



Franklin Public Schools

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Superintendent's Report to School Committee January 25, 2022

Congratulations to Dr. Weber!

Congratulations to Dr. Maria Weber, Franklin High School Assistant Principal. Dr. Weber recently defended her doctoral dissertation at Endicott College. She has been taking doctoral courses and completing a dissertation for the past three years. Having defended her dissertation, she can and ought to be referred to as Doctor Weber.

Title: *Teachers' Self Efficacy: Perspectives from Teachers and School Leaders.*

Dr. Weber studied the factors influencing the efficacy of school principals and assistant principals and the efficacy of teachers and how the two are interrelated. Please join me in congratulating Dr. Weber.

Comments on protecting LGBTQIA+ Students

Last week, a video generated by students was posted with the goal of bringing awareness to school leadership, educators, and the Franklin High School (FHS) community regarding the homophobic and transphobic experiences of our LGBTQIA+ students. We felt it very important to speak directly with the students to understand more about what they wanted to share. Here are my main takeaways:

- The depth of pain is underestimated.
- Efforts on the part of administrators were recognized, but we talked about the need for more communication with students.
- Our administrative team actively investigates all claims, but we continue to be concerned with underreporting and hearing about distrust with that process. We aim to communicate more about the investigation process, the provision of support and resources through Safety and Support plans, the range of disciplinary consequences that may be expected, and the opportunities for education.
- We collect a lot of data on investigations and disciplinary incidents. We are verifying the thoroughness of our records and will report numbers to the Committee.

In the fall, we communicated specific actions FPS is taking towards fostering a safe and respectful environment. As an update,

- FHS launched their ["No Place for Hate School"](#) campaign in the hopes of a better FHS for all. Student representatives from A World of Difference, the Diversity Awareness Club, and the Sexuality and Gender Alliance served on the development team to

organize this work. The planned [activities](#) will prompt a school-wide effort that integrates productive dialogue and active learning on the topics of bias, bullying, and allyship. This is a really important step in bringing the HS community together. Five administrators have tremendous influence over the culture and climate in our schools, but it really is up to the 2000 individuals at FHS to make the school a truly inclusive community.

- In December, FHS, and our middle schools, implemented Resource Groups for students to gather and talk about their experiences with bias-based incidents and actions that can be taken to ensure a more equitable experience at school. The FHS resource group will bring their experiences to the FHS faculty during an upcoming faculty meeting.
- The district continues to partner with the Anti-Defamation League to support our World of Difference™ Peer Leader program at Franklin's middle schools and Franklin High School. Training of our peer leaders has been underway and the middle school leaders will bring anti-bias lessons to grade 6 students later this year.
- The FHS administrators led the December 10th and January 14th professional development day for educators focused on creating a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all of our courses. Examples of that work include examining our course experiences so that all students are represented in the sources they study throughout the course and on explicitly and more frequently incorporating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into our curriculum and instructional planning.
- We hosted a DEI workshop for winter athletic captains prior to the start of the season.
- During the November 2nd and January 14th professional development days, sessions were facilitated by staff leaders building upon the "Speak Up At School" strategies to interrupt microaggressions.
- Students at FHS and our middle schools completed the MetroWest Youth Risk Behavior Survey in November 2021. Survey questions include experiences of bullying and harassment. An additional school-wide climate and culture survey is also being planned. We have been working with the survey vendor to specifically add questions related to LGBTQIA+ youth, which the survey previously did not have.
- Our Bullying Intervention and Prevention Plan is currently undergoing some major revisions. It is required to be updated every two years and the last update was in the 2019-2020 school year. Mr. Giguere reorganized the information and added clarity to some questions we are getting from students and families. It is currently being reviewed by our administrative team and we will extend the review process to other stakeholders prior to its publication. Additionally, the School Committee is reviewing its Anti-Bullying Policy through the policy subcommittee.
- All administrators recently attended a refresher training on bullying and harassment investigations, with a particular focus on Title IX.

- The Director of DEI has been posted and we will initiate the interviewing and selection process in the next several weeks, with the goal of naming the successful candidate in March.
- Public Consulting Group has been awarded the bid for the Equity Audit and will get the work underway in February and March. This will gather both quantitative and qualitative data about the experiences of students and staff. We are planning a formal launch to the School Committee within the next few meetings.
- We are preparing to present a comprehensive update on our D, E, I efforts to the School Committee on February 8, which will also be shared with the Town Council on February 16.

More than anything, what I continue to be reminded of is the need for the development and nurturing of relationships among adults and students in our school buildings. This was reinforced in a discussion I had with a high school student yesterday who independently shared this same assessment with me as she was talking about some positive experiences she has had with her teachers at FHS.

Relationships and communication help to build trust. I extend the same invitation to members of the community who may be concerned that we aren't doing enough to support our students. Please reach out, ask questions, and we'd be happy to share our efforts with you.

MASS MidWinter Meeting

The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents is holding a modified version of its Mid-Winter meeting this Thursday, January 27 via Zoom. At this meeting,

We will hear welcoming remarks from Superintendent Tim Piwovar, President, M.A.S.S.

An Update on the MASS REDI work (Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) with an introduction to a resource guide, "Getting Started with Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Work". MASS recently conducted an internal equity audit survey and the results will be shared with the membership. I look forward to attending.