

Franklin School Committee

January 12, 2021

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.

Per Governor Baker's Executive Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20, the public will not be allowed to physically access this School Committee meeting. Members of the Public can access the meeting via remote conference. The School Committee reserves the right to implement additional remote participation procedures and will notify the public of these procedures as soon as practicable.

LOCATION: School Committee members will meet in Town Council Chambers or via Zoom. Members of the public may access the meeting via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/97288308717?pwd=RTRqS0JaNURiWUlvbmZ5amU4YnJwZz09>

Meeting ID: 972 8830 8717

Passcode: FSC

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,97288308717#,,,,*994490# US (Washington D.C)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 972 8830 8717

Passcode: 994490

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

Roll call attendance were Dr. Anne Bergen-yes, Denise Spencer-yes, Judith Pond-Pfeffer-yes, Elise Stokes-yes, Mary Jane Scofield-yes, Timothy Keenan-yes and Jennifer D'Angelo-yes.

Also in attendance were Dr. Sara Ahern, Lucas Giguere, Dr. Joyce Edwards, Miriam Goodman, Lisa Trainor and Paula Marano.

Pledge of Allegiance

Anthony Ficco, Grade 5

Our student leader from Oak Street Elementary School was selected amongst many peers for the honor of representing and sharing his experience as an Oak Street student. Anthony Ficco is a fifth-grade student in Mrs. Reynold's class. He is joined by his parents, Julia and Michael Ficco. Anthony is described as being a student that is personable, enthusiastic, curious, and respectful and friendly. He diligently strives to meet and often exceeds academic expectations. He embodies our core values and consistently demonstrates responsibility.

His current teacher, Mrs. Reynolds was thrilled to nominate and quick to highlight Anthony's many strengths. Anthony is insightful, dedicated, always putting forth his very best effort....always going the extra mile. Anthony is a leader and often drives classroom discussions to a higher level and deeper understanding. He has shared his aspiration to grow, graduate, and attend Harvard! The best part of all is that Anthony has a wonderful sense of humor and enjoys laughing and having fun while learning. He is a pleasure to know!

The Oak Street community and his family are proud of all that Anthony has accomplished and all that he continues to pursue as an Oak Street scholar.

Anthony Ficco shared a statement about how much he likes school and the core values of Oak Street Elementary school.

Moment of Silence

I. Routine Business

A. Review of Agenda - in order.

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

Sonia Vaz -Brune, English as a second Language Teacher from Jefferson Elementary and JF Kennedy Elementary schools wanted to give a teacher point of view. Between traveling between schools and working with higher needs population she spoke about being tired and scared during the pandemic.

C. FHS Student Representative Comments

Katie Garrigan spoke about Winter Sports - going great. Yearbook club working tirelessly on the yearbook and senior superlatives went out last week. The Diversity Club and World of Difference Clubs were putting together resources following the events at the Capital last week. Panther News aired a segment on one of the English classes with a motivational song. Mr. Walsh's AP Government class has been having a fantasy football style government competition. Many students commented about the asynchronous schedule that was implemented on Wednesday last week was appreciated.

Mackenzie Atwood added that the class of 2022 is running a flocking fundraiser, where flamingo's are placed on people's lawns in the hopes that they would donate and receive a free ticket to an upcoming FHS event.

D. Superintendent's Report

Dr Ahern shared an appeal to the community that everyone does their part during the pandemic noting to follow safe practices, limiting social gatherings, wearing masks, and social distancing. She also noted to follow travel restrictions as directed by the Governor's order, emphasizing that getting a negative test on a Thursday followed by a trip on the weekend - that Thursday test is not permitted to use upon return to Massachusetts - a new test must be completed after returning. Dr. Ahern asked that families report cases directly to school nurses so that we can implement our contact tracing protocols more immediately.

Dr. Ahern explained about the opportunity of low cost "Pool Testing" in the schools and community. The DESE is piloting a 6-week, cost-free pool testing for interested districts in Massachusetts, with the option to continue the program at a cost which can utilize federal stimulus money. Surveys will be going out to families and faculty to see if we meet the participation requirements. Dr. Ahern noted that Q & A sessions were set up for families and faculty this week.

