



# **Franklin Public Schools**

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

---

## **Superintendent's Report to School Committee September 22, 2020 School Committee Meeting**

### **School Reopening Update**

#### *Ongoing Professional Development*

We know that this year began and will continue like no other and that our staff will need ongoing support for teaching and learning in both the remote and hybrid environments. This is incredibly difficult work and everyone is working so very hard -- from our instructional staff to our technology department; our administrators and our support staff. Professional development and meeting times will be designed to provide ongoing support. I will also note that when we talk about our District Improvement Plan later this evening, our efforts will focus on our four main goals, prioritizing the work that needs to be done to teach and to learn under these unusual circumstances. We are not proposing to add much new to the plate but rather continue with goals in only the most strategic of places.

Tonight, there are two specific areas I would like to highlight:

During the school year, elementary faculty have an opportunity to work together with time provided above and beyond their contractual prep. This happens one time per week and is called Common Planning Time (CPT). We have crafted the Wednesday schedule to include CPT on an ongoing basis with a primary focus on supporting students/faculty in the hybrid and remote instructional models. The first day for this will be tomorrow, September 23. The student day will remain the same, with the conclusion of the day coming at 2:45. From 12:50 PM to 2:30 PM, students will be engaged in a combination of the following: a special, chorus (grades 3-5), and/or asynchronous independent work. At 2:30, teachers will reconvene the class for a closing circle for the day.

Our half professional development day on Friday, September 25 will be a building-based day focused on the following overarching themes (which will repeat in meetings and future professional development sessions):

- Reflecting on the opening of school
- Collaborative planning for future curriculum, assessment, and instruction
  - Refining instructional approaches in the remote and hybrid setting
  - Repeating expectations for synchronous learning
  - Identifying opportunities for asynchronous/independent work for students

“Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice”  
Equal Opportunity Employer

- Expectations for health and safety practices and building protocols for hybrid (lunch/recess; arrival and dismissal; mask breaks, etc.)

#### *Transition to Hybrid*

October 1 is the target date for transition to hybrid for grades K and 1. DESE urges districts to use three weeks of data which I am sharing below:

	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
9/2	1.9	Higher	0.63%	No change	2.6	Higher	0.72%	Lower	4.2	Higher	0.69%	Lower
9/9	2.1	Higher	0.74%	Higher	3	Higher	0.73%	Higher	4.2	Higher	0.97%	Lower
9/16	2.3	No change	0.93%	Higher	3.2	Higher	0.77%	No change	4.6	Higher	0.90%	No change

Based on the average daily cases being below 8 per 100,000 and the under 1% positivity rate, the metrics support the district going to in-person or hybrid learning. We would be on track with other grades if this trend holds. The Committee may want to consider accelerating a transition to hybrid. While our focus is on having a strong remote start to the year, especially at middle and high school, we have been considering, in particular, moving the hybrid date of high school to be earlier. We would be ready to have an alternative date to the Committee at the next meeting for high school.

#### *Coronavirus Relief Funding*

The CARES grant was allocated to the Town to support Coronavirus relief efforts. While the Town Administrator will have more specific information about that particular grant, FPS purchased 4000 Chromebooks from CARES funds. This is also the source of funding for the UVGI project for the HVAC.

Two state grants are available to support schools' return for the 2020-2021 school year. As noted in the Budget Update from the last meeting:

ESSER - Federal Grant - Allocation \$123,235 - This grant was identified during the budgetary process and will support interventionists. The FPS operating budget was reduced accordingly.

CvRF - Federal Grant - Allocation \$1,156,275 - As reported on September 8, this grant will support the addition of 3 Digital Learning Integrationists as well as monitors, long-term and

permanent substitutes, ESPs, LPNs/Medical Waiting Room monitors, and Crossing Guards through December, 2020. These will be strategically hired as the need arises.

Additionally, these funds will be used to equip outside areas with tents and, where needed, fences, to support outdoor mask breaks. Vendor professional development is included as well as supplies and materials and additional software subscriptions to support learning in a remote environment (this includes Virtual Learning Academy).

Having identified additional needs now that the school year has started, the grant is being amended to reduce the number of positions in an effort to secure additional necessary hardware for instruction. And finally, there is a small allocation for personal protective equipment (PPE) also included in this grant.

#### *Virtual Learning Academy*

We want to acknowledge and apologize for late information coming to K-5 families committing to remote only. As the district committed early to open predominantly remotely, that stalled efforts in consideration of families making this commitment for the long term. Hybrid planning has consistently been a challenge and we vacillated on whether or not we'd be able to meet the needs of three cohorts of students in the hybrid setting, particularly at the elementary level.

Our team has been doing a tremendous job putting together a special program of virtual only learning for families utilizing current staff. Based on the numbers of families who committed to the program, we have built a staffing model with two teachers per grade level, with designated special educators and ESPs. We are striving to maintain connections to "home" schools where possible.

Supplies and materials are being supported from both building-based supplies (as funds at the district level are allocated on a per pupil basis to schools) as well as use of Coronavirus Relief funds, as noted above.

Schedules in the VLA have been shaped however, like the schedules at our elementary schools, subject to change. We are currently short staffed with our specialists and working hard to rectify that.

Logistically, we continue to work on areas like coding students in our student management system as assigned to this cohort and also retain enrollment in their "home" school.

#### *Chromebooks and Technology*

I am pleased to report that the Chromebooks, initially identified as backordered and being delivered in November have an accelerated arrival date. We anticipate that 1500 of the new Chromebooks will be received in the district by the end of next week. The remaining Chromebooks are due in October. We will have and communicate a process for swapping Chromebooks.

We know that there have been glitches with technology and our tech department is working diligently to lend Chromebooks as well as attend to on-site issues for staff and adding remote support to an already busy schedule. Assessing our needs as we return, we would like to apply Coronavirus relief funding to support a remote helpdesk, which we think is very necessary.

Some issues are matters within families' homes. We will try to support you through Digital Learning Specialists (hosting events this week) and some support through the technology department, however that support has to be limited. Some matters may need to be addressed by families with their Internet providers.

Staff are assisting in identifying families who do not have Internet at home. We think the number is small (7.5% of households in Franklin do not have Internet access -- some of these will not be families with school-age children). If anyone knows of a family who does not have Internet access, please contact the Superintendent's office (508) 553-4819.

### **DALTON Award**

Congratulations to the FHS Athletic Department for winning the prestigious Boston Globe Dalton Award for Division 1. From the Globe article "Fielding 26 varsity teams (in addition to cheer and unified sports), Franklin won 76.12 percent of its 245 games, compiling a 179-51-15 overall record to repeat as the Globe's Dalton Division 1 champion."

We are proud of our athletes not only for their achievements, but also for their focus on teamwork, sportsmanship, inclusion, community service, and scholarship.