

Franklin School Committee
February 13, 2024
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.

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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.”

At 7:00pm, Mr. Callaghan called the meeting to order.

Roll Call attendance was: Mr. David Callaghan-Yes; Mr. Al Charles-Yes; Ms. Erin Gallagher-Yes; Dr. Paul Griffith-Yes; Mr. David McNeill-Yes; Ms. Ruthann O’Sullivan-Yes; Mr. KP Sompally-No

Also in attendance was: Mr. Lucas Giguere; Mrs. Paula Marano; Dr. Robert Dutch; Dr. Tina Rogers

Pledge of Allegiance - due to the meeting being remote the pledge student from Annie Sullivan will be at a future meeting.

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 - Ms. Ella Mahoney

Ms. Mahoney said that Panther Pride night was on 2/12/24 and February break is next week. She also noted that over 30 students and 5 chaperones will be going on the Belize trip over break.

She said course selection ended on 2/13/24 for 8th graders, moving on to 11th graders in the coming weeks.

She added that NHS applications for the spring are due 2/26/24.

She said there will be an all town showcase chorus and orchestra will be 3/12/24 in the auditorium and the all town concert band will be 3/13/24

She said that DECA club members will be traveling to Boston 3/7-3/9 to compete in the state competition.

For sports, she said that boy’s basketball is currently ranked 9th in the state while the girl’s swim team placed 3rd overall at sectionals. She said the girl’s track team is #1 in the Hockomock League for the 3rd year in a row. She said the boy’s team placed 3rd overall. She added that the Varsity and JV Cheer team placed 1st overall at the recent invitational competition.

She shared the following class of 2024 updates:

- Caps and gowns can be ordered now for graduation
- Senior Banquet is 4/5/24
- All Night Party invites have been sent out and tickets need to be purchased by 3/5/24.

She shared the following class of 2025 updates:

- Prom is 5/3/24 and the theme is luxury, she sent the officers recently visited the venue. She said prom tickets will be on sale after February break.

Mr. Callaghan asked the committee for any questions/comments from the committee?

Mr. Charles said he was able to attend Panther Pride Night and that it was successfully run.

E. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Giguere said he also attended Panther Pride Night and appreciated the efforts of Mr. Hanna and his team.

He noted there was a half day on 2/2/24. He said educators participated in the following PD:

Pre-K: Safety care training and the new IEP

Elementary: Science of Reading

Secondary: UDL curriculum development and assessment

He said the next half day is on Wednesday, 2/28/24. He wished all families a restful and safe February break.

Finally, he said Spring Conferences are upcoming on 3/5-3/6 for grades K-8. These are both early release dates for those grade levels.

Mr. Callaghan asked the committee for any questions/comments from the committee? There were none

II. Guests/Presentations

A. Annie Sullivan Middle School Highlights

Mr. Giguere stated that this presentation will be rescheduled to a later date in order to be in person.

B. SAFE Coalition Overview - Jennifer Knight-Levine

****See presentation slides for more detailed information***

Ms. Levine spoke about the Substance Use Diversion Program. She said the SAFE

Coalition is a judgment free community organization. She spoke about trends coming out of the COVID in 2021-2024 and the suspensions due to substance use. She spoke about the youths in the program and what reasonings they give for their substance use.

She spoke about the Up in Smoke program which is an alternative to traditional school. She added that it is a diversion based program that invites students for three full-day, in-person, small group classes.

She said they work with 12 different school districts and presented a graph of the students they have worked with this school year by grade level.

She talked about substance use and behavior, in regards to mental health, trauma, and family.

She noted the themes they are seeing in 2023/2024 including behavior, stimulant use, trafficking, gambling, and risky behavior. She also noted the positives such as the students speaking about their needs.

Mr. Callaghan asked the committee for any questions/comments from the committee?

Mr. Giguere said the foundation was formed on substance use, however over the past few years, they have also developed their mental health support, and behavioral health support. He noted their referral process has been updated and has evolved.

Mr. Charles asked how this year compares to previous years?

Ms. Levine replied they are seeing different substances, noting an increase in stimulant use.

Mr. Charles asked if there is work with the families as well?

Ms. Levine replied that every child and their family has access to the family support division.

Ms. O'Sullivan asked where young kids typically get vapes from?

Ms. Levine said they typically have a dealer through Snapchat or someone they know, like a family member.

Mr. McNeill asked if there are others that participate in this program or is it primarily for suspensions/expulsion.

