

Franklin School Committee

January 26, 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:

<https://zoom.us/j/93416472166?pwd=dG10VUY5MkVWeDhZczVuOWN6QUlZQT09>

Meeting ID: 934 1647 2166

Passcode: FSC

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,93416472166#,,,,*529921# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 934 1647 2166

Passcode: 529921

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

Also in attendance were: Dr. Sara Ahern; Mrs. Miriam Goodman; Dr. Joyce Edwards; Mr. Lucas Giguere, Mr. Josh Hanna; Ms. Rebecca Motte; Mr. Craig Williams.

Pledge of Allegiance

Emerson Laing, Grade 8

Emerson Laing is an 8th grader at Horace Mann Middle School who brings positivity and kindness into our school every day. Emerson has varied interests both inside and outside of school. She plays

soccer and likes to play roller hockey. She is a dog lover and helps care for two dogs at home, Pebbles and Charlie. Emerson loves art, animals and reading and is currently in the process of learning how to ski. Her teachers describe Emerson as a curious learner and a dedicated student. She is an enthusiastic class participant and is always punctual. In their words, Emerson is “compassionate”, “thoughtful”, “super artistic”, “her own person”, and “has an uplifting personality”. Emerson is involved in many of Horace Mann’s after school clubs and schoolwide events. She is currently a member of Yearbook Club, Art Club and Book Club. For our recent visiting author event, Emerson created the virtual welcome banner we used before the live-stream started. Outside of school, Emerson has volunteered at the Franklin Food Pantry as a Food Elf for the past 2 years and created bowls for their Empty Bowls fundraiser. It is with great pleasure that Mr. Williams and Ms Motte recognize Emerson tonight and have her represent Horace Mann Middle School!

Emerson spoke about being guided by the 6 Pillars of Character - trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship and why those traits are in place at HMMS. She spoke of so many fond memories of her time at HMMS the past 3 years and how clubs have had a big role in her life at HMMS. She states they are still able to have clubs, albeit virtually. She tells a small history of Horace Mann and says how essential and amazing teachers are, especially right now. She gives a special recognition of her principal and vice principal, Ms. Rebecca Motte and Mr. Craig Williams, respectively.

Moment of Silence

I. Routine Business

A. Review of Agenda - in order

B. Citizen’s Comments - No citizen 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

C. FHS Student Representative Comments

Akash Shetty, Senior FHS: spoke about tutoring available from the National Honor Society, students can reach out to their guidance counselors to access. Franklin Arts Academy is open for applications for Sophomores and Juniors. This is great for students who may learn more creatively and visually. Applications open until early February. A virtual music concert on February 11th, 2021 for Grades 6-12. Student life: Seniors are prepping for graduation, parents/guardians have been sent emails to order caps and gowns. The class officers are working with the administration to

try to make an outdoor graduation ceremony work. 26 FHS students admitted to senior districts this year for the ensembles music program.

Nipun Goel, Junior FHS: spoke of the FHS Theater Company, a new project called Senior Directed One. They will be holding auditions the first week of February. They will be performing a play either remotely or in person. This is a great way for seniors to get some acting experience and for underclassmen to begin getting involved. Also, The Music Production Podcast Club titled, *To Be Honest* has FHS students discuss issues and current events. Climate change, social justice, etc. Winter sports is underway - season is shortened but students are grateful to just be playing. Hockey, swimming, and basketball are underway and going great. These can sometimes be viewed on Franklin TV. Massachusetts DECA is January 27th, 2021 with over 100 students who submitted a project. Although, no rewards this year like a trip to nationals, they took the time and effort to submit a paper. Mock trial season underway, conducting trials remotely. A different experience but still a good time.

Dr. Bergen thanked both students for their leadership and spirit.

Dr. Bergen asked for any comments/questions?

D. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Ahern welcomed Christina Tocci to the School Committee Secretary position.

Dr. Ahern spoke of an update regarding pool testing. Two webinars have been provided to district leadership to gather more information. One was January 22nd and one was January 26th. Another webinar is set up for January 29th. When more information is gathered it will be shared with Franklin families.

