

Franklin School Committee
January 25, 2022
Municipal Building – Council Chambers
7:00 P.M.

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Vision Statement

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

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

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

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MINUTES

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

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

Roll Call Attendance 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

Also in attendance were: Dr. Sara Ahern; Mr. Lucas Giguere; Mrs. Paula Marano; Mrs. Miriam Goodman; Mr. Ravin Chaudry; Mr. Nipul Goel; Mr. Josh Hanna

Pledge of Allegiance

Horace Mann Middle School (Beckie Motte & Brendan Healy)

Colleen Kennally

Colleen Kennally is an 8th grader at Horace Mann Middle School who is kind, diligent and respectful. Colleen has varied interests both inside and outside of school. She plays basketball and enjoys swimming. She is an active participant in the literacy opportunities at Horace Mann, such as All In! and our visiting author experiences. Colleen recently started taking archery lessons, after participating in a PE mini unit that tied in with the school's reading of The Hunger Games for All In 2021. This year Colleen says that Social Studies is her favorite subject. Here is what some of her teachers had to say when asked about Colleen:

"Colleen is a student who always offers to help out in class. She is the first to offer to hand out supplies and to clean up. Colleen is an active member of the Kindness Club where she naturally steps up to be a leader for the younger members."

"Colleen is kind, thoughtful, and though she can be quiet in school, she has a great sense of humor."

"Nothing but positive things to say about Colleen. She works hard, treats people with kindness, and keeps a positive attitude."

Colleen is a respectful, kind and positive individual who always puts others first. It is with great pleasure that Mr. Healy and Ms Motte recognize Colleen tonight and thank her for the positive impact she has on the Horace Mann Middle School community!

Moment of Silence

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

Mark Bisson, 39 Miller Street

Mr. Bisson pointed out to the committee that the email sent home earlier in the day stated that the iHealth Covid test is FDA approved. He said he went online to the company website where it states that it is not FDA approved and he expects to see a redaction from Ms. Marano and district.

C. FHS Student Representative Comments

Mr. Chaudhry said all the winter sports teams have been performing well. He said last Friday was Nick Strong night at the basketball game. He said the junior class raffle calendar is still ongoing. He added that the prom committee went to visit the prom site recently. It will be May 6, 2022 at Lombardo's in Randolph. He said the guidance counselors have been meeting with juniors to discuss future plans. Finally, he added that the Science National Honor Society has been thinking of sending some members to the elementary schools to talk to the students about science at the elementary level.

Mr. Goel said that 1/26/22 is the final day of Quarter 2. He said the FHS Student Government will be holding a mobile blood drive in honor of Nick Gaspar on 2/11/22 from 9am-3pm. He said details and registration will be forthcoming. He said the mock trial team won their first preliminary trial on Thursday against Joseph Case High School. Their next preliminary trial is this Thursday vs. the Newman School.

The Music Dept is participating in a calendar raffle fundraiser. There was a Jazz concert last Wednesday 1/19/22. There will be upcoming music performances at the 2/8/22 and 2/10/22 concert recitals.

The class of 2022 finalized their disco theme senior banquet being held on 4/1/22. Graduation will be held on 6/3/22. Other senior week events include a cruise in Boston and a trip to Kimball Farm.

D. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Ahern spoke on behalf of the district, in relation to LGBTQIA+ students. She addressed the recent video generated and shared by some students. Their goal was to bring awareness to school leadership, educators and the FHS community regarding homophobic and transphobic experiences. She said the administration met with the students after the video was shared.

Dr. Ahern spoke about her takeaways from the video and the conversations she had. She said students are sharing their pain and the pain of others and there is the concern that the pain is unrecognized and underestimated. She said the district is taking this matter very seriously. She said another takeaway centers around communication and how the district can share the ways they are working

to make the schools a more safe and inclusive community. She said she is aware there is a disconnect and will need to work on being more communicative and supportive. She said there is still the concern over under-reporting. She said while being aware of privacy rights, demystifying the process will help people understand the process more.

She said the No Place for Hate Campaign launched last week at FHS with Mr Hanna and the administrative team. Along with student representatives from the World of Difference, Peer Leaders, Diversity Awareness Club, and the Sexuality and Gender Alliance. She said the intent to garner commitment from 75% of the students at FHS. They will undertake three school-wide activities in order to get the designation from the Anti-Defamation League. She noted there are 2000 people at FHS and 5 administrators who are actively responding in many ways to create a safe and inclusive school community. She added that it is up to the entire FHS community to make it a more inclusive place.

