



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

July 27, 2021

Back to School Information, Especially Health/Safety Related

I know that many are eager to know the health and safety practices for our fall return to school. Here is what I can share:

We will be returning to school full and in person for all students. The first day of school is Tuesday, August 31 for grades 1-12. Kindergarten orientation, screening, and placement will occur in the first week and K students will begin school on Wednesday, 9/8/2021. We will be meeting the expected 180 days of school for students and 900/990 hours of instruction for elementary and secondary schools, respectively. We are not permitted and will not be running an entirely remote option for school.

Vaccines are encouraged for students who are ages 12 and over. Vaccine statistics in Franklin as of July 20, 2021:

Ages 12-15 = 70% 1 dose; 61% fully vaccinated
Ages 16-19 = 75% 1 dose; 68% fully vaccinated
Total Franklin = 69% 1 dose; 64% fully vaccinated
65+ = 90-91% fully vaccinated

We are remaining apprised of information related to vaccines for children under 12, including how those are intended to be distributed once they are approved.

We are aware of the climbing case counts and breakthrough cases largely being attributed to the Delta variant. We are also aware of recent decisions both locally and nationally about masking, particularly indoors. Yesterday, physicians in Massachusetts recommended that children in grades 6 and under mask upon our return to school. The ultimate decision appears that it may be a local one, however, I'd prefer state level guidance from DPH and/or DESE.

The mask policy for Franklin Public Schools students is currently under review as we continue to monitor health information. More information about our health and safety practices at school for the fall will come out in August. We anticipate continuing with good hand hygiene practices and ventilation protocols including the use of UVGI as available as well as the portable HEPA filters. We are also aware the state will be funding pool testing this fall. Pool testing in school is also being reviewed.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to have their children vaccinated if eligible. Timing is of the essence as students vaccinated now will be fully vaccinated or closely fully vaccinated by the start of the school year.

Professional Development at MASS

Mr. Giguere and I attended the MASS Executive Institute last week, which occurred over three days. Sessions included:

Day 1 started with keynote presenter, CNN host Michael Smerconish speaking to superintendents about the current status of education in our nation. Also, on day 1, M.A.S.S. presented 1 of 2 Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) Panels. Panel 1 – “Developing a Game Plan for Leading the Racial Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Work in Your District” consisted of Superintendents who talked about the context of their school districts and the work being done through an equity lens. Following these morning presentations, attendees had the opportunity to pick from a plethora of breakout sessions focused on moving forward after this Covid school year, focused autonomy, social emotional leadership, high quality curriculum, anti-racism practices, educational licensure, school facilities and many more. I had the opportunity to sit on a panel of Superintendents and participate in a reflective conversation about the past year and share our thinking about how we are approaching the next school year.

Day 2 welcomed keynote Professor Sarah Lewis, Harvard University, who delivered meaningful visuals as part of a thoughtful journey and important narrative to bring conversation around equity. She challenged members to look at the power of the arts to influence our common narrative and culture. The Day 2 REDI Presentation on “Strategies and Resources for Addressing Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion” featured another panel of Superintendents. Additional breakouts occurred that afternoon. I attended a Q and A with MASS attorneys.

Day 3 included a general session of important legal updates from Attorney Mike Long. Then, students from Project 351 engaged MASS members in a “Playbook Workshop” on anti-bias and anti-discrimination program for students that they developed in partnership with the Boston Celtics.

Additionally, I want to note that Dr. Joyce Edwards presented with Primary Source, a social studies professional development provider, on the implementation of the new social studies standards, specifically Civics, here in Franklin.