Dr. Ahern highlighted the half-day professional development for Wednesday, January 13th. ECDC is working on DECA assessment and SEL. Teachers of grades K-3 will be working on the NWEA Assessment. Teachers in grades 4 & 5 will work on the focus in priority standards. Middle School teachers will work on Keys to Literacy, and High School teachers are working by department on the priority standards.

Dr. Ahern announced that Dr. Joyce Edwards will be retiring from her position of Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning in June of this year. Dr. Ahern thanked Dr. Edwards for her tremendous commitment and dedication to the children of Franklin for the past 10 years.

Dr. Bergen asked for any comments/questions?

Mrs. Stokes noted she is excited about the Pool Testing.

Mrs. Spencer asked about the logistics in the Pool Testing.
Dr. Ahern noted that it hinges on the participation rate.

Steve Sherlock asked if DESE would adjust time on learning to accommodate the time pool testing will take during the day.
Dr. Ahern noted that she would look into that.

II. Guests/Presentations

A. Oak Street Elementary School Update – Brad Hendrixson & Donna Krikorian

Mr. Hendrixson, Principal of Oak Street Elementary School introduced his Assistant Principal, Donna Krikorian as well as Sue Egan, REACH Program Teacher, Jenna Perro, 1st Grade Teacher, Catherine Nayler, 4th Grade Teacher and a shout out to Anthony Ficco who led the Pledge tonight.

Mr. Hendrixson thanked the Committee, School Administration, and families for the opportunity to share these highlights. He thanked the teachers for their dedication, and the students for their energy and inspiration.

Mr. Hendrixson spoke about Social Emotional wellbeing and engaging a rigorous curriculum. He explained about the challenges this year and how they have evolved from full remote learning to hybrid.

Mrs. Krikorian spoke about the social emotional wellbeing of the Oak Street students being at the forefront of their work by making connections and helping them feel safe and cared for. They have validated the student's emotions, shared coping strategies, and high volumes of positive reinforcement.

Ms. Sue Egan spoke about the REACH Program, which she has been a part of for the past 14 years at Oak Street. She explained how the students in the Program

thrive when they feel their needs are being met and their challenges are understood.

Jenna Perro spoke about her time at Oak Street for over 20 years. She spoke about the bags they pack for students with supplies for their online learning days. She shared some of the struggles of our youngest learners with at home and in person learning and how they are overcoming them.

Katherine Nayler, a 4th grade teacher for 15 years, shared how invaluable the Digital Integrationists are for the classroom teachers. She spoke about her gratitude for the Wednesday planning time that is critical for all teachers to collaborate and adapt their curriculum to the hybrid model. She shared about the resilience and flexibility of both students and teachers. She praised teachers for thinking creatively and building a sense of normalcy for both online and in person students.

Mrs. Krikorian shared some of the student's responses when asked what they like about Oak Street Elementary School.

Dr. Bergen asked for comments or questions from the Committee.

All Committee members thanked the group for their thoughtful presentation.

III. Discussion/Action Items

Dr. Ahern, along with Mr. Hanna as Mr. Angelo had a previous engagement, explained what would happen with Athletics if the schools had to go to a predominantly remote setting. She noted that she thinks that the circumstances are different from the fall. She spoke of the challenges with staff attendance for both Covid related and unrelated reasons. If the High School were to go fully remote, reasons being there was evidence of in-school transmission, multiple cases connected within the school environment, a confirmed party with Covid positive people attending, or a significant municipal outbreak that involves a cluster of High School students. Dr. Ahern, Mr. Hanna and Mr. Angelo were not comfortable with the current vote that athletics would occur with this scenario, and are asking the Committee to consider, under these circumstances, to discontinue sports participation at that time.

Questions?

Mrs. D'Angelo asked for clarification on what they would vote on.

Dr. Ahern explained that it would be to suspend athletic participation if circumstances warranted full remote at the High School based on health metrics related to students.

Mr. Keenan asked for clarification around the specific health metric used to determine which model the schools are in.

Dr. Ahern explained that the Department of Education changed their guidance to schools about instructional models, as Franklin has been "red" for the past couple of weeks which indicates a hybrid instructional model and remote should only be considered under the most extreme circumstances after consideration with the Board of Health and Department of Education. She stated that it was a qualitative standard based on in-school transmission or the appearance of a school-based cluster. The level of risk is assessed by the contact tracing team (school nurses, Mrs. Marano and Mrs. Trainor) and the decision to go remote could affect a classroom, a specialized program, or an academic team, grade level or cohort.

