



## **Franklin Public Schools**

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### **Superintendent's Report to School Committee January 28, 2020 School Committee Meeting**

#### **Professional Development Day Recap**

In the afternoon of Friday, January 17, FPS hosted professional development for faculty across the district. This day was building-directed professional learning, under the direction of building principals. The following are some highlights:

- **ECDC** -- ECDC teaching teams analyzed the first round of the new "Developmental Summary" (report card/progress report), considering what worked well, what was challenging, and feedback from families.
- **FHS** -- Franklin High School staff continued to engage in our ongoing work with SEL and Teaching and Learning. They also included Cultural Proficiency as part of this work.
- **Remington** -- Remington staff reviewed the draft skills of the Portrait of a Graduate (POG) and provided feedback. Then educators collaborated on inclusive practices related to inclusion of students with special needs.
- **Annie Sullivan** -- Annie Sullivan staff explored the current discipline practices in place, reviewed data to analyze trends, and identified ways to support student needs in the classroom. Teachers met as teams/grade levels to apply their learning in discussions about specific students and share strategies, review/update behavior plans, etc.
- **Horace Mann** -- HMMS staff focused on developing *Keys to Literacy* Comprehension, Vocabulary and Writing strategies across content areas. Sessions were facilitated by coaches and administration, based on feedback from staff provided in a recent survey.
- **Davis Thayer** -- Davis Thayer Staff engaged in a recommitment to Core Values, redefining how those Core Values look and feel across settings, and examined the interrelation between our Core Values and the five core competencies for SEL.
- **Parmenter** -- Parmenter staff engaged in PD focused on mathematics and planning using the Understanding by Design framework.
- **Kennedy** -- Kennedy teachers participated in the following workshops: Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices, Analyzing Literacy Assessments, and Developing Math Fluency Instructional Materials.
- **Keller** -- Keller School staff engaged to learn more about the Understanding by Design framework for curriculum development.
- **Jefferson** -- The Jefferson staff continued their learning about cultural proficiency; they reviewed books and other curriculum materials for bias within the content.
- **Oak Street** -- Oak School staff continued to engaged to learn more about the Understanding by Design framework for curriculum development.

- **District Nursing Staff** -- The district's nurses worked together to share (compare & contrast) current office practices and assess specific school needs in order to provide better consistency for nurses covering the health offices.

### **Franklin Educators Provide PD Regionally**

We are very excited to share that several FPS educators are presenting at this year's Local Staff Development Opportunities workshop/dinner Series, running regionally January through March. We are fortunate to have such talented educators within our system, as evidenced by regional interest in them sharing through professional learning.

- Kate Merten and Anne Williams (4th grade teachers at Kennedy Elementary School) will lead a workshop on "I Do Readers' Workshop -- Now What?". Participants will take a deeper dive into the aspects of the Readers' Workshop instructional strategy, which is a means of differentiating to meet individual student's needs and provide a more personalized learning approach in the elementary classroom.
- Jaime Hulbig, Jennifer Violet, and Jennifer Young (Math Specialists at Jefferson, Davis Thayer, and Keller elementary schools) will lead a workshop titled "Beyond Pizza and Pies: Teaching Fractions and Decimals for True Understanding" -- This two-part session will help educators build conceptual understanding, number sense, problem solving and procedural fluency with fractions, a foundation for future math learning.

### **Report from the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents' (MASS) Mid-Winter Meeting**

MASS holds two meetings during the school year to provide professional development to its members. The mid-winter meeting was held last week on January 23, 2020 and Mr. Giguere, Assistant Superintendent, and I attended.

We started the morning with a breakfast discussion as part of our partnership with MAPLE, the Massachusetts Personalized Learning Edtech consortium. We learned about various districts' personalized learning initiatives and joined a conversation about personalizing professional development. Philosophically, we seek to progress towards more personalization in our professional development program, in order to model for staff the types of personalized experiences we wish to see within classrooms. Central to this idea is the notion of choice and voice in the process as well as matching learning to skill development. We shared our initial strategies in personalizing professional development for staff through Edcamp-style PD, which is occurring in many of our buildings. We also learned from two districts about their progressive approaches. We look forward to applying our new learning in FPS.

The formal MASS program then began and we heard from Jeff Lawrence, Managing Director of Organizational Agility Advisors. He presented a keynote speech on "Thinking Systemically -- Acting Relationally". The focus of this session was on the complexity of leadership in education today. He urged Superintendents to engage in self-care strategies and thinking, engaging, and

acting differently in order to develop more leadership agility. Mr. Giguere and I are looking forward to bringing these concepts to the leadership team, likely during our summer retreat.

Jeff Riley, Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, then shared the developing details of the DESE required implementation plans that are part of the Student Opportunities Act. These plans are designed to hold districts accountable to using additional funding provided by SOA for their intended results: closing achievement gaps among student groups, including English learners, students with disabilities, and students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds. Details are still emerging. The School Committee can expect that the FPS plan will be shared at a meeting in March, where a vote to approve will be requested.

Dr. Edwards and I will attend the spring meeting of MASS in May.

### **A Word about Grant Funding**

I am aware that some conversation has been percolating in the community about grant opportunities. I wish to convey that the district pursues grant funding that seems reasonable and appropriate when they arise. Some of our grant funding comes in the form of government entitlement grants, but we do also pursue competitive grants. Due to our student population and demographics, these opportunities are not as widespread as they may be for other communities. However, when appropriate we seek additional resources. For example, we secured a state-offered competitive school safety grant last year to support school safety upgrades. Our ECDC secured a local grant from Big Y to develop a “Chill Zone” to assist students with the SEL skill of self-management.

Many grants come with expectations and additional management that may be inconsistent with our improvement plan, potentially siphoning resources away from our current priorities. Therefore, we critically evaluate the benefit of the grant application/award.

We appreciate the public’s interest in this area. Also, we always welcome outreach and ideas from the community, even if we can not support each one.

### **FHS Chorus Highlight with Boston Symphony Orchestra’s Choral Director**

I had the pleasure to attend a special Chorus workshop today, at the invitation of Director Olivia Goliger. She hosted Mr. James Burton, the Choral Director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Conductor of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus. Mr. Burton spent the hours of 10:30-3:30 PM today at FHS workshopping pieces for festival and recording, including his own large work, *The Lost Words*. He worked with students on musicianship and musicality, vocal, and choral technique with the singers, while simultaneously working with Ms. Goliger on conducting and rehearsal technique. The instruction was inspiring and motivating. The students were phenomenal but one could also hear how his coaching techniques developed their sound. Additionally, I was so moved with the connection to social-emotional learning as he drew out

their emotions through voice. It was a very powerful and unique experience and a real highlight for our students.