



Franklin Public Schools

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Superintendent's Report to School Committee August 25, 2020 School Committee Meeting

School Surplus Materials and Donations

I wish to revisit the conversation about surplus school materials from the last meeting. The topic came up late at night and I am not sure we fully addressed the process.

Periodically, the School Committee may be asked to declare items as surplus. We do not take this request lightly, as we recognize the investment made in materials. However, our schools do not have unlimited storage and we do have periodic needs to create space. Additionally, we carefully review our materials to be sure that they reflect the expectations of the School Committee through policy IJ -- Instructional Materials.

We critically evaluate what we request to be declared as surplus and we review potential market value. Where possible, the items may be sold. Additionally, items have sometimes been donated. We see this as fiscally prudent as well as environmentally friendly.

When donating or selling materials, we will consider the usefulness and value of these materials. Because the materials under discussion last week do not fit with contemporary expectations and values for cultural proficiency, both here in Franklin as well as elsewhere, we would not be seeking to donate them.

I would anticipate that as we review our curricular resources, this topic may arise again with the declaration of surplus, so I wanted to circle back and revisit it.

School Reopening Update

First Ten Days of PD

We are actively planning the first ten days of professional development for staff starting on Monday, August 31. The days will be a combination of professional learning as well as planning, preparation and collaboration time. Main themes include:

- COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols
- Digital Learning Integration in remote and hybrid settings
- Assessing and responding to students' SEL and academic needs
- Self-care
- Cultural proficiency

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

- Content-specific professional development

Bus Transportation

We have received a lot of questions about bus transportation. Even though the deadline has passed, parents/guardians can still register their student(s) for bus transportation via this [google form](#), and we will do our best to accommodate families' needs.

Please **wait** to make payment until further implementation plans and timelines are announced. We expect that our busing contract will be amended this year with a varied schedule and reduced seating capacity. At this time, we are unsure of what and when refunds will be issued, so we encourage you to wait to make payment until we can assure that your student will have a seat. We will communicate future payment deadlines as they are determined.

The FPS [transportation website](#) has been updated with further information. Please contact schoolbus@franklinps.net with questions or to remove an already registered student.

Remote Only Students and Instructional Model

We have been actively collecting information from families seeking to commit completely remotely during the 2020-2021 school year when we transition to a hybrid model this fall.

We have 250 students in grades K-5 seeking this option and 120 students in grades 6-8. We have 121 high school students, but we have not re-surveyed families since July because high school is planning to be remote for longer.

We are taking the information from families and identifying the best model to continue remotely. For K-5, the model would involve identifying Remote Only teachers who will work with a grade level of students. This is an approach being used in many area districts. We feel that this will give Remote Only students the best instructional opportunity (as compared to being entirely remote while in the hybrid model), while also addressing the needs of some staff members.

Students will be combined across all schools in working with this teacher; principals will continue to involve Remote Only students in pertinent school-based activities so that they may continue to feel connected to their home building. We are currently working through the staffing details and we will be communicating with further clarity to families soon.

The other option would be to purchase seats in a Learning Management System. We would prefer to keep Franklin students with Franklin educators.

Under this model, we would permit movement back to hybrid at the end of each trimester and we would ask for 4 weeks notice from families.

For grades 6-8, we anticipate that the Remote Only students will continue to participate with their peers in classes when the middle schools transition to hybrid.

High School

We have received many questions about transitioning the high school students to hybrid. We have heard the feedback from families about the late date and we are reconsidering those dates and thinking about how we might stage it like at the other grade levels.

One common question has to do with freshmen. An initial iteration of the model had an earlier start date for grade 9, but it is very difficult, due to our mixed grade level classes at the high school, to cohort simply by grade level.

The high school recognizes that there is a need to appropriately welcome freshmen from four middle schools across Franklin to the large high school and some transition activities will be communicated and announced. We appreciate the patience - getting the year underway is an enormous undertaking.

As for the high school schedule being shortened during the hybrid model, the schedule is being reexamined. There are many details to work through and the schedule shared previously was a sample possibility. We appreciate everyone's patience.

New DESE Guidance

Teachers' Children in School

DESE issued guidance encouraging districts to permit the children of educators to attend school full-time in their home districts, even if the district is hybrid. This is not an option for the time period when we are remote. For hybrid, we have analyzed our cohorts and sections and are concerned about being able to physically accommodate the students full-time when we go hybrid. Our space availability will be determined by class size, high needs students, and remote only learners. We will keep this under consideration but we do not feel we are able to commit at this time.

Teachers' Children Coming into School

DESE's guidance also suggested that we permit teachers to bring their children to school if they are teaching from their classrooms. We are concerned about this for a number of reasons including health and safety.

Teachers Working from Classrooms

DESE issued expectations that teachers in Remote Only districts would be working from classrooms/buildings. This is something that we have been planning for, as we think it will support teaching and learning and a transition to hybrid as faculty/staff get more comfortable with the health and safety practices. However, having heard the wishes of the Committee, we are being flexible with our educators who have asked to work remotely whether for health-related or childcare reasons.

Staff Daycare Option

Lifelong Learning is accepting applications of Franklin educators for full-day childcare at a cost that only covers our expenses. We anticipate being able to offer about 30 seats to educators for 3, 4, or 5 days per week. This childcare will be located in the Jefferson Elementary School cafeteria and remote learning will be supervised.

Mandatory Influenza Vaccine

Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, influenza vaccine will be required for all students. Documentation of immunization status should be submitted to schools within 60 days of school start. This immunization is required in all models of learning, including Remote. Vaccinating against influenza is important for several reasons. Influenza vaccine is always important to receive to reduce the risk of getting sick with influenza, reduce the severity of disease if one does get sick (including the risk of hospitalization) due to influenza, as well as preventing the spread of influenza to others. During the COVID-19 pandemic, influenza vaccine will be especially critical to reduce the overall impact of respiratory illness on the population, protect vulnerable populations from severe illness, and decrease the overall burden on the healthcare system.

Exceptions may be granted for those for whom the vaccine is medically contraindicated or for families who attest in writing that the vaccine violates sincerely held religious beliefs. Families must submit a letter to the school nurse requesting an exemption and indicating the reason.