Ms. Pond-Pfeffer asked if High School sports would be suspended only if the High School went remote due to covid?

Dr. Ahern explained that yes, only if it were a Covid related issue with students, not a staffing issue and when returning to hybrid, athletics would start up again.

Ms. Stokes asked why they were doing this now?

Dr. Ahern explained that with Covid numbers rising, there is more of a risk now than what we have previously experienced. Dr. Ahern noted that winter sports are predominantly indoors, i.e. basketball and hockey, gymnastics and swimming, which increases the risk of spread.

Ms. Spencer thanked the team for being proactive.

Mr. Keenan asked if the School Committee approval was required for the cancellation of sports?

Dr. Ahern explained that School Committee approval is required for participation in sports when in a remote instructional model.

Ms. D'Angelo stated that she believes that the Superintendent has the authority to make those decisions when moving in and out of remote learning.

Dr. Ahern noted that she could look into that more, if requested.

A. FHS Athletics if Remote

I recommend approval of the plan to suspend athletic competition if Franklin High School went remote as discussed.

Motion: Ms. Spencer; Second: Mrs. Scofield

Roll Call Vote: Ms. D'Angelo-Yes; Mr. Keenan-No; Mrs. Scofield-Yes; Ms.

Pond-Pfeffer-No; Ms. Stokes-Yes; Ms. Spencer-Yes; Dr. Bergen-Yes

Motion Carries: 5-2

Dr. Ahern noted that the approval of the Student Opportunity Act Plan was a legal compliance requirement that has been postponed due to the budget process and is now due this Friday.

B. Student Opportunity Act Plan 2021-2023

I recommend approval of the Student Opportunity Act Plan 2021-2023 as discussed.

Motion: Ms. Spencer; Second: Mrs. Scofield

Roll Call Vote: Ms. D'Angelo-Yes; Mr. Keenan-Yes; Mrs. Scofield-Yes; Ms.

Pond-Pfeffer-Yes; Ms. Stokes-Yes; Ms. Spencer-Yes; Dr. Bergen-Yes

Motion Carries: 7-0

IV. Discussion Only Items

A. Personnel Update

Dr. Ahern invited Lisa Trainor to share some thoughts.

Mrs. Trainor noted that we are in a better place at this time than we were at the beginning of the year and that we are utilizing college students to fill in where appropriate. She shared about Covid and routine leaves of absence, and that providers are asking for longer maternity leaves in this environment, retirements, etc. Mrs. Trainor asked the community if there are any nurses looking for opportunities, please check our web site as we are looking for substitute nurses.

Dr. Bergen thanked the team for this report and for all their hard work with the contact tracing.

B. Kindergarten and Grade 1 Survey Summary

Dr. Ahern spoke of the survey that went to families and teachers across the district and the common goal of doing what is best for students in the current environment. She cautioned to not pit the two groups against each other, and noted that the most common comment from families was their appreciation for all the work that teachers are doing.

Key data points from families:

- 275 Family responses (50% of students K-1)
- Questions included 4 scenarios
 - Full in person learning at 3-6 feet distance
 - Full in person learning at 6 feet
 - Modified Hybrid (k-1 in person ½ days)
 - Current Hybrid model
- Families responded
 - 56% would be comfortable with 3-4 feet distancing
 - the majority of families stated they would send their children to school in an alternative setting in the same school
 - 86% of families would send their children to school under the ½ day model
 - 54.6% of parents would be in favor of in person learning if their child's teacher were changed.
- Many parents noted that additional synchronous learning time and additional supervision during remote learning was needed.
- The number one comment was about prioritizing in person learning.

Key data points from classroom teachers:

- ⅔ of teachers responded
- 60% of teachers would like to see 6 feet of distancing
- the number one strength of the scenarios was consistency for students and concentrating on in-person instruction.
- Teachers were predominantly concerned with safety
- The majority of teachers felt that splitting classrooms or moving to alternative spaces wouldn't be effective.
- DT and JFK teachers felt it would be disruptive to move classrooms to a different location.
- Additional planning time and more ESP's were the top supports needed by teachers in the survey.

Dr. Ahern noted that in-person learning is coming, and that we need to look at the logistics of making that transition in the near future.

