

Franklin School Committee
August 23, 2022
Municipal Building – Council Chambers
7:00 P.M.

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Vision Statement

The Franklin Public Schools will foster within its students the knowledge and skills to find and achieve satisfaction in life as productive global citizens.

Members of the public are now welcome to attend committee meetings in person. Additionally, in an effort to ensure citizen engagement, citizens will be able to continue to view the public meeting using Zoom. We will use the Zoom Webinar feature. You may view the meeting with the link or phone numbers below. Participants wishing to speak during the Citizen's Comments portion of the agenda will be able to raise their hand to be recognized by the Chair. The webinar host will invite the attendee to unmute for comment.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84096929085?pwd=Y09SSC9abVFhOFdjYUxTbXdpcmwvUT09>

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MINUTES

“The listing of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.”

Ms. Spencer called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Roll call attendance: Ms. Camille Bernstein-Yes; Mr. David Callaghan-Yes; Mr. Al Charles-Yes; Mr. David McNeill-Absent; Ms. Elise Stokes-Yes; Ms. Meghan Whitmore-Absent; Ms. Denise Spencer-Yes

Also in attendance were: Mr. Lucas Giguere; Dr. Tina Rogers; Mrs. Paula Marano; Mrs. Miriam Goodman; Ms. Kelty Kelley; Mr. Josh Hanna; Mr. Eric Stark; Mr. Mike Prococcini.

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of Silence

I. Routine Business

- A. **Review of Agenda** - reviewed and in order
- B. **Payment of Bills** - reviewed and in order
- C. **Payroll** - reviewed and in order
- D. **FHS Student Representative Comments** - there were none

- E. **Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Giguere said he hopes families and staff are enjoying their last days of summer break. He said August 23rd-25th is new staff orientation with 55 newly hired educators in attendance. He said the 3rd day will be school based orientations.

He said for transportation there are 26 bus routes including Charter. This year, there are late buses for the middle and the high school. Two elementary bus routes were eliminated due to low ridership. He said some buses are filled to capacity and there is a waitlist on some buses and will be assigned soon.

Currently, there are 2,320 students registered in the district.

He said there is no charge for school meals for the 2022/2023 school year, adding that an email went out to families. He said if you think you are eligible for free meals regardless, to complete the application.

Mr. Giguere gave a Covid update for the upcoming school year. He said DESE and MDH released a joint memo that is aligned with the new CDC guidance. He said there are no statewide mask mandates, no testing requirements, and those choosing to wear a mask will be supported by the districts. Masks will be on hand in the schools.

He noted important upcoming dates:

8/29/22 - First day for faculty and staff

8/30/22 - First day for Grades 1-12

8/21/22 - First day of Kindergarten

9/2/22 - PD Day for staff (no school)

9/6/22 - First day for ECDC students

He reminded the committee again that various positions are still open within the district.

Finally, Mr. Giguere thanked the administration, secretaries, DPW, custodians, facilities, technology, etc. for all the work that has been put into planning for the upcoming school year.

Ms. Spencer asked for any questions or comments from the committee?

Mr. Callaghan asked about the status of the BRYT program?

Mrs. Marano replied that they hired a social worker at the high school, there is a space at the high school, and they are still looking for a paraprofessional.

She said the middle school program is on hold while they consult with BRYT further to meet the needs of three middle schools. She added that there is a new social worker at middle school.

II. Guests/Presentations - there were none

III. Discussion/Action Items

A. School Handbooks

I recommend approval of the School Handbooks as detailed.

Mrs. Marano said thanks to the administrators for their work and collaboration on handbooks this summer. Building principals from all three school levels presented on the changes in the handbooks.

The handbook is broken into three sections:

Section 1: School Specific; Section 2: Level Based; Section 3: District Policies

ECDC: Ms. Kelley spoke on the changes at the preschool level and how they align with the elementary level on appropriate dress code and the bullying plan. She did note the discipline matrix is not included in their handbook.

Elementary Schools: Mr. Stark spoke on changes at the elementary level such as appropriate dress, cell phones and electronic devices, code of character, conduct, and support, and the bullying prevention plan.

Middle Schools: Mr. Prococcini noted the significant amount of changes at this level such as advisory, attendance, code of character, conduct, and support, search policy, suspension procedures, and the bullying prevention plan.

High School: Mr. Hanna said thank you to the assistant principals for their hard work on the high school handbook changes. He said they have condensed their handbook to make it more user friendly. He noted the following changes made were attendance, academic dishonesty policy, code of conduct character, and

support, elevator use, pass policy, social event rules/regulations, commencement activities.

Mrs. Marano spoke about Section 3: District Policies and the policies that were approved through the school committee last year such as the wellness policy, the student transportation policy, and the bullying policy.

She noted the principals and assistant principals also in attendance and on zoom who could answer any questions specific to their schools.

Ms. Spencer asked for any questions or comments from the committee?

Mr. Callaghan asked about the attendance policy and if attendance is a big issue in Franklin. He followed up by asking if the issue has been since Covid?

