

Franklin School Committee
December 14, 2021
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 may be asked to raise their hand to be recognized by the Chair. The webinar host may invite the attendee to unmute for comment at the Chair's direction.

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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 7:02pm. She said at the conclusion of the meeting they would be entering into Executive Session and not returning to open meeting.

Roll Call Attendance were: Ms. Camille Bernstein-Yes; Mr. David Callaghan-Yes; Mr. Al Charles-Yes; Mr. David McNeill; Ms. Denise Spencer-Yes; Ms. Elise Stokes-Yes; Ms. Meghan Whitmore-Yes (zoom)

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Matthew Pellecchia

Grade 8

Matthew is an 8th grader at Annie Sullivan Middle School and exemplifies the values of inclusivity, kindness, and perseverance. He is actively involved in the school community and has taken on a leadership role by being a member of the Peer Leader Program and Best Buddies. Both of these clubs strive to educate and provide an opportunity for students to connect and appreciate differences. He also enjoys being active and participates in the Intramural club at Annie Sullivan as well as in the rec department events outside of school. His favorite classes are History and Science but he works hard to do his best in all of his classes. Matthew takes time to study outside of school and has developed good habits that will help him as he progresses in school. Matthew is a big Patriots football fan and enjoys cheering on his team. We are so proud of Matthew and his passion for learning and helping others.

Moment of Silence - this moment of silence was in remembrance of the anniversary of the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre and the recent deadly school shooting in Oxford, MI.

I. Routine Business

A. Review of Agenda - all is fine

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

Steve Joanis, 262 Daniels Street

Mr. Joanis said he made a request for the sexual education curriculum at ASMS and hasn't had a response yet and left a request with the Chair.

Arielle Shearer, Dix Road

Ms. Shearer spoke about objections to students with disabilities being able to be disciplined, including with an in school suspension. She stated that the school is ignoring IEP accommodations and that students with disabilities should not be punished with in school suspensions. She said she did reach out to the central office and Dr. Ahern said she wasn't entitled to an appeal but offered to meet with her. She added that the Asst. Superintendent didn't return her call and the Special Ed Director said she can't tell the principal what to do. She added she does not hold the teachers responsible and applauds their hard work and dedication to her child.

KP Sompally, 42 Palomino Drive

Mr. Sompally is requesting that Diwali be added to the list of observed holidays in which there is no school in Franklin. He said that the town of Franklin observes other numerous holidays with different backgrounds and religious beliefs. He said Diwali is celebrated by people of multiple faiths. He added about 800 families celebrate Diwali in Franklin and about five million across the nation.

Meaghan Bensen, Winthrop Drive

Ms. Bensen spoke about removal of masks at Franklin High School that began on December 13, 2021. She said she reached out to school committee members and Dr. Ahern for clarification for the unvaccinated. She said Dr. Ahern is claiming that the requirements are coming directly from DESE. She states however that the other directive that DESE has issued is unclear and contradictory. She added that Commissioner Riley stated that the unvaccinated are required to wear a mask. She said there is a contradiction as the DPH does not require masks for the unvaccinated, they only recommend them. She said she has asked Dr. Ahern for clarification 8 separate times since Nov 19th. She added that Dr. Ahern's reply each time is a reference to the aforementioned contradictory language and a DESE page of FAQ's. She said no education specialists at DESE have been able to clear this up and that DESE said they are still looking into it. She said that teachers knowing a student's vaccination status based on being masked or unmasked would be a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

C. FHS Student Representative Comments

Ravin Chadhury, Junior Class President

Mr. Chadhury said that the first Spirit Week was successful and it was nice to see the school come together. He added that the drama department had a performance at the pep rally that wrapped up Spirit Week.

He said that Dramafest auditions are this week for the show Cave Dreams. Also, for the middle school theater program Footlighters there will be a start up meeting on 12/22/21 after school in the HMMS auditorium.

The Class of 2022 will be holding a Chipotle fundraiser on 1/3/22.

The Class of 2023 is currently holding a raffle calendar fundraiser for \$20. Prizes are pulled every day in January.

In sports news, he said the football team lost their last playoff game but did beat King Philip on Thanksgiving to win the Hockomock Championship. The Unified basketball team wrapped up their fall season and will be going to Disney in June to represent Massachusetts. The cheerleading team won the Division 1 state championship. He added that the boy's hockey season kicked off last night with a win and the girls hockey team is currently playing. At the same time, boys and girls basketball were currently playing Canton. Also, gymnastics won their home opener.

Finally, he added that the first couple of days of mask optional has begun and everyone is following rules and guidance. He said everyone is looking forward to winter break.

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

Ms. Bernstein asked about the number of students continuing to mask even though they are vaccinated?

Dr. Ahern replied she will share more about this in the Superintendent's report.

D. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Ahern said there was a Professional Development Day on 12/10/21 and the next one is 1/14/22. The PDD on 12/10/21 was by building by level:

ECDC: Foundations, DECA assessments, and Playmakers

Elementary: DESSA assessments which was expanded to all schools this year

Middle: Multi-tiered systems of support particularly for behavioral interventions

High School: Curriculum development with a focus on working with course partners and including SEL/DEI

Dr. Ahern congratulated the Unified basketball team who will represent Massachusetts in the 2022 US Games in Orlando in June. She added that the school committee will see a field trip request for this trip.

Dr. Ahern also congratulated Paula Lupien as she was chosen as the MIAA gymnastics Coach of the Year.

Dr. Ahern spoke about the mask mandate being lifted as of 12/13/21 for those students who have been vaccinated and submitting the attestation form. She said that a number of forms were completed by 12/10 and throughout the weekend as well.

Dr. Ahern said that Mr. Hanna estimated that 75% of students and 40% of staff were unmasking. She said along with the unvaccinated, there are those who are vaccinated and continue to mask.

She said that case counts are going up and in the FPS the numbers are climbing especially in the younger students. There have also been more cases in the high school students in recent weeks than the prior couple of months.

She reminded everyone that students are still required to wear masks while on buses as it is a Federal mandate as well in the school nurse's office.

She said along with the mask optional choice for those vaccinated comes a change in the close contact definition. For close contact tracing, it will be 6 feet at the high school rather than 3 feet like in PreK-8 schools.

Also, Test and Stay cannot be expanded and those who are fully vaccinated are not eligible to participate. This is a Dept. of Education rule.

Dr. Ahern presented a back to school status update slideshow showing case counts from the beginning of the school year - December 2021.

- The DPH publishes a report each Thursday including the % positivity rate.
- As of 12/9/21, Franklin is at 3.27%. It is over 4% in Massachusetts. She said the next report should be coming out on 12/16/21 at 5:00pm.
- If Franklin is 4% or higher, masks would be encouraged on Friday at the high school with an email going out mandating masks for the following Monday.
- Dr. Ahern shared a % positivity chart and noted where there was a spike in August and currently headed up again.
- Dr. Ahern said they are keeping track of the weekly vaccination report. She noted as of 12/10/21 that 37% of Franklin children 5-11 have had 1 shot and 17% have had 2 shots.
- She said they are keeping track of the total cases and there are currently 129 students in quarantine and faculty/staff in quarantine is 6.
- She noted this report is published on Mondays and Ms. Rivera will be sending an email newsletter home to families with the link.

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

Mr. Callaghan asked for confirmation with the 4% positivity rate on Thursdays, if the families receive an email before Sunday to prepare.

Dr. Ahern replied that an email would be sent out encouraging masks for Friday but requiring it for Monday.

Mr. Charles asked for confirmation that masks would be required until the % positivity is back below 4%.

Dr. Ahern replied yes.

Mr. Charles asked if the slide presentation going forward could have the most recent dates at the top of the report?

Dr. Ahern replied that they can do that.

Ms. Stokes asked for confirmation that vaccinated students cannot utilize Test and Stay if they are close contacts in school and has it been that way the whole time?

Dr. Ahern replied that she is correct and has been that way the whole time.

Ms. Stokes also gave a shout out to the music department and all the FPS concerts being held this month. She said it's amazing to everyone playing together in person.

Ms. Spencer asked for clarification on what the 75% is Dr. Ahern mentioned?

Dr. Ahern replied that 75% of students who are vaccinated were unmasked.

II. Guests/Presentations

A. Recognition of recent School Committee Members – Dr. Ahern

Dr. Ahern recognized Mary Jane Scofield. She said that Ms. Scofield served from 1997-2007 and again from 2015-2021. She said Ms. Scofield has been committed to the children of Franklin in many ways. Highlights of her recent time on the school committee include: policy sub-committee, the school start time advisory committee, and the Davis Thayer Facilities Analysis Sub-Committee. She was also a contributor to the Keller/Sullivan building project on her first tenure on the committee. She thanked Ms. Scofield for her dedication and commitment.

Ms. Scofield said she appreciates returning to be recognized. She said she has worked with at least 26 other School Committee members over the years and 5 Superintendents. She said she worked closely with all those people to achieve a common goal. She spoke of the committees she worked on over the years and

gave advice to current committee members. Finally, she said she appreciates the opportunity to serve over the years.

Ms. Spencer said it has been an honor and a privilege to work with Ms. Scofield for the past two years. She said Ms. Scofield has made a world of difference for students, staff, and families.

B. Lifelong Learning Presentation – Pattie Gay, Interim Director of Lifelong Learning Institute

**See presentation slides for detailed information.*

Dr. Ahern noted that Lifelong Learning took a significant hit during the pandemic because of after school programs and enrichment offerings.