She said they continue to partner with the Anti-Defamation League for training peer leaders at the middle school level. She said peer leaders prepare lessons for 6th graders that will happen this spring. She added that resource groups have been implemented. She said that they hosted a DEI workshop for winter athletic captains in December. There has also been professional development for incorporating DEI into the curriculum. Also, the Speak up at School continues to be offered for faculty and staff professional development.

She said Mr. Giguere is working on updating the bullying intervention and prevention plan that gets updated every two years. She said the Policy Subcommittee is working to update the bully policy as well. She added that the Director of DEI position has been posted. She said a public consulting group has been awarded a bid for the equity audit. The work they will be undertaking will be shared in the coming weeks. There is a presentation planned for the next school committee meeting on 2/8/22. She said she has also made an offer to the Town Administrator to go to the Town Council meeting on 2/16/22 to share the presentation there as well.

She also shared that the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents is holding their midwinter meeting Thursday 1/27/22 on Zoom. There will be an update from the organization on their REDI work. They will introduce their new Resource guide *Getting Started with Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*. She said MASS recently conducted an internal equity audit, she said results from the survey will be shared with the membership.

Finally, she said that FHS Asst. Principal Maria Weber recently defended her doctoral dissertation at Endicott College and she will be graduating in May. Going forward she ought to be called Dr. Maria Weber.

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

Mr. Callaghan said thank you to Dr Ahern for sharing what is in place. He was able to sign his name at the HS for the No Place For Hate pledge. He commends the work being done and wants to let students know their voices are being heard, to not suffer in silence, and to speak out.

Mr. McNeill said thank you and happy to know the equity audit is moving forward.

Ms. Whitmore said everyone needs to be respectful of each other and it takes courage to come out and be yourself. She said people need to treat others how they want to be treated.

Ms. Spencer said that when bullying is happening and adults respond quickly and show that it is not acceptable. She said the change will require everyone to come together and do better.

II. Guests/Presentations

A. FHS Program of Studies – Josh Hanna, Principal FHS

** See presentation slides for detailed information.*

Mr. Hanna said the Program of Studies captures all of the course offerings offered at FHS. He said in the core value acronym PANTHERS, all the words are relevant in the work that goes into deciding what offerings are going to exist for the students. He acknowledged all members of the community for surviving, growing, and thriving in the most difficult time in education.

Mr. Hanna spoke about the academic expectations for student learning.

Mr. Hanna discussed the process and said the Principal's Council meets every 7 days to review current courses.

Mr. Hanna noted some highlighted adjustments in the Earth Science course and the ESL course. He said the projection for EL's at FHS next year is 20, currently at 13.

Mr. Hanna spoke about World Language courses specifically AP Spanish Literature and Culture. Currently, only AP Spanish Language and Culture is offered. Allowing for native Spanish speaking students to take more challenging curriculum.

Mr. Hanna noted changes in the area of Music/Art. Guitar Class will be broken into Guitar I and II. Similarly, Stagecraft I and II will allow for younger grades who are interested in Theatre Arts IV but not eligible yet.

He also spoke about Physical Education and Wellness. Beginning in 2025, students must take an in school PE elective course or participate in a school sports team. Students in the past have been able to earn credit for belonging to a gym, etc.

Mr. Hanna said the FAA is now under Mr. Grossman who has adjusted the criteria for graduating with FAA distinction.

Finally, Mr. Hanna said that the work is summarized around a guaranteed and viable curriculum as part of the school improvement goal.

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

Ms. Bernstein complimented the honors classes being able to interact with all students in their setting.

Mr. Callaghan said thank you and keep up the great work.

Mr. Charles asked what the FAA is?

Mr. Hanna replied it is the Franklin Arts Academy.

Mr. Charles asked how the course selection process works?

Mr. Hanna replied that teachers will recommend courses. There is less variety early on and once you've met graduation requirements there is allowance for flexibility for the learner to challenge themselves.

Mr. McNeill said he benefited from his time at Franklin High School and he would've liked a guitar class. He asked about the input to propose the adjustments?

Mr. Hanna replied that it begins with the department heads and student needs. As well as graduation requirements.

Mr. McNeill asked if student feedback plays a role in new course offerings?

Mr. Hanna replied they are always open to suggestions and have more clubs and classes than more high schools in the area offer.

Mr. McNeill asked if there is rationale for why these particular courses were adjusted?

Mr. Hanna replied the department heads will do inventory on where they are with the offerings and where they'd like to go.

Ms. Stokes asked about dual enrollment with a local college?

Mr. Hanna replied there are models that exist within the state and they are doing some inventory of options.

Mr. Giguere added there are opportunities and the administration continues to explore how to evolve as a district.

Ms. Stokes asked about the EL co-taught classes and the budget.

Mr. Hanna replied there are additional asks in support of the EL program due to the increase of the number of students for next year. The program will be able to be staffed without additional funding, he said.

