



# Franklin Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent  
355 East Central Street; Suite 3  
Franklin, Massachusetts 02038  
Phone: 508-553-4819

## Reopening of Schools 2020-2021

Status Update  
December 4, 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
11/12	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
11/27	23.8	Higher	3.95%	Higher	21	Higher	2.38%	No Change	34.9	Higher	3.32%	Higher
12/3	23.4	Lower	3.85%	Lower	23.0	Higher	2.79%	Higher	35.7	Lower	3.73%	Higher

### Past Two Weeks of Cases in Franklin Public Schools

Positive Cases Week of	Number of Students in Quarantine	Number of Staff in Quarantine due to self or children	Positive Cases Cumulative FPS	Active Positive Cases Town of Franklin
9 Individuals (week of 11/7)	52	30	19 (9/16-11/13)	44 (11/10)
6 Individuals (week of 11/14)	84	30	25 (9/16-11/18)	104 (11/18)
3 Individuals (week of 11/21)	70	5	28 (9/16-11/27)	96 (11/24)
17 Individuals (week of 11/28)	105	20	45 (9/16-12/3)	124 ( <a href="#">12/1</a> )

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 and do not report students who are fully remote. 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. **Snow Day Plans and Power Outages.** The District is engaging in plans to use remote learning when snow days would otherwise be called. The District has also been making contingency plans for situations where there may be widespread or sporadic power outages in town.
  - a. **Actions taken:** Communications are going out to faculty and staff and families about contingency planning for snow days/remote learning and power outages. Faculty and staff are planning asynchronous activities for individual students in the event that there are sporadic power outages in town.

### Digital Learning/Technology

1. **Remote Support Service.** The District is evaluating the Remote Support Service being provided to families and our remote staff. There have been a few concerns raised.
  - a. **Actions planned:** Identify whether or not additional clarification is needed to direct people appropriately to support services (remote or in-house tech support)
2. **Device Registration and Chromebook Insurance.** Only 25% of K-8 families have registered the new Chromebooks and/or opted for the insurance program.
  - a. **Actions taken:** A reminder to register devices was sent. The reminder emphasized the importance of registration. Students qualifying for free lunch were automatically enrolled in the insurance program as that may have been a barrier to their registration of the device. Deadline for registration/opting into insurance was extended to December 7, 2020.
3. **Digital Learning Support at FHS.** The technology integration specialist at Franklin High School has been vacant since the beginning of the school year. We shifted this position to recruit a HS Digital Learning Integrationist and advertised. The posting did not yield a strong candidate pool.
  - a. **Actions taken:** We have been thinking creatively about the strengths and interests of our current high school staff. We shifted a class section of a teacher (0.2 FTE) to a part-time teacher (0.8 FTE), making that person a full-time classroom teacher (1.0 FTE) at the end of quarter 1. The original teacher will pick up 0.2 FTE responsibilities of Digital Learning Integration and serve as a resource for high school faculty, along with the three Digital Learning Integrationists who are supporting the district. This leaves a vacancy of a 0.8 integrationist at FHS.

## Whole Child Supports

1. **Student and Staff Well-being.** At this time, we are learning about the effects of quarantine, COVID fatigue and learning from home resulting in rising obesity and mental health concerns among children.
  - a. Actions taken: School Wellness Advisory Committee is actively addressing matters of nutrition, physical activity, and mental health through their website and the "[Give 2020 the Boot](#)" fitness challenge with future activities planned.

## 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. Report cards and goal setting of educator evaluation are weighing heavily on educators at this time.
  - a. Actions taken: The District will continue to send reminders to both faculty/staff and families about travel expectations and safe holiday practices with the upcoming Winter Break. Professional development of 12/4/2020 will be a balance of new learning and time for educators to complete planning and goal setting tasks.
2. **Staffing.** As case numbers rise, we continue to have an increase in staff absences. Coverage continues to be a challenge at all levels.
  - a. Actions taken: Principals and assistant principals are providing coverage as needed. This takes away from their other responsibilities, which at this time include contact tracing (see below) in addition to other customary responsibilities. We are recruiting additional subs and monitors as college students return home for the next several months. We are requiring negative COVID tests for employment.

## Health and Safety

1. **Contact Tracing.** The demands of contact tracing, at times, is all consuming. Paula Marano and Lisa Trainor have been serving as the points of contact for district-wide tracing efforts, in conjunction with Patty Elias, school nurse leader. School nurses are completing much of the contact tracing for students and building administrators are completing much of the contact tracing for faculty and staff. They collaborate with the Health Department and MA Contact Tracing Collaborative. Due to the high volume of cases across the state, the public health system is overloaded.
  - a. Actions considered: Other districts are hiring full-time contact tracers. I think the District should consider hiring a seasonal contact tracer during what is likely to continue to be a very busy time.
2. **Changing Guidance.** We continue to adjust to changing guidance. The CDC has issued new quarantine guidance this week, which shortens the period of quarantine in an effort to improve compliance. We are not experiencing compliance concerns. We have not adjusted quarantine expectations to a shorter standard at this time. We will consult with the Department of Public Health in order to be consistent with their practices.
3. **Testing Programs.** Franklin has been approved for a one-time no cost baseline testing program from Concentric by Gingko. It is a saliva based PCR screening program that is being planned for

early January. It will serve as a pilot for more widespread pool testing. Diagnostic and pool testing options continue to be explored.

4. **HVAC.** UVGI installation is scheduled for Franklin High School to begin the week of December 7, 2020. The “large unit” installation at complex schools is scheduled for late December. The District procured 500 HEPA portable air purifiers from DESE at no charge for use classrooms. Delivery is expected to start next week. Additional HEPA air purifiers have been ordered through Facilities using CARES funding.

#### **Selected Issues from Recent Updates and Status of Actions**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Anticipated Timeframe</b>	<b>Status</b>
Increased bandwidth	Internet line is being upgraded from 2GB to 10 GB.	Current	Ongoing
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	Resolved
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 Re-opened.
	Issuing letters by school and not by complex to provide additional specificity.	12/2/2020	Resolved
New Chromebooks	Delivered and distributed	Week of 10/26/2020	Resolved