There were over 1,100 family responses to the survey last week. About 50% of families show an interest, with an additional 20% who may be interested but have further questions. Dr. Ahern feels optimistic with more information coming.

Over 600 faculty and staff responded with 73% who are interested. More information to come.

Dr. Ahern updated that she sent a letter to the Department of Education asking them to release an earmark from State Senator Becca Rausch that she allocated to the communities she serves and that it has been released. This will add an additional \$20,000 to Franklin for covid related costs.

Dr Ahern announced a new 8th grade civics curriculum and course.

Dr. Ahern asked Dr. Edwards to speak to a few points on this.

Dr. Edwards states that in 2018 the Massachusetts social studies frameworks have been revised. Franklin has been working to align our curriculum with the new frameworks. Civics is woven in the K-12 curriculums, not just 8th grade. It is non-partisan, based on historical facts. It incorporates visions from the founders of our country in the 1700's, the vision for our government, 3 branches of government, how a bill becomes a law. When the children get to middle school, in 8th grade they have the full civics course where they learn about rights and responsibilities and how to exercise those rights and responsibilities in an action oriented civics way. These are learning standards right out of the Massachusetts framework. Teachers are reporting back that the children are enjoying the work and are starting to immerse in the choosing of the topic for their civics project - a requirement from the Massachusetts legislature as part of the civics curriculum.

Dr. Ahern stated questions will be saved for the end.

Dr. Ahern highlighted the half-day professional development for January 19, 2021.

- ECDC focused on instructional technology in the in person and remote settings.
- Elementary Level focused on instructing the priority standards which have been identified by literacy and math specialists. Some educators who are piloting an Illustrative math program, they had a specific tailored professional development on the IM program.
- Middle School Level focused on their skills on the keys to literacy program. Also, they engaged in social emotional learning community building culture and the sharing of best teacher practices in the hybrid setting. Social studies educators had a workshop on Discovery Education in instructing new standards and the new materials.
- High School Level focused on effective communication, best hybrid teaching practices, priority standards, as well as effective assessment on student information systems.
- Also nurses calibrated around COVID policies and practices.

Next Professional Development Day is February 12, 2021. There will also be a district wide session on cultural proficiency and anti bias education. (3rd part of the series this year in promoting more inclusive school culture) Afternoon will vary across the district, and will have some varying PD on the NWEA assessment on our K-3 educators. Primary Source will be working with social studies teachers on Grade

5 Social Studies instruction as related to new standards. New Consultants working with specialized programs with special education. Also information going out on pool testing, etc.

Dr. Ahern stated that we are proud of the 26 high school students who were accepted to Massachusetts Central District Honor Band Chorus and Orchestra. 12 of the students received all state recommendations. All students are invited to perform in a virtual master class - performing solo with feedback. All students can observe the master classes.

Dr. Ahern wanted to speak again about the program called YOU, Inc. YOU, Inc, is fully able to support students in telehealth - for families who need support during this difficult time.

Dr. Bergen asked for any comments/questions?

Mrs. Stokes stated there is a lot of great information here and thank you.

Dr. Bergen asked, regarding YOU, Inc - if families need services, how do they go about that? Dr. Ahern answered, they go through building administration or student services.

II. Guest/Presentations

- A. HMMS School Highlight -- Ms. Rebecca Motte and Mr. Craig Williams
Ms. Motte and Mr. Williams used the quote - Life's roughest storms prove the strength of our anchors to start the presentation. During all this unknown, what is best for the students? The answer is academic and social emotional needs. Ms. Motte and Mr. Williams spoke of the anchors at HMMS and the six pillars of character - trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship still very much part of every day.

Ms. Motte spoke about the keys to community: collaboration and communication.

Mr. Williams spoke of keeping consistency throughout the day. He also spoke about how awesome the teachers are and they are a team. Ms. Motte spoke about the connection between the teachers and students. Ms. Motte further spoke about creating an effective remote learning experience if it took that direction.

Mr. Williams spoke about professional development and team meetings. Always finding ways to keep the kids engaged whether remote or in person. He said they are very proud of student attendance this year.