Questions/Comments:

Ms D'Angelo asked if families were able to pick multiple options about moving to alternative spaces?

Dr. Ahern explained that yes, they were able to pick from multiple options.

Mr. Keenan asked if there were any timelines for these decisions?

Dr. Ahern explained that any of these options would need to follow a process for the logistics and be negotiated with the Union.

Ms. Pond-Pfeffer asked when the decision would be made to return k-1 students to school full time?

Dr. Ahern noted that a process must be followed and more discussions should be had.

Ms. Stokes noted that she had hoped the survey would have brought back a more definitive answer, but stressed that we should be providing more supports for teachers in this model in the meantime.

Dr. Edwards noted that they sent out a support newsletter to families today that will ultimately help teachers by answering common questions. She shared that grade level teachers would use part of the professional development days this week and next week to collaborate on best practices.

Dr. Ahern added that the DESE has developed two webinars on best practices in the remote learning environment to support teachers.

Ms. Spencer asked if there was a clear plan to move forward and if services would be decreased for the older students to accommodate the K-1 students? She also asked if more families of older students wanted to go to the VLA, would we have enough staff?

Dr. Ahern explained that she did not see services being decreased and she would redeploy or move staff to accommodate the VLA.

Dr. Bergen spoke about the complexity of the procedures and inequity in the buildings and the problem that poses in regards to space.

Dr. Ahern noted that the rising case counts creates added pressure and caution in decision making at this time.

Ms. D'Angelo asked if we could explore prioritizing K & 1 students who were making little or no progress during remote learning, which would limit the number of students returning to four day in person classes.

Mr. Keenan added that he would like to align on the prioritization if that were to come to fruition.

C. School Reopening Status Update (1/8/2021)

Dr. Ahern updated the Committee on the most recent health metrics for Franklin, including case counts and cumulative data by schools. She spoke of shortened MCAS testing time for grades 3-8 and the extended ACCESS testing window. She reported on the P-EBT food services benefits in place through the end of the year. She updated the Committee on HVAC system updates and the UVGI at the High School and complexes. Dr. Ahern is excited to announce the vaccine clinics for first responders (school nurses) and looks forward to including educators.

Dr. Bergen asked if there were any public comments?

Donna Grady - K Teacher, FEA President

Thanked the administration for addressing the extra planning time issue. She shared her thoughts on safety with the youngest learners during a global pandemic.

Heather Sansoucy - 3 Downingwood Drive

Shared her thoughts on having a goal for this year around bringing back only K-1 students or bringing back the entire district.

Brent Bullock - 17 Wachusett St.

Shared his frustration around Parmenter being closed this week and discussions about bringing back K-1 students across the district. He stressed his concerns for the high needs population.

Deborah Winterroth - Grade 1 teacher at Jefferson

Shared her thoughts about meeting the needs of students safely during the pandemic.

Kate Roberts - 43 Southgate Road

As a teacher in another district, shared her thoughts on the protocols that are required for in person instruction and all the challenges it poses. She thanked all the teachers for all of their hard work.

Brian Weeks - 107 Conlyn Avenue

Shared his frustrations with regard to his 1st grader in the hybrid model and that the in-person model is not moving forward.

William Ertle - 4 Mockingbird Drive

Shared his thoughts on adding needed planning time without adding more asynchronous time and changing our expectations on where students should be in alignment with the standards.

Kristen Johnson - 4 Sherbourn Lane

Commented that with the School Committee meetings virtual, she has had the opportunity to attend them more regularly and hopes they will continue remotely. She also shared that her children were so excited to attend school in person the 3 days they attended in December/January so far and that they are not ok when learning remotely.

Sonia Vaz Brune - ELL teacher at Jefferson and Kennedy Elementary Schools
shared her worries about her low comfort level with the short distancing that would be put in place with more in person learning.

Christine Anderson - 5 Peter's Lane

Commented that her son is as passionate about being in school as he is on his remote days. She asked that the Committee consider all the implications of bringing all the student's back to in person learning.

Chris Evans - 2 Odyssey Lane

Shared his concern for teachers, working under extremely stressful conditions citing positive test results reported by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education supports all of their concerns.