Ms. Stokes complimented the PE curriculum changes and noted the importance of physical health in regards to mental health.

Ms. Whitmore said thank you and there are a lot of good options.

Ms. Spencer said thank you to all the staff and teachers who have gone above and beyond. Ms Spencer said last year he spoke about world language offerings so it was nice to hear about it again tonight.

Ms. Spencer said last year he highlighted Race in American Society and the New World History course and asked how those were going?

Mr. Hanna replied the courses are running and are always being looked at to see how they are best offered.

Ms. Spencer asked about community service and opportunities.

Mr. Hanna replied that the community service in this presentation is specifically for the FAA. There are currently no community service requirements for graduation.

Ms. Bernstein added her hope as a parent and educator for interdisciplinary classes in the future. She also added that students are taking different paths after high school like gap years, community college, starting businesses, and not immediately heading to a four year college. She said students are talking about what is best for their mental health.

III. Discussion/Action Items

A. Extending Senior Perks to Include Lunch Block for Students in Directed Study

I recommend approval of the request of Principal Josh Hanna to extend student perks to include lunch block for students in Directed Study as detailed.

Dr. Ahern spoke of a piloted program in the spring of 2018 where students could get to school late or leave early depending on when their study hall was. It was

brought to the School Committee and the attendance policy was suspended. The program was successful and implemented into the handbooks for the following year. Mr. Hanna and his team are now proposing this similar perk for seniors who have study during the lunch block. The students are required to be in good standing and will need parent/guardian permission.

Mr. Charles asked how they would measure if this was a success in order to continue it?

Mr. Hanna replied one area is student performance with a minimum grade threshold. This will be evaluated every two weeks. He also said students need to be given the opportunity to see if they are capable of managing their time and have an increased trust. Also, increased discipline referrals will be another factor. Mr Charles asked if there is a date set to present on the findings?

Mr. Hanna replied if this goes well, there will be a commitment during the school handbook presentation in August.

Mr. Charles asked about juniors preparing for this possibility next year.

Mr. Hanna replied that a student needs to be at a threshold to receive senior perks and it doesn't happen as a default. It also allows the school to utilize a style of progressive discipline where the student loses their perks.

Mr. McNeill said he likes the style of progressive discipline and it is beneficial.

Ms. Stokes asked if an individual is not in good standing if this can be revoked?

Mr. Hanna said this is a privilege and not a right, it can be revoked.

Ms. Whitmore said this is a good reward system.

Ms. Spencer asked who is responsible for the students who are off campus?

Dr. Ahern said this is where the parent/guardian permission factors in.

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Mr. McNeill

Approve: 7 Oppose: 0

Motion Carries 7-0

B. Varsity Cheerleading National Competition

I recommend approval of the request of Doni Gill (Coach) to take 11 cheerleaders to Orlando, Florida from March 18-21, 2022 for the Nationals Competition as detailed.

Dr. Ahern said they have not done a lot of trips for athletic competitions except for state and regional competitions. She said this trip will set a precedent for other groups of students who have this travel opportunity. There will be two days out of school, making for an exception to the school committee trip policy. She added that the fundraising and cost to the trip are both factors in this decision as well. She noted that since the packet was sent out last week, there is an updated version with trip insurance added in.

All the members said best of luck and congratulations.

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Mr. McNeill

Approve: 7 Oppose: 0

Motion Carries 7-0

C. Space Needs & Facilities Assessment Sub Committee

I recommend that the School Committee establish a Space Needs & Facilities Assessment Sub Committee as detailed.

Dr. Ahern said the subcommittee would look at how space is being used, as well as demographics with the housing market. This group will meet with Dr. Ahern, central office, and principals as needed. There was a similar group about 20 years ago. She does not recommend engaging any consultants right now, keeping it internal for the time being. Possibly engaging a consultant next year. She also stated that redistricting could be a recommendation that comes from this subcommittee as well as new school construction. New construction would then be a part of another new committee in conjunction with the town.

Ms Spencer asked if there could be a redistricting subcommittee that comes from this committee's findings?

Dr. Ahern replied that this can morph into a redistricting subcommittee. She added any new construction would then need a new committee.

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Mr. McNeill

Approve: 7 Oppose: 0

Motion Carries 7-0

IV. Discussion Only Items

A. Covid Status Update

Dr. Ahern gave a Covid status update:

- The numbers as of last Thursday are still high with a 21.54% positivity in Franklin. She noted there is a possibility of a lag in that reporting.
- There has been an increase in vaccination rate week to week. There is a higher vaccination rate of older children vs. younger children.
- There was a high of 246 cases two weeks ago, now down to 176 last week.
- A large number of students/staff continue to be out due to isolation, although improving.
- There was a high of 15% of students out on one day and 12% of staff out on one day. On 1/25/22, 6% of students were out and 6% of staff.
- Contact tracing is taking up the most time for the nursing staff and administrators.
- DESE announced a new testing program and notification has been sent to faculty, staff, and families about home testing kits. This is an opt-in program and there are two tests per kit. Students and staff will test every other Wednesday, hoping to capture weekend exposures.
- Symptomatic testing will continue in the schools.