Ms. Motte spoke about the many benefits of online tools and the benefits to keep all kids on the same team, no need for a Virtual Learning Academy. She said that teachers have done a wonderful job keeping everyone connected. Technology has made instant engagement possible.

Mr. Williams spoke about social emotional needs and the approach of supportive accountability. He spoke about the benefits of student check-in's to get to know students.

Ms. Motte spoke about the importance of finding creative ways to still have a yearbook and (virtual) clubs.

Ms. Motte and Mr. Williams thanked the School Committee and community for all of their support.

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

All committee members thanked them for such an organized presentation

Mr. Keenan said he learned a lot and asked a follow up question about teacher vaccine eligibility and how the second half of the year looks. What challenges are teachers facing?

Ms. Motte answered that just so many unknowns still and we will keep the foundation of working as a team and leaning on each other. The commitment is what will get them through.

B. FHS Program of Study Update – Josh Hanna, Principal FHS

Mr. Hanna spoke on the advancements and adjustments made on the program of studies. Over 1,200 sections of classes are offered. He spoke about the core beliefs of FHS and how they play a role in decision making. Mr. Hanna also touched upon how academic beliefs and the FPS Portrait of a Graduate play a role.

Mr. Hanna also explained the process of proposing and reviewing and then making the adjustments on the program of studies. Moving into February, students will be choosing their upcoming courses.

Mr. Hanna highlighted a few of the adjustments, such as the course Race in American Society, encouraging students to take as an elective, world language courses and how important culture is as well as the language.

Also, he spoke on PE Pathways, and starting with the class of 2025, credits will need to be earned in the building during the school day or in an after school sport only. He continued to speak on the state Seal of Biliteracy, more increased offerings and a new world history course - touching upon what Dr. Edwards spoke of earlier. Finally, Mr. Hanna spoke on the importance of windows and mirrors, the importance in seeing others and seeing themselves in their courses.

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

Mrs. Pond-Pfeffer asked for clarification on the new courses offered and if they will have experienced teachers offering the course.

Mr. Hanna replied that yes, the question went out to teachers what courses they would be interested in teaching. It would be experienced teachers or the course would not be offered.

All committee members thanked Mr. Hanna.

C. Homework & Homework Policy – Dr. Joyce Edwards

Dr. Ahern spoke about how the homework policy was revised in the summer/fall 2017.

Dr. Edwards spoke about how the new policy changed the tone of homework, a kinder/gentler approach. A homework committee met regularly 2 times a month for a couple of years regarding practices and guidelines.

Dr. Edwards spoke about how the pre-pandemic plan was to monitor and gather data and make any adjustments in the spring, 2020. Due to COVID no formal gathering took place. She explained that this year homework lines are blurred between day and night due to Independent/asynchronous vs. homework. Due to this there is not a data recognizing system this year.

Dr. Edwards updated that homework free vacations have continued and have not heard any complaints from parents, there has been overwhelming support. There will be no survey at this point in order not to overload families. Instead, there will be virtual or social distant focus groups. There was good feedback at the JPCC meeting on January 25th. She said parents said kids are getting less homework but doing more independent work throughout the day and that middle school parents are impressed with the depth of learning this year and kudos to the teachers. Also,

principals will gather data from school councils. A reminder email will go out to teachers that February vacation week is homework free. This doesn't include high school AP classes who may need to prepare for exams in May. There will be a DIP update happening in the spring. Homework is moving into grading reform efforts largely in middle/high school. Future work will include elementary grades.

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

Mr. Keenan stated he is glad homework policy is still happening, especially this year.

Ms. Scofield is excited about the work the kids are doing, and appreciates the update.

The School Committee thanked Dr. Edwards for her presentation.

III. Discussion/Action Items

2021-2022 School Calendar

Dr. Ahern recommends approval of the 2021-2022 School Calendar as discussed.

Approval will be in a two step process.

2nd step will come at a later date which includes half day PDD's and parent teacher conference days.