Mr. Stark replied at the elementary level they are trying to get back to previous practices. During Covid, everyone was a little more loose and understanding.

Mr. Callaghan asked about the academic honesty policy at the high school and why it states that a referral may be written and not should be written?

Mr. Hanna replied it can depend on the magnitude of the violation.

Mr. Charles asked if there are policies where we look to high school for guidance?

Mr. Prococcini replied that they looked through the high school handbook and will continue to do so each summer.

Mr. Giguere also replied there are districtwide practices like the bullying prevention plan and the civil rights process for investigations.

Mr. Charles asked about the distribution of handbooks and the process.

Mrs. Marano replied that a google form in an email goes out the first week of school. Ms. Kelley added that if parents request a hard copy of the handbook they can request one. Mr. Prococcini added they have a handbook assembly at the beginning of the year.

Ms. Stokes said thank you to everyone for their work on this over the summer.

Ms. Stokes asked about how lines are highlighted in different colors and what does it represent?

Ms. Marano said those highlights will be gone in the final copy, it was only for SC members to review.

Ms. Stokes said she is glad Advisory is at the high school and if it is called Advisory?

Mr. Hanna replied yes.

Ms. Spencer said thank to you all for their hard work and hours.

Ms. Bernstein asked about the high school handbook and why there is no wording about sportsmanship in the interscholastic section.

Mr. Hanna replied the handbook is really for within the school walls and the MIAA has been great at creating courses and training for all the athletes to take.

Mr. Giguere also replied that school sports are school sponsored events so the handbook applies.

Ms. Spencer asked if the MIAA provides any training?

Mr. Hanna replied that they provide a training that all the athletes need to complete before they are eligible to compete.

Ms. Stokes asked if the new DEI director has been involved with the handbooks?

Mr. Giguere replied that since she is new and onboarding, but she will be involved. He said she did participate in the administrative retreat.

I recommend approval of the School Handbooks as detailed.

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Ms. Bernstein

**Roll call vote: Ms. Bernstein-Yes; Mr. Callaghan-Yes; Mr. Charles-Yes;
Mr. McNeill-Absent; Ms. Stokes-Yes; Ms. Whitmore-Absent; Ms. Spencer-Yes
Motion Carries 5-0 with 2 absent**

B. Policy First Readings

I recommend moving forward the following policies to a second reading:

AC - Nondiscrimination

ACAB - Harassment Including Sexual Harassment

ADC - Tobacco Products on School Premises Prohibited

Ms. Spencer asked for any questions or comments from the committee?

Ms. Bernstein asked what a second reading is?

Mr. Giguere replied that in order for a policy to become official, a first read will take place and then have a second meeting two weeks later on this topic. It is not an official policy until it is voted on at a school committee meeting after the second reading.

Ms. Bernstein asked what if it is cyber bullying that happens in the evening?

Mr. Giguere said they are cleaning up protocols and the connection is when a learning environment becomes impacted, they look at the outside behavior.

Mr. Charles asked about adding language to the Title 9 coordinator.

Mr. Giguere said there is a secondary document they are looking to update. He added there will also be a website forthcoming.

Mr. Charles asked if the DEI director will be looking at the second read of the policy?

Mr. Giguere said yes.

Ms. Spencer asked about ADC - Tobacco Products on School Premises Prohibited and if signs are posted on athletic fields?

Mr. Giguere replied that they are on the buildings but he doesn't believe they are on the fields with the exception of the FHS football field possibly. He said he will follow up.

I recommend moving forward the following policies to a second reading:

AC - Nondiscrimination

ACAB - Harassment Including Sexual Harassment

ADC - Tobacco Products on School Premises Prohibited

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Ms. Bernstein

Roll call vote: Ms. Bernstein-Yes; Mr. Callaghan-Yes; Mr. Charles-Yes;

Mr. McNeill-Absent; Ms. Stokes-Yes; Ms. Whitmore-Absent; Ms. Spencer-Yes

Motion Carries 5-0 with 2 absent

IV. Discussion Only Items

A. New Hires Update

Ms. Lisa Trainor, Human Resources Director said this has been a challenging recruitment summer. She said they are not done and there are still openings. She said there are 117 new hires, 69 of those are educators and administrators and 48 are support personnel.

She said there are 25 remaining vacancies, 5 of which are educator positions. She said most of the openings are ESP, ABA Tutors, and Interventionists.

She said there has been some movement between buildings and positions. She added that 20% of openings are filled with internal transfers.

She said hiring educators from an agency is a last resort. She said the individuals are screened and interviewed.

She said they use different avenues to advertise the jobs such as SchoolSpring, Handshake, print newspapers, and social media. She said there have been referrals as well.

Mr. Giguere also added that during exit interviews with staff who are leaving, the reasons given often are shorter commutes or relocations.

Ms. Trainor also added some educators and administrators have returned to Franklin this year.

Ms. Spencer asked for any questions or comments from the committee?

Ms. Bernstein said there seems to be about a 14.5% turnover, noting the unusual year and other districts facing the same hardship. She said the data collected during an exit interview is good feedback. She asked if the agency personnel are in the union?

