

**Franklin School Committee**  
**August 24, 2021**  
**Municipal Building – Council Chambers**  
**7:00 P.M.**

*Meetings are recorded by Franklin TV and shown on Comcast channel 11 and Verizon channel 29*

**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 and comply with open meeting law regulations, citizens will be able to continue to access the public meeting using the Zoom link or phone numbers below:*

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*Meeting ID: 879 4329 7050*

*Passcode: 335620*

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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.”

**Dr. Bergen called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.**

In attendance were: Ms. Jennifer D’Angelo; Mr. Timothy Keenan; Atty. Judith Pond-Pfeffer; Ms. Mary Jane Scofield; Dr. Anne Bergen; Ms. Denise Spencer; Ms. Elise Stokes.

Also in attendance were: Dr. Sara Ahern; Mr. Lucas Giguere; Mrs. Paula Marano; Mrs. Miriam Goodman.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Moment of Silence**

**I. Routine Business**

**A. Review of Agenda** Dr. Ahern recommends removing **II. Discussion/Action Items:**

**A. Policy - Waiving 1st reading and B. Policy Adoption** from tonight's agenda due to the vote from DESE authorizing the commissioner Jeff Riley to institute required masking in public schools for all teachers, students, and staff until October 1, 2021. The purpose of this is to encourage higher vaccination rates. A threshold of 80% vaccinated would be required to lift the requirement. More information is expected to come in the next few days.

***A vote was overlooked but taken later in the meeting at 7:15 pm for removing II. Discussion/Action Items: A. Policy - Waiving 1st reading and B. Policy Adoption***

Motion: Ms. Spencer Second: Ms. Scofield  
Approve: 7                      Oppose: 0                      Absent: 0

Dr. Bergen then noted that there will be a 20 minute space open for public comments at this meeting.

**B. Citizen's Comments**

In the spirit of open communication, "the Committee will hold a public participation segment (also called Citizen's Comments) about matters not related to an agenda item at the beginning of each regular School Committee meeting. The Committee will listen to, but not respond to any comment made.... A Committee member may add an agenda item to a future meeting as a result of a citizen comment.... The Committee will hear public comments related to an agenda item when the Chair deems appropriate during the Committee meeting. Topics for discussion during the meeting must be limited to those items listed on the Committee meeting agenda for that evening...." - from Policy BEDH

Jackie Maciel, Elm St

Ms. Maciel thanked Ms. Scofield for allowing time for everyone to speak at last week's Policy meeting and to Mr. Giguere for keeping track of everyone who wanted to speak. She said she corresponded with Jamie Hellen to voice her displeasure about the microphones not working.

**C. FHS Student Representative Comments - there were none.**

**D. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Ahern said that there will be a vaccine clinic sponsored by the Health Department and ice cream social in the Davis Thayer parking lot on 8/25/21 from 10am-3pm.

Dr. Ahern stated that nearly 35 teachers attended the first day of orientation on Tuesday 8/24/21 and will continue for the next two days. Tuesday's session included a section on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Two teacher's in the DEI subcommittee facilitated. Two groups learned about technology with the Digital Learning Integrationists. There was an orientation to Student Services as well as English language learning. The day ended with a Portrait of a Graduate exercise.

Dr. Ahern added that on 8/25/21, the new hires will have a conversation with the Franklin Educators Association who will be hosting a breakfast for them. They will also be having a bus tour of Franklin to see all of the schools. Finally, the day will conclude with a walk or drive to the Franklin Public Library who will be hosting a tour.

Dr Ahern noted that on 8/26/21 they will be learning more about school-based activities.

Dr. Ahern referenced a question from the last School Committee meeting on the destination of surplus materials. She said that there are over 1700 math textbooks and 450 social studies textbooks. Canton took a small amount of math materials and an organization called More than Words will be picking up the remaining items for donation.

Dr. Ahern noted the administrative retreat was held last week along with the staff meeting regularly this summer for fall planning. She said the day started last week with a social emotional learning activity facilitated by the Directors of Curriculum Tina Rogers and Linda Ashley. The topic was work/life balance.

There was a reflection exercise facilitated by Shannon Barca and Rebecca Motte, reflecting on education last year.