V. Information Matters

A. School Committee Sub-Committee Reports

1. Budget - next meeting Thursday 1/14/21 at 4:30pm
2. Ad Hoc Facilities Analysis meeting thursday 1/14/21 and will discuss Stage 1 data and next steps.
3. Community Relations/Public Schools Advocacy - met on Thursday 1/7/21 to discuss the Legislative Forum which is Tuesday March 2, 2021 at 6:30 pm and will be a virtual event that addresses funding, the SOA, mental health, special education and transportation. Please send additional topics to Denise Spencer within the next week. She also wanted to congratulate the 26 FHS Music students who were accepted to the Honor Band chorus and orchestra.
4. Policy next meeting is Thursday, 1/21/21

B. School Committee Liaison Reports

1. Joint PCC next meeting later in January. Ms. Pond-Pfeffer asked for clarification of the "review of agenda" on the School Committee's Order of Business. Dr Ahern/Ms. Scofield explained that it would be used to take an agenda item out of order or off the agenda.
2. Substance Abuse Task Force next meeting January 26, 2021
3. School Wellness Advisory Council Met this morning, spoke about exercise classes with the Y, and personal trainer small group discounts for FPS staff, as well as working on the newsletter, healthy recipes, etc. Next meeting is February 9, 2021
4. Franklin Racial & Social Justice Task Force - has not yet met.

VI. New Business

A. To discuss any future agenda items

Dr Ahern noted that at the next meeting the FHS would present the Program of Studies 2021-2022, Dr. Edwards will present a homework update, a school highlight and a potential vote on the 2021-22 school calendar.

VII. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes

I recommend approval of the minutes from your December 22, 2020 School Committee meeting as detailed.

B. Keller Gift

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$790.56 from the Keller PCC for supplemental supplies as detailed.

C. Scholarship

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$5,000.00 from Thomas A. Wagner for the Wagner Scholarship as detailed.

D. Music Gift

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$60.00 from Franklin Music Parents for in-house enrichment as detailed.

E. Leuder's Annual Gift

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$75.00 from Leuder's Environmental, Inc. for supplemental supplies as detailed.

Motion: Ms. Scofield; Second: Ms. Pond-Pfeffer

Roll Call Vote: Ms. D'Angelo-has left the meeting; Mr. Keenan-Yes; Mrs. Scofield-Yes; Ms. Pond-Pfeffer-Yes; Ms. Stokes-Yes; Ms. Spencer-Yes; Dr. Bergen-Yes

Motion Carries: 6-0

VIII. Payment of Bills

Dr. Bergen

IX. Payroll

Dr. Bergen

X. Executive Session

A. Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the FEA as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee and the chair so declares.

B. Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A §21(a)(2) to conduct strategy session in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel.

At 10:18pm, Dr. Bergen asked for a motion to adjourn to enter into executive session and not return to open session.

Motion: Ms. Scofield; Second: Ms. Pond-Pfeffer

Roll Call Vote: Ms. D'Angelo-absent; Mr. Keenan-Yes; Mrs. Scofield-Yes; Ms. Pond-Pfeffer-Yes; Ms. Stokes-Yes; Ms. Spencer-Yes; Dr. Bergen-Yes

Motion Carries: 6-0

Respectfully submitted,
Secretary Pro Tem

Denise Miller

List of Documents

SCAgenda 1-12-21
Oak Street Presentation School Committee 1.12.21 (1).pdf
Discussion Action A - FHS Athletics Plan in Remote.pdf
Discussion Action B - SOA Plan 21-23.pdf
Personnel Update Memo Jan. 2021.pdf
SC K_1 Full in Person Survey Summaries.pdf
V.2 Reopening Schools Status Update Jan. 7 2020-2021.pdf
Consent Action A - Minutes.pdf
Consent Action B - Keller Gift.pdf
Consent Action C - Scholarship.pdf
Consent Action D - Music Gift.pdf
Consent Action E - Leuders Gift.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2113 Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2113.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2114 Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2114.pdf
SC Warrant 121720.xlsx
SC Warrant 122420.xlsx
SC Warrant 123120.xlsx
FPS Summary & Sign Off 011221.pdf
SC Warrant 121720.pdf
SC Warrant 122420.pdf
SC Warrant 123120.pdf
Executive Session Minutes-12-22-2020-DRAFT.pdf
January Budget to Actual.pdf
Pledge Student.pdf