Mrs. Marano said no. Ms Trainor replied they are not employed by FPS. She said the 14.5% number would go down if you take away some transfers, etc.

Ms. Bernstein said she would hate to see Franklin move towards an agency model. The administration assured Ms. Bernstein this is not ideal and a last resort.

Mr. Callaghan said that Franklin TV is able to show the website to apply to the viewers watching. Ms. Trainor said they can also access the website to apply as well.

Mr. Callaghan said that the hiring issue is not unique to Franklin and the administration confirmed this is true.

Mr. Charles asked how Franklin compares to other communities?

Ms. Trainor said she feels better than she did a couple of weeks ago and is still in the process of hiring. Mr. Giguere also replied that it is shared across the state.

Mr. Charles asked how many applicants there have been to get to the new 117 hires?

Ms. Trainor replied there are less applications coming in per posting than in the past.

Mr. Charles asked what happens if they don't get the educator positions filled?

Mrs. Marano replied they will look at case loads, and a last resort of transferring staff while continuing to hire.

Ms. Stokes asked how long the contract is from the agency?

Mrs. Marano replied most want a one year contract. She added that there is a termination clause.

Ms. Stokes asked if FPS evaluates the person?

Mrs. Marano replied there is a check and balance process but not a formal evaluation.

Ms. Stokes asked what the line item is in the budget for the agency services?

Mrs. Goodman replied it is under special services or contract services under the Student Services budget. She said there could be a budget transfer if need be.

Ms. Stokes asked if most of the agency hires are for the special education positions?

Mrs. Marano replied yes.

Ms. Stokes asked if they turn away qualified candidates who cost too much?

Mrs. Marano said they are not turning people away if they have the experience.

Ms. Trainor replied that some candidates with experience have been making the move in order to be closer to home. She added that the agency employees are vetted and go through mandated training and do PD days with the rest of the staff.

Ms. Stokes asked if there is a mentor process for new hires?

Mr. Giguere replied that there is a mentor for each new hire. He also spoke about bringing on student teachers into the school.

Ms. Spencer asked what happens if the ESP and Interventionist positions are not filled?

Mrs. Marano replied that services could be potentially missed, coverage may not be available for lunches, etc. She said they will do everything they need to do to make sure minutes are met and anything legal for the students.

Ms. Spencer asked about classroom numbers at Keller and if they are still high like last year?

Mr. Giguere replied they are continually monitoring enrollment. He said they are trying to be fiscally responsible while providing a safe learning environment. He said this may be part of a larger discussion but isn't prepared to speak on that yet. He also said this is typically when a big push happens for enrolling students.

Ms. Spencer asked for an update of classroom sizes after September 1.

Mr. Charles asked if it's possible to have volunteers come in to cover lunches if there is a shortage?

Mrs. Marano said it is definitely an option but a staff member would need to be

present. She commended the building administration for their hard work.

V. Information Matters

A. School Committee Sub-Committee Reports

1. **Superintendent Evaluation** - looking for goals in October
2. **Budget** - N/A
3. **Policy** - next meetings 9/7/22 and 9/28/22
4. **Community Relations** - Ms. Spencer reserved the Harvest Festival booth. MASC and MASS joint conference (11/2-11/5). MASC Delegacy is 11/2.
5. **Space, Needs, and Facilities Assessment** - next meeting 8/25/22, began the RFP process.

B. School Committee Liaison Reports

1. **Joint PCC** - N/A
2. **School Wellness Advisory Council** - N/A
3. **SEPAC** - N/A
4. **Substance Abuse Task Force** - N/A
5. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** - N/A

VI. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes

I recommend approval of the minutes from the August 9, 2022 School Committee meeting as detailed.

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Ms. Bernstein

Roll call vote: Ms. Bernstein-Yes; Mr. Callaghan-Yes; Mr. Charles-Yes;

Mr. McNeill-Absent; Ms. Stokes-Yes; Ms. Whitmore-Absent; Ms. Spencer-Yes

Motion Carries 5-0 with 2 absent

VII. Citizen's Comments - there were none

VIII. New Business

To discuss any future agenda items

Mr. Giguere shared the anticipated items for the 9/13/22 meeting:

- School opening
- New administrator introduction
- DLI and DLI plan
- Superintendent Program Coach
- Transition plan
- Board appointment for Franklin TV

IX. Ms. Spencer asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Ms Stokes; Second: Ms. Bernstein

**Roll call vote: Ms. Bernstein-Yes; Mr. Callaghan-Yes; Mr. Charles-Yes;
Mr. McNeill-Absent; Ms. Stokes-Yes; Ms. Whitmore-Absent; Ms.Spencer-Yes**

Motion Carries 5-0 with 2 absent

X. Adjournment at 8:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Christina Tocci, Secretary

SCAgenda 8-23-22
FPS Summary & Sign Off 082322.pdf
SC Warrant 080422.pdf
SC Warrant 081122.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2304 Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2304.pdf
Discussion Action A - Handbooks.pdf
Discussion Action B - Policy.pdf
Consent Action A - Minutes.pdf