Dr. Ahern, Mr. Giguere, and Mrs. Marano facilitated a data analysis protocol regarding the survey from last year for the faculty/staff well being.

The day concluded with google tips from the Digital Learning Integrationists.

Dr. Ahern spoke about the upcoming calendar for the next couple of weeks:

8/30 - 1st day faculty and staff.

8/31 - 1st day grades 1-12. Preschool and Kindergarten have a delayed start due to screenings.

9/3 - Professional Development Day (no school for students).

9/8 - Rosh Hashanah (no school).

Dr. Ahern acknowledged the hard work from the facilities department and custodial staff, the technology department, as well as the DPW.

**Dr. Bergen asked the committee for any questions/comments? There were none.**

**II. Guests/Presentations - there were none.**

**III. Discussion/Action Items**

**A. Policy - Waiving 1st reading**

**REMOVED FROM AGENDA SEE I. Routine Business. A. Review of Agenda**

*I recommend waiving the First Reading of Policy EBCFA Face Coverings as discussed.*

**B. Policy Adoption**

**REMOVED FROM AGENDA SEE I. Routine Business. A. Review of Agenda**

*I recommend adopting Policy EBCFA - Face Coverings as discussed.*

**C. ACCEPT Collaborative Capital Reserve**

***Ms. Stokes recused herself from the vote.***

I recommend the approval of the creation of ACCEPT's Capital Reserve with a balance limit of \$1,000,000 for the purpose of accumulating funds for the acquisition, maintenance and improvement of capital items.

**Dr. Bergen asked the committee for any questions?**

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer asked if all 158 member districts will be voting on this?

Dr. Ahern replied that it isn't 158 and you don't have to be a member district to send students.

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer asked if ACCEPT is in all the schools in Franklin?

Dr. Ahern said she is probably talking about BICO and not ACCEPT. ACCEPT is not in Franklin and Franklin sends students to out of district schools.

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer how many students from Franklin are in ACCEPT?

Mrs. Marano replied 10 at the most.

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer asked what are capital items?

Dr. Ahern replied it is furniture, equipment, materials needed for their classroom.

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer asked if each member district pays the same amount of money?

Dr. Ahern replied each district has an assessment and referred to Mrs. Goodman for clarification.

Mrs. Goodman replied that member districts pay \$4,000 to be a member of the ACCEPT collaborative and there are assessments for other items.

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer asked how much money Franklin is paying into this?

Dr. Ahern replied that Franklin is not putting money into this account and we have no cumulative surplus account.

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer said she also noticed that there were many towns that provide community outings and vocational placements for the ACCEPT students but that Franklin wasn't listed.

Dr. Ahern replied that we do have vocational placements at the high school level.

Motion: Ms. Spencer Second: Ms. Scofield

Approve: 6

Oppose: 0

Absent: 0

Abstention: 1

**D. School Handbooks and Back to School Health and Safety**

I recommend approval of the school handbooks as discussed.

Mr. Giguere said that the Assistant Principals and Principals worked together to review handbooks. He noted there are changes being made at the middle and high schools levels. He also noted that lunch is also free again this year and noted in the handbook.

Ms. Stokes said she didn't see a section highlighted green in the Annie Sullivan handbook that Mr. Giguere pointed out.

Mr. Giguere said all middle schools have the same expectations and there is a combined handbook for all middle schools. He said it is the same for elementary schools across the board.

Ms. Stokes noted that this keeps it consistent across the board.

Ms. Spencer said thank you for your hard work.

Ms. Scofield said her name is listed incorrectly in the ECDC manual.

Mr. Giguere said he will fix this error.

Ms. Scofield said for high school graduation requirements, the chart needs to be updated to reflect the classes of 2022-2025.

Mr. Giguere replied the dates were not updated in the handbook and will make the adjustments.

Ms. Scofield asked why Independent study is not included in class rank?

Mr. Giguere replied that he needs to look further into this but that the Senior projects are graded.

***\*See Presentation slides for further information.***

Dr. Ahern spoke on the second part of this discussion/action item and shared that the slides are similar to what was shown at the Policy Subcommittee the week before.

She said the goal is full-time in person for grades Pre-K-12 five days a week. She said there will be more cooperative learning opportunities for students than last year.

