



Franklin Public Schools

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Superintendent's Report to School Committee

June 13, 2023

Sad Student News

As it was communicated with the FHS community, it is with a great deal of sadness that we acknowledge the passing of one of our 10th-grade students, Anthony Gates. The loss of a child is incomprehensible, and our most heartfelt sympathy is with the Gates family and friends. While, as a community, we cannot take away the pain and grief that comes with a tragic and unexpected loss, we can continue to add our love and support.

Our students, staff, and families will also be impacted and will process in ways requiring different levels of support. The FHS Team organized a plan to support students and staff at school by continuing with a sense of routine and predictability while being as responsive as possible to all students and staff needing additional support, which has been communicated to families.

- offering in-school counseling and bereavement support services to all students in need throughout the day in the FHS lecture hall (this will continue throughout the week as needed)
- in terms of our final exam schedule, we will maintain the structure as the situation permits while providing the student with a choice to take the exams or go to the lecture hall where there are school adjustment counselors available.
- staff members are providing students with grace and flexibility during this time
- offering after-school counseling support in the FHS library from 2:00-3:00 pm
- allowing students' absences to attend memorial services to be excused

I shared today that grief is a uniquely personal experience and is not linear. We aim to maintain normal a routine and structure as the situation permits while meeting the students and staff who need further support where they are at. We will do everything we can to help.

This is the second student loss to our community in a short period of time. My heavy heart is with the families. We will navigate what's in front of us together, but there is a lot to process.

Spain Trip Recap

As you may recall, you approved our international trip to Spain last year, which took place over the February vacation. tonight we are joined by our outstanding Spanish teacher and trip coordinator, Laura Keenan, Who wishes to say a few words about the trip and thank you for approving this opportunity for our students.

Franklin High School Track and Field Division 1 Champions

The Franklin Girls' Outdoor Track and Field Team had an amazing spring season!! Their hard work, dedication, teamwork, and competitive spirit earned them new personal bests, new school records, and for some, state championships!

The MIAA Meet of Champions was held at Fitchburg State University on June 1st and June 3rd. The following members of the Franklin Girls' Outdoor Track and Field team earned MIAA Division 1 State Champion honors:

- Sarah Dumas (Grade 11) - Pentathlon Champion
- Sarah Dumas (Grade 11) - 100M Hurdle Champion
- Liz Hopkins (Grade 11) - Javelin Champion
- Lily DeForge (Grade 11) - Discus Finalist

These three student-athletes have had an amazing spring season! Special thanks to the FHS Track and Field Coaches:

- Paul Trovato
- Mark Rudolph
- Tom Geysen
- Nick Bailey
- Kathleen Hogan
- Brianna Cummings

Coach Paul Trovato, Coach Mark Rudolph, and Coach Kathleen Hogan are here tonight. These three student-athletes have all qualified for the New Balance Nationals in Philadelphia. It is a non-school, non-MIAA sanctioned event that will happen June 17th-June 19th.

Six Flags Bus Trip

As you likely heard, an incident occurred on Saturday while middle school students were on their way to Six Flags in Agawam, MA. While the buses were caravanning along the highway, the rear wheels of one bus came off. The driver maneuvered the bus to a safe location, and students were loaded onto the other buses and continued to Six Flags. We are incredibly grateful and fortunate that nobody on any buses nor any nearby motorists were injured during this event. Holmes Bus Company issued a [statement](#) regarding the matter.

Budget

We'll discuss the budget in more detail later, but I wanted to communicate that there are reductions being made across all levels and disciplines. I share this because budgets are complex and involve many variables. We make challenging decisions and consider the needs of our entire system, some of which affect me both personally and professionally as a parent and superintendent.

One variable is reviewing sections and enrollment. At the elementary level, we found opportunities to utilize our specialist staff more efficiently, resulting in reductions to positions in art, PE, and music. This led to another variable which was an impact on a middle school music position as a result of a contractual obligation regarding seniority within licensed subject areas. No music positions were eliminated at the middle level. We value our program and our teachers in these positions.

We are grateful for the additional appropriated funds voted by the town council last week. We continue to feel the effects of finalizing this budget on June 13th, when most districts have begun planning for the next school year. Districts with settled budgets in March and April are concluding the school year by reviewing and improving systems, collaborating with stakeholders, planning, and strategizing, which is where we seek to be.

Transportation Sign-up Deadline

Pay-to-Ride registration is ongoing through the Aspen Parent Portal. While the deadline for a guaranteed spot has passed, we encourage you to sign up as soon as possible if you need transportation for next year. Payment in full is due by July 10, 2023, via Unibank's website.

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