Ms. Gay gave an overview of the programs within Lifelong Learning: Solutions, Community Learning, Music Academy and the Summer Program. She also gave an overview of the mission of Lifelong Learning.

Ms. Gay highlighted the Summer 2021 program and upcoming Summer 2022. She said that Summer 2021 was at a limited capacity and had limited offerings. Registration for Summer 2022 which will be full offerings opens Feb 1, 2022.

Ms. Gay spoke about how Lifelong Learning aligns with Franklin's district improvement plans - social emotional well being of staff and students, engaging and rigorous curriculum, high quality instruction, effective two way communication to support student learning.

Ms. Gay said thank you to all who support Lifelong Learning including Central Office, Facilities, Technology, Student Services, etc.

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

Ms. Bernstein said thank you and her children have participated in the programs and a special thanks to Solutions.

Mr. Callaghan echoed Ms. Bernstein as their experience with Solutions has been positive. He also said their experience with the Junior Leader program was great. Mr. Callaghan asked about any considerations for low income families.

Ms. Gay replied that they are a self sustaining organization where tuition supports the program. She said scholarships are available in some of the programs for those who qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Mr. Charles said he utilizes the Solutions program in the morning and it makes it easy for parents.

Mr. McNeill asked if there has ever been any feedback where any classes have led to adding to the school curriculum or how classes are being taught in school? Ms. Gay replied they try to enhance what the students are learning and one way is through SEL.

Mr. McNeill asked if STEM is a complement to what students are learning in school?

Ms. Gay replied that it is a complement and the program is made up basically of FPS teachers.

Mr. McNeill asked about college preparatory classes and any plans to add more classes?

Ms. Gay said Lifelong Learning started offering Writing a College Essay and it is now a very popular course. Common App Bootcamp was added next.

Mr. Giguere added that he was able to see firsthand the first year this course was held and how students were able to complete the course with a firm draft.

Ms. Gay said they also work with the Guidance Dept. and they are always open to new ideas or courses.

Mr. McNeill asked how Lifelong Learning has adapted to students' needs during the pandemic?

Ms. Gay said they are in a rebuilding year and last year hybrid models were offered. Also, there were also virtual private music lessons. She said online classes were very popular last year. She said they needed to adapt and make changes as everyone did.

Mr. McNeill asked about parent and community feedback?

Ms. Gay said they are receiving feedback face to face from families. There are evaluations at the end of each course. There is also space on the website for feedback.

Ms. Stokes echoed the other parents whose children have been to the camps. She said kudos to Ms. Gay and her staff.

Ms. Whitmore said it's a great service and her daughter has taken cello lessons.

Ms. Spencer echoed that her son is in Solutions. She said you can go to the website franklinlifelonglearning.com to sign up for the emails about offerings.

III. Discussion/Action Items

A. Dissolve Transportation Sub Committee

I recommend dissolving the Transportation Sub Committee as discussed.

Dr. Ahern said this was formed by a prior School Committee for the recommending and reviewing of policies around transportation. This committee has not met in Dr. Ahern's time in Franklin. The School Committee will still be able to review transportation policy. The bid process is more operational and is executed by the school business administrator and Superintendent with oversight by the Committee during the budget process.

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Mr. McNeill

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

Motion Carries 7-0

B. DECA Field Trip for State Competition

I recommend approval of the request of Miguel Carmo to take students to the DECA State Competition in Boston, MA from March 10-12, 2022 as detailed.

Dr. Ahern said per policy, anything that is an overnight stay or out-of-state requires approval from the School Committee.

Ms. Bernstein said she is so excited field trips are happening again.

Mr. McNeill asked how many students will be going on this trip? How many have gone in the past?

Dr. Ahern replied between 80-100 students and there were 60 students in 2020.

Mr. McNeill asked if Dr. Ahern could give some information on the format of the competition?

Dr. Ahern replied there are two types - written events which is a 10-20 page paper (60% of the score) and a 15 minute presentation (40% of the score). Also there is role play and a case study. There is also a multiple choice exam factored into the overall score. Students will receive a rubric from the judges.

Mr. McNeill asked if costs are typically covered completely for low income students?

Dr. Ahern replied that costs are not completely covered through the fundraising. She added that one of the group's biggest fundraisers is the school store which the group runs. There is a financial assistance policy through the School

Committee which allows for available funding at the school level to support those who require more support.

Ms. Spencer asked about COVID precautions for overnight trips?

Dr. Ahern said there is nothing in the School Committee policy related to this and said she can find out about any additional DECA requirements.

Ms. Spencer said she wouldn't want anyone to be out any money and asked about the cancellation policy for any student not able to attend due to any COVID exposures.

Dr. Ahern said she will look into the cancellation policy and recouping costs.