Dr. Ahern spoke about layered mitigation plans and noted that some of the deep cleaning practices will be reduced compared to last year. Routinely cleaning of high touch areas is still in effect.

Dr. Ahern noted there are plans in place for grades Pre-K - 8 to distance during lunch.

Dr. Ahern said that Mrs. Marano has been working with Patty Elias, the nurse leader, to keep up to date on what the state is providing for testing options.

Dr. Ahern noted that pool testing will not be returning at least at the beginning of this year, but will not rule it out.

Dr. Ahern said COVID communications will still be in place but is proposing to change the frequency.

**Dr. Bergen asked the committee for any questions/comments?**

Ms. Stokes asked if Franklin would consider an open campus at lunch time?

Dr. Ahern replied this has been requested but it increases risks in other ways with students rushing off of campus.

Ms. Stokes asked if students are quarantined, will they have work to do at home?

Dr. Ahern replied that it will differ by level - at younger grades it could be a packet and older grades could be google classroom.

Ms. Spencer asked if students will be marked truant?

Mr. Giguere replied if students are quarantined they will be marked absent, not truant.

Ms. Spencer asked how the vaccine percentage is being monitored?

Dr. Ahern replied they are monitoring data from the Department of Public Health right now. They will need to ask individuals their vaccine status.

Ms. Spencer asked if Dr. Ahern had any information about Commissioner Riley's statement on vaccines not being the only benchmark for masks

Dr. Ahern said she doesn't have information but after reading a press release or article earlier in the day, her opinion is that he could be referring to improvement in cases and at 80% vaccinated then those with vaccines can remove masks. If something changes with case numbers or a variant. then the mask could return. She is expecting guidance from Comm. Riley soon.

Ms. Spencer asked about possible lunch pods?

Mr. Giguere replied with a moving schedule that would be hard to accomplish at the high school level.

Dr. Ahern added that the cameras in the high school lunchroom would be able to capture who the students ate lunch near.

Ms. Scofield asked about athletes being tested on the weekends.

Dr. Ahern replied that they are individuals who have been identified as close contacts and need to test under the test and stay watch.

Mr. Keenan is happy to see a metric in place to stop wearing masks.

Dr. Bergen said over the past few weeks, the School Committee has received a number of thoughtful and respectful emails. She said according to the protocol, the chair answers for the Committee and there is no behind the scenes deliberation.

### **Public Comments**

Ricky Clark - 53 Julia Avenue

Mr. Clark is against a mask mandate in the schools, is unhappy with the current School Committee, and wants better for the children of Franklin.

Lynne Leblanc - 14 Skyline Drive

Ms. Leblanc has a daughter at ECDC with a speech IEP. She is concerned about her teacher seeing her mouth in a mask. She would like an amendment to the Policy. She thanked the subcommittee for staying late last week for everyone to speak.

Natalie Clark - 912 Washington Street

Ms. Clark is saddened that there is so much debate on this issue and there is no room for mandates in a free society. She refuses to let her children live in fear of

this virus. She said it disgusts her that there will be repercussions for children wanting to breathe oxygen. She said her children will not be muzzled or silent.

Brianna Morehouse - 15 October Drive

Ms. Morehouse feels mask wearing until achieving a vaccination rate feels like blackmail. She said the vaccination rate of 80% moved higher from what was said about herd immunity of 70%. She said what about people who can't have a vaccine like those with EpiPens? She complimented Mrs. Marano on her clear mask. She also stated she is concerned about kids quarantining.

Meghan Federico - 10 Tyson Rd.

Ms. Federico said she realizes the mask mandate is out of the School Committee's hands. She is curious how lunch will work with desks or tables. She doesn't want them at a desk when they can sit in a restaurant at a table.

Mark Bisson - 39 Miller Street

Mr. Bisson would like to see a comprehensive review on the mandates they are doing. He said he has sent the Committee emails with data. He is concerned with quarantining and testing. He feels the five days of testing is a bit much. He would like information on the tests being used.

M. Doherty, no address given

Mr. Doherty said the School Committee cares about children and they work for free volunteering on the Committee.