Ms. Levine said the majority they receive are from schools but parents will refer their child and they have students self refer this year.

Ms. Gallagher asked how families in the district find out about the program?

Ms. Levine replied that schools will send referrals, as well as doctor's offices. She said they have people calling the support line for information.

Ms. Gallagher noted that earlier in the presentation Ms. Levine said that kids who have had programs or clubs cut are feeling a void.

Ms. Levine replied this is something they saw coming out of Covid. She said there is a concern that middle school youth are not engaged in extracurriculars or the funding is no longer there.

Mr. Griffith noted that he appreciates her positive attitude and approach. He said he appreciates the work and sees the value in it.

Mr. Callaghan said thank you to Ms. Levine for being a resource and for what SAFE Coalition does for the community.

Mr. Callaghan asked for a motion to move: II. Guest Presentations: C. Budget Overview to be presented after III. Discussion/Action Items A and B.

Motion: Mr. McNeill; Second: Mr. Charles

Roll call vote: Mr. Charles-Yes; Ms. Gallagher-Yes; Mr. Griffith-Yes;

Mr. McNeill-Yes; Ms. O'Sullivan-Yes; Mr. Sompally-Absent; Mr. Callaghan-Yes

Motion Carries 6-0 with 1 absent

III. Discussion/Action Items

A. Costa Rica Field Trip Proposal

I recommend approval of the request of Rosanne Achin-Houseman and Vickie Baima to take students to Costa Rica from February 15-22, 2025 as discussed.

Ms. Baima said the cost of the trip is just over \$3,500.

Mr. Charles asked which students are eligible?

Mr. Giguere replied they would need to be a student at FHS currently. Students who are freshman for the 2024/2025 year are not eligible.

Mr. Charles noted that there are a lot of trips happening and wants to make sure this is inclusive for all students based on budget.

Mr. Giguere replied that the offering of more trips each year offers more opportunity for more students to attend. He also added that EF Tours has fundraising pages that can be utilized.

Motion: Mr. McNeill; Second: Mr. Charles

Roll call vote: Mr. Charles-Yes; Ms. Gallagher-Yes; Mr. Griffith-Yes;
Mr. McNeill-Yes; Ms. O'Sullivan-Yes; Mr. Sompally-Absent; Mr. Callaghan-Yes
Motion Carries 6-0 with 1 absent

B. Italy Field Trip Proposal

I recommend approval of the request of Chris Penza and Christopher Kelly to take FHS students to Italy from Feb 14-23, 2025 as discussed.

Mr. Kelly noted the total cost for the trip for students is \$4,409.

Ms. O'Sullivan asked how the fundraising works?

Mr. Giguere replied that the fundraising page that is set up is similar to a GoFundMe page. He noted that EF awards scholarships as well.

Mr. Penza gave her an overview of the process.

Ms. Gallagher asked if the tour departed from New York, how would the students get there?

Mr. Penza replied that EF sends buses to bring the students to New York.

Motion: Mr. McNeill; Second: Mr. Charles

Roll call vote: Mr. Charles-Yes; Ms. Gallagher-Yes; Mr. Griffith-Yes;
Mr. McNeill-Yes; Ms. O'Sullivan-Yes; Mr. Sompally-Absent; Mr. Callaghan-Yes
Motion Carries 6-0 with 1 absent

C. Budget Overview - Mr. Lucas Giguere and Dr. Bob Dutch

****See presentation slides for more detailed information***

Mr. Giguere said that in March he will have the Superintendent's Recommended Budget and Budget Hearing. He said the FY25 Budget is being developed in support of Franklin's Portrait of a Graduate.

Dr. Dutch gave some facts about Franklin, its schools and teachers, and the budget process thus far from October, 2023 to February, 2024.

Mr. Giguere spoke about how the budget impacts students, budget actions thus far, and priorities.

Dr. Dutch spoke about the level service budget and the budget increase obligations. He noted that the proposed FY25 Budget is a 10.19% increase over the Final FY24 Budget.

Mr. Giguere spoke about General Education and general education expenses. Dr. Dutch noted the increase in Athletics at 36.05% and said they have moved coaches salaries from Teachers/Specialists to Athletics. He noted the movement of transportation related to Athletics was moved to this category as well.

Mr. Giguere spoke about Special Education and Special Education expenses. He spoke about what the district needs to maintain a level service budget. He noted that the average budget increase since FY19 has been 2.94%.