Motion: Ms. Scofield; Second: Ms. Stokes

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

Motion Carries - 7-0

IV. Discussion Only Items

A. Personnel Update

Reopening Status Update

- Dr. Ahern shared she receives health metrics for Franklin and Massachusetts, not Norfolk county anymore. Franklin is still in the red for the last 2 weeks. There were 31 cases the week of 1/9. There were 16 cases last week. There is a high amount of staff in quarantine due to themselves and/or their children. Hard to navigate a coverage plan due to this.

- Mr. Kaufman is having a VLA information night for parents on January 28, 2021. Dr. Joyce Edwards and Ms. Kate Merten will be there as well. Dr. Edwards is working with Assistant Principal Maria Weber at FHS. The idea is for FHS senior students in good standing to be educational support staff in elementary or middle schools. Messages have gone out to students and families looking for interest. A wonderful opportunity for students interested in education. This is similar to the internship program offered in Q4 but expands it to be earlier than that.
- Mr. Giguere is working with the technology department and digital learning integrationists to clarify tech support. There is a new landing page with information for remote families or teachers looking for tech support.
- Food services - grab and go breakfast and lunch continues to be free and available behind FHS.
- Dr. Ahern stated that there is not a lot of vaccine information for educators and believes this will be rapidly developing in phase 2. She hopes to have more information soon. Some staff have been vaccinated with medical licenses and nurses had first round vaccinations. Upcoming second dose clinics for first responders second doses are upcoming on two Wednesdays.
- Dr. Ahern spoke on pool testing. Anticipates more information next week after the webinar on January 29th. She stated she has learned more on the state's timeline to be up and running. Next step is to formally apply and they will match districts with vendors based on geographic area and number tests that will be anticipated to be used. Also, the BinaxNOW Antigen tests have been further vetted for accuracy in terms of identifying positive individuals from a pool who may be asymptomatic. Initially was approved for symptomatic people.
- Dr. Ahern repeated the travel expectations and intent with the out of state travel order. She stated that before children return to school, they need to be tested with a PCR test.

- Dr. Ahern spoke about internet issues on January 26, 2021. This was a Verizon issue not a Franklin issue. It is not due to our recently upgraded system of 2 gigabytes to 10 gigabytes.
- Dr. Ahern spoke of deploying air purifiers in school buildings and classrooms. Municipal building as well.
- Dr. Ahern said they are continuing to meet regarding K and 1 and supporting families when remote/hybrid.

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

- Ms. D'Angelo asks for clarification on K/1 remote/hybrid.

Dr. Ahern stated the focus is on supporting families in remote settings, improved synchronous instruction while remote, identifying students who most need four days a week in person. Right now, sending K and 1st back full and in person will be very difficult. The case count is too high. Franklin has exceeded last week's case count in the last two days. There have been a lot of close contacts and questions on being able to fully staff. The situation would be too unstable.

- Ms. D'Angelo asked if there will be a pool testing full report.

Dr. Ahern answered, yes at the next meeting there will be a more thorough plan.

- Mr. Keenan: Regarding the Governor's press conference on January 25, 2021, he is disappointed that teachers have been bumped down within vaccine phase 2. Meanwhile, there is an increased push to get kids back into school full time while virus numbers rise. He finds that annoying and frustrating. He proposes sending a letter to the state or DESE?

Dr. Ahern replied that she is disappointed as well and echoes what Mr. Keenan said. She said yes, we could write a letter to the governor. Superintendents organizations have sent a letter already.

- Mr. Keenan: what is the extent the teachers are feeling unsafe in school? He states there must be a range with delay in vaccines and cases rising. Can we send out a survey?

Dr. Ahern replied that yes, this has been a goal and thinks there is a range too.

- Mr. Keenan asked about the vaccine rollout - can district employees get vaccinated without having to schedule themselves? Can the district book appointments for them to take stress off educators.

Dr. Ahern replied that she is working with the health department on what the rollout plan is. There is just not a lot of information from the state right now. Areas for consideration are possibly Franklin HS gym. or possibly Gillette.

- Ms. Stokes asked about the role of the reopening task force? Will the role shift?

Dr. Ahern replied that the role will shift. There will need to be forward planning and in terms of pool testing and vaccine rollouts. Questions like, what kind of summer programs may Franklin be able to offer? What does a transition back to school look like? There will be a team working on next steps.