Gretchen Donahue - 7 Padden Road

Ms. Donahue said the people who spoke before her are not speaking for her or her family and do not represent what she believes. She said she believes in science and masks do work. There should be exceptions but the goal should be to keep kids in school.

Meghan Whitmore - 9 Downingwood Drive

Ms. Whitmore said even if children do not get bad symptoms they can still spread the virus around. It is imperative to work together to stop the spread of the virus to be able to get rid of masks.

Jessica Gerra - 12 Eagle Drive



Ms. Gerra said after recently having COVID, she recommends continuing the Binax now testing to the sixth day. She also thanked the School Committee and said it is a thankless job. She also is thankful for all the replies to emails the School Committee sends.

Bridget Sweet - 1 Doe Drive, BOH chair

Ms. Sweet said they know there is not a one size fits all approach. She doesn't want people to feel hostile towards the 80% number. She said the School Committee, staff, and BOH are all listening and this is a fluid situation. Also, she added the PCR test was not recalled and the majority of tests and BINAX now are effective. She added that while COVID doesn't affect the majority of kids now, no one knows in 10 years what the impact is.

Kim Cawley - 13 Longhill Road

Ms. Cawley asked the School Committee to make a note to plan for the students who are well enough to do work at home. She said vaccines will not stop transmission. She also added that you will never be fully vaccinated if there are more boosters to come.

Meghan Benson - 19 Winthrop Drive

Ms. Bensen said that we don't know the negative effects of face coverings. Also, she said real metrics need to be provided for when the mandate will end.

Dr. Ahern thanked everyone for their comments.

She stated that this is a fluid situation and the way the year is started is not necessarily how it will end. Things may evolve and change.

Dr. Ahern said the BINAX now test is an antigen test.

She also added there is no additional request of the committee to make a decision tonight on masking due to DESE's vote earlier in the day.

**Dr. Ahern recommends approval of the school handbooks as discussed.**

Motion: Ms. Spencer Second: Ms. Scofield  
Approve: 7                      Oppose: 0                      Absent: 0

#### **IV. Discussion Only Items**

##### **A. Back to School Status Update - 8-20-21**

Dr. Ahern referred to the chart with average daily cases per 100,000 and percent positivity. She stated they are at 15 per 100,000 and a 3.63% positivity rate. She said there is five other weeks of data and this is posted in the School Committee meeting packet.

Dr. Ahern said as of 8/20/21, Norfolk county is still in the substantial risk category from the CDC. She said the vaccination status continues to be tracked from the DPH and in the coming weeks will have data specific to Franklin. She said about 40 school age children become vaccinated or receive a first dose on a weekly basis.

Dr. Ahern answered a question asked at the last meeting. The person asked how many cases had been in the Franklin schools last year. She replied that there were 367 cases between students, faculty, and staff overall. She said there is a graph of cases from Sept-June.

Dr. Ahern said the Hockomock League continues to discuss health and safety practices that can be expected in athletic events. The recommendations go to the high school principals who then vote.

Dr. Ahern said bus routes are now posted and bus passes will be distributed on the first day of school. Thanks to Mrs. Goodman and the transportation coordinator, Denise Johnson.

Dr. Ahern said there will be more discussion in September around the October application for the ESSER III funds.

Dr. Ahern said they are actively hiring staff members but there are still some vacancies. There was a job fair at ECDC on 8/23/21 with 15 candidates in attendance. She added they are always looking for substitute teachers, ESP's and nurses. She said they are very excited for next week.

**Dr. Bergen asked the committee for any questions/comments?**

Ms. Stokes asked if the case number is staff and students combined.

Dr. Ahern replied yes.

**B. Summary of New Hires**

Dr. Ahern said in the packet you will find the new hire name, school, and position and it is an excellent group of individuals. These hires are proud of the work they do and feel their work matters.

**Dr. Bergen asked the committee for any questions/comments?**

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer asked how many teachers retired or resigned since June 30?

Mrs. Goodman replied the range is around 12 for retirements.

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer said there are 50 names on the new hire page.

Dr. Ahern replied there were a number of resignations. The number of new hires in large are replacing those who retired or resigned.

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer asked if any of the 50 were employed by FPS in a different position last year?

Dr. Ahern replied yes, there are people on the list who moved positions.

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer is wondering how these hires will be paid come January or February?