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

Mr. Callaghan asked how long the tests will be provided?

Mrs. Marano replied right now it'll be through April vacation.

Mr. Callaghan asked if test and stay and contract tracing will continue?

Dr. Ahern replied they will not continue.

Mr. McNeill asked about the curriculum and courses are faring with the high number of staff out?

Dr. Ahern replied that it's been tricky. She has been to visit the school and has seen lessons happening. However, students are out and missing school and staff is in quarantine so there is definitely an impact. She said learning gaps need to be addressed but continue to be mindful there is still an ongoing pandemic. She noted that the high school has had the higher number of absences but with their age and more independence the priority of substitutes is at the lower level. She said teachers will prioritize what is important for the students.

Ms. Stokes asked if there is a percentage the state is hoping to get for opting in?

Dr. Ahern replied there is no threshold they need to meet.

Ms. Whitmore asked if testing is for staff as well?

Dr. Ahern replied it is staff as well and there has been a good response so far.

Ms. Spencer said everyone is trying to get through this together and a parent being stressed about it won't be beneficial to the children. She asked if there could be clarification on the FDA approval per citizen's comments?

Mrs. Marano replied that the FDA approval language was from DESE and apologized for the oversight and she will follow up with DESE. On the iHealth website, it states that the product is not FDA cleared or approved but has been authorized by the FDA for Emergency Use Authorization.

Ms. Whitmore asked for clarification that it is a sterile swab?

Mrs. Marano replied that it is correct.

V. Information Matters

A. School Committee Sub-Committee Reports

1. **Superintendent Evaluation** - meeting on 1/27/22 to review the evaluation process.
2. **Budget** - working to finalize a date for next month.
3. **Policy** - next meeting 2/2/22.

B. School Committee Liaison Reports

1. **Joint PCC** - next meeting 2/8/22.
2. **School Wellness Advisory Council** - next meeting is 2/1/22.
3. **SEPAC** - question and answer session on 1/25/22 at 7pm.
4. **Community Relations** - next meeting 2/1/22; discussing coffee chats, legislative forum, and the newsletter.
5. **Substance Abuse Task Force** - next meeting 2/8/22.
6. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** - next meeting 2/9/22

VI. New Business

A. To discuss any future agenda items

Dr. Ahern shared the anticipated items for the 2/8/22 meeting:

- A Diversity, Education, and Inclusion presentation

VII. **Consent Agenda**

A. Approval of Minutes

I recommend approval of the minutes from your January 11, 2022 School Committee meeting as detailed.

B. Transfers

I recommend approval of the budget transfers as detailed.

C. Music Gift

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$664.40 from music parents for supplemental supplies as detailed.

D. Jazz Festival Recurring Field Trip

I recommend approval of the request of Diane Plouffe to take Jazz Band students to the University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, on March 12, 2022 to participate in the Annual Jazz Festival as detailed.

E. Executive Session Minutes for Release

I recommend approval of the Executive Session Minutes from the January 11, 2022 Meeting as detailed.

Ms Spencer asked about the \$75,000 transfer from teachers to counseling services?

Mrs. Goodman replied the Counseling position came before the committee after the budget was approved at the end of July/early August. The line item has been expended with a new hire at Parmenter.

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Mr. McNeill

Approve: 7 Oppose: 0

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 not return to open meeting.**

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with non-union personnel.

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

XI. Adjournment at 8:48pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Christina Tocci, Secretary

SCAgenda 1-25-22
FHS Program of Studies 2022 - 2023Presentation.pdf
Proposed 2022-23 FHS Program of Studies.pdf
Discussion Action A - Senior Perk Change.pdf
Discussion Action B - Cheerleading Trip.pdf
Discussion Action C - Space Needs & Facilities Assessment Sub Com.pdf
Back to School Status Update Oct-Present.pdf
Consent Action A - Minutes.pdf
Consent Action B - Transfers.pdf
Consent Action C - Music Gift.pdf
Consent Action D - Jazz Festival Field Trip.pdf
Consent Action E - ES Minutes.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2215 Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2215.pdf
FPS Summary & Sign Off 012522.pdf
SC Warrant 010622.pdf
SC Warrant 011322.pdf
SC Warrant 123021.pdf
Pledge Student.pdf