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Mr. McNeill

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

Motion Carries 7-0

C. New York City Trip

I recommend approval of the request of Paul Cadenhead and Miguel Carmo to take NBHS (National Business Honor Society) students to NY City on April 2, 2022 to visit the Stock Exchange, Wall Street and the World Trade Center as detailed.

Dr. Ahern noted since the packet was released last Friday the date has been changed from April 9 to April 2, 2022.

Mr. Callaghan said this field trip wowed him.

Mr. McNeill said it's a fantastic opportunity for students.

Ms. Stokes asked about overlap between the two trips?

Dr. Ahern said there will probably be overlap of students attending between the two trips.

Ms. Whitmore said she is happy to see trips starting up again.

Ms. Spencer said she has the same questions here as she had for the DECA trip regarding COVID precautions.

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Mr. McNeill

Roll call vote: Ms. Bernstein-Yes; Mr. Callaghan-Yes; Mr. Charles-Yes; Mr. McNeill-Yes; Ms. Stokes-Yes; Ms. Whitmore-Yes; Ms. Spencer-Yes
Motion Carries 7-0

IV. Discussion Only Items

A. 2022-2023 School Committee Meeting Schedule - DRAFT

Dr. Ahern shared the draft for the 2022-2023

She noted the following:

- Per policy, meetings typically fall on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month.
- Typically one meeting in July
- The 4th Tuesday in December is 12/27 so only one meeting is proposed for December

Ms. Spencer asked for any comments or questions from the Committee? There were none.

V. Information Matters

A. School Committee Sub-Committee Reports

1. **Superintendent Evaluation** - have not met.
2. **Budget** - first meeting on 12/16/21 at 7:30pm.
3. **Community Relations** - meeting will be scheduled soon.
4. **Policy** - first meeting on 1/5/22 at 6:00pm.

B. School Committee Liaison Reports

1. **Joint PCC** - met on 12/13/21. Mr. Charles said they discussed COVID concerns and Remington is partnering with An Unlikely Story for their bookfair. Next meeting is 1/10/22.
2. **School Wellness Advisory Council** - met this week - group is reviewing the wellness policy. Looking to offer community engagement this spring. Next meeting 1/4/22.
3. **Substance Abuse Task Force** - met on 12/13/21, discussed social media concerns, next meeting is 1/24/22.
4. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** - met on 12/8/21. Next meeting 1/12/22
5. **SEPAC** - Ms. Spencer appointed Ms. Stokes as the Special Education Parent Advisory Council Liaison.

VI. New Business

A. To discuss any future agenda items

Dr. Ahern shared the anticipated items for the 1/11/22 meeting:

- Special Education Presentation
- Action items related to the budget. One item will be the \$93,000 budget reduction and FY22 Capital Requests.

VII. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes

I recommend approval of the minutes from the November 23, 2021 School Committee meeting as detailed.

B. Athletics Gift

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$33.00 from Campus Box Media for Supplemental Supplies for the Athletics Department as detailed.

C. Districtwide Gift

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$295.00 from BJ's Wholesale Club for in-house enrichment districtwide as detailed.

D. Jacqueline A Schaeffer Theatre Arts Scholarship

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$250.00 from Sean Jobin for the aforementioned FHS scholarship as detailed.

E. Vincent & Alma DeBaggis Scholarship

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$1,000.00 from Roberta Trahan for the aforementioned FHS scholarship as detailed.

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Mr. McNeill

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

Motion Carries 7-0

VIII. Payment of Bills

Ms. Spencer

IX. Payroll

Ms. Stokes

X. Ms. Spencer asked for a motion to adjourn to Executive Session and will not be returning to open session.

a. Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A §21(a)(2) to conduct collective bargaining with nonunion personnel as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee and the Chair so declares.

Motion: Ms. Whitmore; Second: Mr. McNeill

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

Motion Carries 7-0

XI. Adjournment at 8:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Christina Tocci, Secretary

Budget Workshop 12-14-2021
SCAgenda 12-14-21
LLI Presentation December 2021.pdf
Discussion Action A - Dissolve Transportation Subcom.pdf
Discussion Action B - DECA Trip.pdf
Discussion Action C - NY Trip.pdf
Discussion Action C - NY Trip-revised.pdf
22-23 SCSchedule-DRAFT.pdf
Consent Action A - Minutes.pdf
Consent Action B - Athletics Gift.pdf
Consent Action C - BJs Gift.pdf
Consent Action D - Scholarship.pdf
Consent Action E - Scholarship.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2210M3 Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2210M3.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2211 Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2211.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2211M Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2211M.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2212 Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2212.pdf
FPS Summary & Sign Off 121421.pdf
SC Warrant 111821.pdf
SC Warrant 112421.pdf
Executive Session Minutes 11-23-21 DRAFT.docx.pdf
Pledge Student.pdf