Dr. Ahern said again the people on the list in large are replacing those who retired or resigned, some may have changed positions, there are new additions that had been shared in July. There have also been late resignations due to those relocating to different parts of the country. Dr. Ahern said these hires can be supported this year and there will be sufficient funds.

## **V. Information Matters**

### **A. School Committee Sub-Committee Reports**

1. **Budget** - will need to look at the fiscal situation once COVID funding is lost.
2. **Community Relations** - a meeting will be scheduled soon and a budget brochure will be handed out at the Harvest Festival.
3. **Policy** - met on 8/19/21. Next meeting needs to be scheduled. Will be moving forward with DESE information.
4. **Ad-Hoc Superintendent Evaluation** - Dr. Bergen said thank you for the thoughtful evaluations and will be able to present at the next meeting.

### **B. School Committee Liaison Reports**

1. **Joint PCC** - have not met. Will be meeting once the school year begins.
2. **Substance Abuse Task Force** - have not met. Will be meeting once the school year begins.
3. **School Wellness Advisory Council** - have not met. Will be meeting once the school year begins.

Dr. Bergen thanked those who are running for School Committee. She added that the School Committee is apolitical and an autonomous board. She said elected members are required to take an 8 hour course called

Charting the Course. Dr. Bergen added that the School Committee has the responsibility of every child that enters the schools. She said if anyone has any questions of the roles and responsibilities of the committee to speak with any of the members.

VI. **New Business**

A. **To discuss any future agenda items**

Dr. Ahern shared the anticipated items for the 9/14/21 meeting:

- Dr. Ahern's evaluation
- District Improvement Plan/School Improvement Plan
- Meeting some new administration
- Back to school update

VII. **Consent Agenda**

A. **Approval of Minutes\***

I recommend approval of the minutes from the August 10, 2021 School Committee meeting as detailed.

Motion: Ms. Spencer; Second: Ms. Scofield

Approve: 6

Oppose: 0

Absent: 0

Abstention: 1

***\*Jennifer D'Angelo was not present at the 8/10/21 and recused herself from the Approval of Minutes Vote***

B. **Transfers**

I recommend approval of the budget transfers as detailed.

C. **FHS Gift**

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$901.90 from Stop & Shop for supplemental supplies at FHS as detailed.

D. **Jefferson Donation**

I recommend acceptance of the donation of furniture (valued at \$3,350.00) from Cardi's Furniture for the Jefferson Teacher's Room.

E. **Music Gift**

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$3,287.50 from music parents for in-house enrichment as detailed.

F. **Student Activity Accounts**

I recommend approval of the 2021-22 Student Activity Accounts as detailed.

Motion: Ms. Spencer; Second: Ms. Scofield  
Approve: 7                      Oppose: 0                      Absent: 0

VIII.     **Payment of Bills**

Dr. Bergen

IX.       **Payroll**

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer

X.        **Dr. Bergen asked for a motion to adjourn.**

Motion: Ms. Spencer; Second: Ms. Scofield  
Approve: 7                      Oppose: 0                      Absent: 0

### **Adjournment at 8:48pm**

Respectfully submitted,  
Christina Tocci, Secretary

SCAgenda 8-24-21.docx  
Discussion Action A - Policy.pdf  
Discussion Action B - Policy Adoption.pdf  
Discussion Action C - Accept.pdf  
Discussion Action D - Handbooks.pdf  
2021-22 FHS Handbook Links  
Back to School Health and Safety 2021-2022.pdf  
Health and Safety Information for Back to School.pdf  
Back to School Status Update August 20, 2021.pdf  
FY22 Staff Update.pdf  
Consent Action A - Minutes.pdf  
Consent Action B - Transfers.pdf  
Consent Action C - FHS Gift.pdf  
Consent Action D - Jefferson Donation.pdf  
Consent Action E - Music Gift.pdf  
Consent Action F - Student Activity Accounts.pdf  
Payroll Warrant #2204 Summary.pdf  
Payroll Warrant #2204.pdf  
SC Warrant 080521.xlsx  
SC Warrant 081221.xlsx  
FPS Summary & Sign Off 082421.pdf  
SC Warrant 080521.pdf  
SC Warrant 081221.pdf