe holiday practices including limiting holiday gatherings to immediate family members.

Health and Safety

- 1. **Changing Guidance.** We are responding to changing guidance related to the definition of close contacts and the expected quarantine period. Although this is not happening consistently across MA communities, our local health department and public health nurse are advising us to use the latest CDC definition of close contact. New quarantine guidance from MA DPH has been issued (11/18/2020) and we are in discussions with the local health department and Town of Franklin about our approach going forward.
- 2. **Testing Programs.** Recently the DESE announced the 134 school districts approved to be part of the Abbott Labs Binax diagnostic testing program. We did not pursue this testing program after internal conversations with our health staff who expressed concerns, including about its accuracy (recently released data shows it is quite accurate, however). This testing program is

limited to symptomatic individuals and at the time of application (and now) we are not experiencing many situations where it would be applied. We have been actively pursuing testing options as screening tools.

Recent Issues and Actions

Issue	Action	Anticipated Timeframe	Status
Transfer requests between hybrid/VLA K-5 (11/6/2020)	Administrators to review during the week of 11/23/2020 and communicate decisions to families.	Week of 11/30/2020	In process
Kindergarten and Grade 1 possible scenarios for full and in-person learning	Administrative walkthroughs of school sites week of 11/16/2020 Consideration of factors - ongoing	Report scenarios to School Committee 12/8/2020	In process
New Teacher Laptops	Distribution of new laptops	Early December	In process
COVID Positive Case Communications	Attended legal webinar on privacy with COVID communications. Plan to continue with COVID communications as shared, out of privacy concerns.	11/19/2020	Resolved
New Chromebooks	Delivered and distributed	Week of 10/26/2020	Resolved