He noted the potential impact on the district. This includes reduction in staff, increase in fees, changes in programming, elimination of activities, continued cuts impacting recruitment and retention, and culture of volatility.

He spoke about beyond level service which would be stabilizing and partially restoring.

He shared four budget model drafts for context. He noted that these were not his recommended proposed budget.

- Less than level service
- Level service
- Level service +
- Level service and programmatic improvements

Mr. Callaghan asked the committee for any questions/comments from the committee?

Mr. Charles referred to slide 13 and 15. He noted the percent increase column and asked for a dollar increase column so the community does not have to figure the math.

Mr. Charles noted that there is not a librarian at FHS and asked about possibly losing accreditation.

Mr. Giguere replied that they made a decision last year to cut the librarian instead of more teaching positions. He said they are in a warning category and by the time they have their decennial visit in 2026 (Mr. Giguere is double checking this date), they would need to have a librarian in place prior to that visit.

Mr. Charles asked what does it mean for the FHS students if the school loses its accreditation?

Mr. Giguere explained the accreditation process and said a visit is made to the school to look at curriculum, assessments, teacher observations, and to shadow students. He said at the end, they provide a report with recommendations, commendations, and areas to be addressed.

Mr. Charles noted how it would look for students applying to colleges to be attending an unaccredited high school.

Ms. O'Sullivan said the school committee will be discussing an override with the town council. She encouraged the community to come to the upcoming joint budget subcommittee on 3/6/24.

Mr. Giguere noted that he and his team have been engaging in a collaborative effort with the town leadership

Mr. McNeill referred to slides 17 and 18 and asked if they could expand upon staff reduction/teacher to student ratios as well as a culture of volatility in terms of not being able to hire or retain staff.

Mr. Giguere replied that they were limited on who they could hire as there was a cap on who they could afford to bring in. He said once reductions were made last year, some of those staff were able to secure other positions in another district and therefore not available when FPS was able to secure additional money. He noted on the question on volatility, that the cycle of layoffs in the district as of late, has an impact on hiring and retaining staff.

Dr. Dutch added that unemployment benefits being paid out are also a cost to the district and are not included in the budget.

Mr. McNeil noted that on slide 11 the increase to the district's obligations such as health insurance.

Ms. Gallagher asked about other sources of funding and the challenges of relying on grants?

Mr. Giguere replied that they have been able to obtain grants that align with their curriculum and their vision and try to take advantage of all resources. He said they cannot rely on grant funding as they may not always be available.

Dr. Dutch spoke about entitlement grants and are usually tied to socioeconomic capacity within the school district and student population within the district.

Dr. Rogers also added that often a component of receiving a grant is the requirement that the district fund some of the money.

Mr. Griffith said that the decisions that are made now will determine what happens in the long run. He said from the models that were shared, the district should not even have to consider a less than level service. He said now is the time to pay attention and the district is not going to be able to attract and retain teachers. He questioned what is left to even cut.

Mr. Giguere replied to Mr. Griffith. He said that anything less than level service is going to have a huge impact. He noted that 86% of the budget is made up of salaries.

Mr. Giguere spoke about a recent meeting he had with the Dean College President, Kenneth Elmore about ways to serve all students up to college level. He noted that it is crucial to have the staff to help make those investments happen.

Ms. O'Sullivan added that the community can email the town council and ask them to help educate the community as to why there needs to be an override.

Mr. Callaghan thanked Mr. Giguere, the admins, and central office staff for their work and creating the 4 scenarios. He noted that the students are only able to perform at the level in which they are financially supported.

D. 2024-25 School Calendar Vote

I recommend approval of the 2024-25 School Calendar as discussed.

Dr. Rogers said they put out two calendars to the FPS staff who were able to vote on which they preferred. She said calendar A was the one with the most votes.

She noted the following:

8/26/24: First day for staff

8/27/24: PD Day

8/28/24: First day for grades 1-12

8/29/24: First day for Kindergarten

8/30/24: No school for students and staff

6/17/25: 180th day of school

She also noted there are 10 half days and that they removed half days from November and moved conferences to Thursday/Friday. In March, the Pre-K - 8th grade conferences fall on a Tuesday/Wednesday.

She said there will be an attachment about cultural and religious holidays that are not observed as days off in the calendar. It calls into account the student handbook policy and the school committee handbook for families to take days off.