- Ms. Stokes asked what are your thoughts on VLA for fall for those students who are immunocompromised?

Dr. Ahern replied that it is early but needs to be thought about with respect to vaccines for kids going into the fall. She said preliminary thinking is if kids need remote, the planning will be for a smaller number of students with some criteria attached. More information from the Department of Education, but depends on the vaccine rollout.

- Dr. Bergen reiterated what Mr. Keenan said about teachers being essential workers. She asked if it would be more powerful for the School Committee to draft a letter regarding vaccines to the state in addition to Dr. Ahern sending a letter? The consensus was there is no harm in sending a second letter.

No further committee comments
No public comments

V. Information Matters

A. School Committee Sub Committee Reports

1. Budget - next meeting Tuesday 2/2/21 at 4:30 pm
2. Community Relations/Public Schools Advocacy meeting 1/28/21 at 3:00pm
3. Policy next meeting 3/18/21
4. Ad Hoc Facilities Analysis meeting. Ms. Stokes stated that the committee has moved from stage 1 information gathering to stage 2 evaluating options. The committee will now meet once a week. All information needed has been gathered to move to stage 2. Once evaluation of options is complete, all information will be compiled and presented to the full school committee. Upcoming meetings include Thursday 1/28/21 and Wednesday 2/3/21. Depending on those meeting outcomes, there may be a recommendation ready for the February meeting.

B. School Committee Liaison Reports

1. Joint PCC meeting was held on Monday 1/25/21 and was attended by Dr. Bergen in place of Atty. Pond-Pfeffer. Dr. Edwards spoke and received feedback regarding the homework policy.
2. Franklin Education Foundation - May 4th (Horace Mann's birthday) a day of fundraising to support the FEF. The FEF gave out 17 grants in 2020. Deadline extended for grants this year to 6/30/21. The interfaith council has formulated a food security team called Project Envoy, partnering with local restaurants from early February until April. A percentage of a number of participating restaurants through dine in or take out will be giving back a percentage to the Franklin Food Pantry.
3. Substance Abuse Task Force next meeting is February 23, 2021
4. School Wellness Advisory Council. Flyer went out on 1/26/21 regarding the exercise classes with the YMCA for FPS staff. Next meeting is 2/9/21.

VI. New Business

A. To discuss any future agenda items

Dr. Ahern noted that the next meeting would include a school highlight and a status update and information on pool testing.

VII. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes

I recommend approval of the minutes from the January 12, 2021 School Committee meeting as detailed.

B. Transfers

I recommend approval of the budget transfers as detailed.

C. Remington Middle School Gift

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$2,324.00 from Read-A-Thon for in-house enrichment at Remington Middle School as detailed.

D. Parmenter Gift

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$2,327.97 from the Parmenter PCC for supplemental supplies as detailed.

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

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

Motion Carries - 7-0

VIII. Payment of Bills

Dr. Bergen

IX. Payroll

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer

X. Executive Session

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

At 9:07pm, Dr. Bergen asked for a motion to adjourn, to enter into executive session and not return to open session.

Motion: Atty. Pond-Pfeffer; Second: Ms. Denise Spencer

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

Motion Carries - 7-0

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Tocci, Secretary

SCAgenda 1-26-2021

1. HMMS School Highlight 1-26-2021.pdf

FHS Program of Studies 2021 -2022 Presentation.pdf

Proposed 2021-22 Program of Studies.pdf

School Committee-Homework 1_26_21.pdf

Discussion Action A - 21-22 School Calendar.pdf

Reopening Schools Status Update Jan. 22 2020-2021.pdf

Consent Action A - Minutes.pdf

Consent Action B - Transfers.pdf

Consent Action C - RMS Gift.pdf
Consent Action D - Parmenter Gift.pdf
Payroll Codes-Addl Info.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2115 Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2115.pdf
SC Warrant 010721.xlsx
SC Warrant 011421.xlsx
FPS Summary & Sign Off 012621.pdf
SC Warrant 010721.pdf
SC Warrant 011421.pdf
Executive Session Minutes-1-12-21 DRAFT.pdf
Pledge Student.pdf