



Franklin Public Schools

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Superintendent's Report

January 24, 2023

School Closings & Notifications

One of the challenges for a Superintendent is deciding whether or not to cancel or delay school due to inclement weather. Like weather forecasting, the school-closing decision process is not a perfect science. As this is New England, we are apt to have a number of school days when the weather is inclement. It is important for families to understand how the process works.

You may recall I shared the inclement weather and school closing information with all families on December 1st to outline the process.

Decision Maker

The Superintendent makes the decision to close or delay school in consultation with the Franklin Department of Public Works (DPW), the Highway Department, the Director of Facilities, and Public Safety Officials.

1. Superintendent monitors state and local weather forecasts as well as Precision Weather Forecasting, a service tailored to give us real-time data on conditions in Franklin
2. DPW, Highway Department consults and, when applicable, tests the road conditions and reports that information.

Factors & Considerations

The safety of our students and staff is our number one priority as we consider the weather forecast. We are very sensitive to families' childcare challenges when schools are closed and only do so if our analysis indicates we should. Please know that schools will likely be open if roads are open and parking lots are cleared. If a parent/guardian believes that weather conditions are too severe, they may keep their children home.

In deciding whether to have school, we consider the following factors:

- Information on road conditions from the town's superintendent of highways/grounds and/or the police
- Time snow starts to accumulate and the amount of snow expected
- Weather predictions as to what is expected later in the day
- Building conditions (e.g., whether we have power and heat)
- Parking lot conditions and our ability to remove the snow
- Temperature and wind-chill

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

- The Department of Public Works prediction as to when roads, walkways, and parking lots will be cleared

Timing

Typically, families will be notified of a school closing or delay by 5:30 A.M. of the day in question. The most accurate information is often provided at the early morning newscasts since conditions could have changed overnight. There may be occasions when a decision can be made the previous evening, but typically it will not be made until the day of. As soon as a decision has been made, families will be notified.

Notification

Families and all district staff will receive messages via phone and/or email about the school opening/closing status due to inclement weather conditions through the Regroup mass notification system.

Phone calls will begin to be made at 5:30 A.M. If you do not wish to receive a phone call early in the morning, please contact your child's school to remove your number from our Regroup system. Tune in to the local news stations for information on school closings. Do not call the school unless it is an emergency. We will also send out a notification via social media.

Weather prediction is an uncertain science when you live in New England. However, getting snow in winter is almost guaranteed. Since we will let the safety of our children guide our decision-making with regard to snow days, we ask all families to make emergency alternative childcare arrangements should the day come when the children have no school or school is delayed.

COVID-19 Test Kits Available to Franklin Residents

The Franklin Health Department received more home COVID-19 self-test kits from the state. Franklin residents can call the Public Health Nurse at (508) 613-1341 to check for availability and coordinate curbside pick-up outside of the Senior Center. Pick-up hours are as follows...

- Mon, Tues, Thurs: 8AM-4PM
- Wednesday: 8AM-6PM
- Friday 8AM-1PM

There is a limited supply! One test per household member, first come, first serve.

Redistricting Analysis

The redistricting analysis advisory committee continues to meet, reviewing information and drafting scenarios. Part of the process will include community input forums in March. All recommendations and/or proposed scenarios will be presented in late Spring 2023 to the Franklin School Committee for a vote. No decisions have been made. Thank you to the redistricting Analysis advisory committee for their contributions and others in our community who've shared their feedback. To better outline the redistricting analysis process, we've created a webpage to update the community on our efforts.

Composting

You may have seen the NBC10 Boston program highlighting our composting pilot that took place at the Annie Sullivan/Helen Keller complex. Students adopted composting program by making small changes to their lunchtime routines, encouraging students to sort through their discarded food scraps in containers into designated bins to be composted. This collaboration with the town of Franklin DPW aims to reduce the amount of waste while creating opportunities for connected learning a community building. We plan to roll this out and other buildings as well.

Hockomock Mental Health,

The Hockomock League, has designated this week as “Mental Health Week” to support the emotional well-being of our student-athletes. Sporting events across the league are designated as mental health awareness games. The League posted a statement saying, “The Hockomock League Values all aspects of the student-athlete experience, and as they navigate the high school sports experience, we want them to do so in a healthy way.”

Panther Pride Night

Calling all eighth-grade students and families. If you're looking to learn more about what it means to be a Franklin in High School's Panther, please attend the Franklin high school annual panther pride night on Tuesday, February 2, from 6-7:30 PM.