Mr. Callaghan asked the committee for any questions/comments from the committee?

Mr. Charles asked if they could differentiate in the legend about the type of early release day.

Mr. Charles asked if they could list the last possible day by utilizing all 5 snow days.

Dr. Rogers replied yes to both.

Motion: Mr. McNeill; Second: Mr. Charles

Roll call vote: Mr. Charles-Yes; Ms. Gallagher-Yes; Mr. Griffith-Yes;

Mr. McNeill-Yes; Ms. O'Sullivan-Yes; Mr. Sompally-Absent; Mr. Callaghan-Yes

Motion Carries 6-0 with 1 absent

IV. Discussion Only Items

- A. ACCEPT Quarterly Report - Mr. Giguere stated that ACCEPT has shared their quarterly report.

V. Information Matters

A. School Committee Sub-Committee Reports

1. **Superintendent Evaluation** - N/A
2. **Budget** - has not met; there was a budget workshop recently, joint budget subcommittee will be on 3/6/24.
3. **Policy** - some grammar revisions have been made recently.
4. **Community Relations** - met 2/12/24. Dates are confirmed for the Strawberry Stroll (6/7) and Harvest Fest (9/28). Next meeting is 3/4/24.

B. School Committee Liaison Reports

1. **Joint PCC** - next meeting is 3/12/24.
2. **Comprehensive School Facilities Planning Committee** - McKibbin presented demographic studies at their last meeting. Next meeting date is TBD.

3. **School Wellness Advisory Council** - next meeting is 3/5/24
4. **SEPAC** - N/A
5. **Mental Health and Well-Being Task Force** - have not met; had a table at Panther Pride Night.
6. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** - next meeting is after February break.

VI. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes

I recommend approval of the minutes from your January 23, 2024 School Committee meeting as detailed.

B. HMMS Recurring Save the Bay trip

I recommend approval of the request of Rebecca Motte for the recurring Save the Bay trip to Colt's State Park in Bristol, RI on May 30 & 31, 2024 as detailed.

C. Music Gifts

I recommend acceptance of several checks totaling \$6,664.00 for in-house enrichment for the music department as detailed.

D. FHS Gift (Grant)

I recommend acceptance of a grant for \$2,000.00 from General Dynamics for supplemental supplies for the Robotics Club as detailed.

E. JFK Roger Williams Zoo Recurring Field Trip

I recommend approval of the request of Laurel Trottier to take 2nd Grade students to Roger Williams Zoo in Providence, RI on May 31, 2024 as detailed.

Motion: Mr. McNeill; Second: Mr. Charles

Roll call vote: Mr. Charles-Yes; Ms. Gallagher-Yes; Mr. Griffith-Yes;
Mr. McNeill-Yes; Ms. O'Sullivan-Yes; Mr. Sompally-Absent; Mr. Callaghan-Yes

Motion Carries 6-0 with 1 absent

VII. Good of the Order - there was none

VIII. Citizen's Comments - there was none

IX. New Business

To discuss any future agenda items

Mr. Giguere shared the anticipated items for the March meetings:

- Recommended budget
- Budget hearing

X. Mr. Callaghan asked for an adjournment to end the meeting.

Motion: Mr. McNeill; Second: Mr. Charles
Roll call vote: Mr. Charles-Yes; Ms. Gallagher-Yes; Mr. Griffith-Yes;
Mr. McNeill-Yes; Ms. O'Sullivan-Yes; Mr. Sompally-Absent; Mr. Callaghan-Yes
Motion Carries 6-0 with 1 absent

XI. Adjournment at 10:24pm

Respectfully submitted,
Christina Tocci, Secretary

SCAgenda 2-13-24.docx
Payroll Warrant #2416 Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2416.pdf
FPS Summary & Sign Off 021324.pdf
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Beige Scrapbook Art & History Presentation.pdf
EF Tours Discover Costa Rica.pdf
EF Tours Southern Italy Feb 2025.pdf
Discussion Action A - Costa Rica Trip.pdf
Discussion Action B - Italy Trip.pdf
Discussion Action C - 24-25 School Calendar.pdf
ACCEPTBoD Quarter Two 23-24.pdf
Consent Action A - Minutes.pdf
Consent Action B - Save the Bay trip.pdf
Consent Action C - Music Gifts.pdf
Consent Action D - FHS Grant.pdf
Consent Action E - JFK RW Zoo Field Trip.pdf
Budget to Actual.pdf
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