

Franklin School Committee
June 22, 2021
Municipal Building – Council Chambers and Zoom
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.

Members of the public are now welcome to attend committee meetings in person. Additionally, in an effort to ensure citizen engagement and comply with open meeting law regulations, citizens will be able to continue to access the public meeting using the Zoom link or phone numbers below.

<https://zoom.us/j/92423390877?pwd=bkIrTkVTaUVtMHo4empZZjYOUXRhUT09>

Meeting ID: 924 2339 0877

Passcode: FSC

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,92423390877#,,,,*121701# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 924 2339 0877

Passcode: 121701

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; Mr. Lucas Giguere; Dr. Joyce Edwards; Mrs. Paula Marano.

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of Silence

I. Routine Business

A. Review of Agenda - all is fine.

B. Citizen's Comments - Dr. Bergen invited 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

Ms. Scofield offered her congratulations to Franklin graduate Kristi Kirshe for being selected to the US Women's Rugby Team at the upcoming Olympics in Tokyo. Ms. Scofield is so proud to know another Franklin athlete will be going to the Olympics.

Mr. Steve Sherlock, 10 Lawrence Drive

Mr. Sherlock said thank you to everyone for a great school year, he said they did an incredible job. He also said that a Franklin area nonprofit network is being created. This will be an informal group meant to share and collaborate around the resources made available to nonprofits. There are over 100 nonprofits based in Franklin. The PCC's are nonprofits in Franklin. There will be additional communications coming up. Reach out to Mr. Sherlock with any questions.

C. FHS Student Representative Comments - there were none.

D. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Ahern said she is proud of the dedication and commitment of teachers, administration, and staff. The faculty and staff modeled adaptability and perseverance. This also extends to the families and students, there is so much to be proud of.

Dr. Ahern said that she and Town Administrator, Mr. Hellen hosted an ice cream truck at the Municipal Building earlier today as a measure of thanks on the town and the school side.

Dr. Ahern highlighted the spring season of athletics. Franklin has four #1 seeded teams - Girls and Boys Lacrosse, Boys Tennis, and Baseball. Boy's Tennis was defeated on 6/21/21 by Needham. Lacrosse and Baseball play again on 6/23/21.

The Unified Track and Field received the MIAA Team Sportsmanship Award at their recent team sectional meet, based on their outstanding demonstration of sportsmanship and respect during their meets.

She also acknowledged Girls Outdoor Track and Field, Boys Outdoor Track and Field, and Baseball were all honored with the Kelley Rex Sportsmanship Award. Dr. Ahern thanked the coaches who are role models and Athletic Director Tom Angelo who sets the tone for the entire department.

Dr. Ahern said earlier today an update went out to the DT and Keller parents related to the DT update. Dr. Ahern noted the following:

- Phase I is complete. This included all the priority items for moving teachers and staff and students to Keller.
- Students toured Keller on 6/10 and 6/17 and she heard wonderful things about that. Having students understand the building and making connections is important before summer break.
- Today being the last day at DT was a bittersweet day. Mr. Giguere was at DT in the morning and Dr. Ahern in the afternoon to check in with staff.
- The DT PCC celebration held recently brought a measure of celebration, enjoyment, and closure during a difficult time.
- Phase II begins this summer, intending to prepare for school in the fall, implement the moving plan, and host some virtual and in person events.
- Mr. Eric Stark and Mr. Jesse Craddock have been doing an excellent job with the transition.
- Lot of questions have come up about the DT building and what will happen with it. The priority right now will be a focus on transitioning materials, students, and staff. The school department will still retain possession of the building.
- Items like desks and cafeteria equipment will be remaining behind. They will be evaluated and will be determined which items to keep and possibly may be distributed to other school buildings. Some additional items may still go to Keller once everyone is settled.
- The Historical Museum has reached out about an exhibit on the history of the DT school.
- Items will be evaluated to determine if they are a surplus to be sold or to be disposed of.
- There will be limited access to the school to protect resources that still remain in the building.

- The School Committee and community will be kept informed of all progress.
- Dr. Ahern concluded with her utmost respect for the beloved Davis Thayer School.

Dr. Bergen asked the committee for any questions/comments?

Ms. Scofield mentioned the video music teacher Jamie Barrett put together about Davis Thayer and how incredible it was.

II. Guests/Presentations

A. VLA Highlights – Ed Kaufman

Mr. Kaufman said he is extremely grateful for the opportunity to be the VLA administrator. He said he arrived in October and the teachers were often working until midnight to prepare for the next day. He said the teachers had compassion and dedication for the students. He said the term Virtually Almost Anything is Possible is something that came out of a staff meeting and is the VLA staff philosophy.

Mr. Kaufman said that prior to coming to Franklin he was an elementary school teacher for 16 years, a junior high school math teacher for 4 years, a counselor for 10 years, also teaching college courses in education and psychology for 18 years. He also was Principal of The Merriam School in Acton, retiring in 2018. He shared the job as Interim Principal for a couple of years, and also took care of his granddaughter at the same time.

Mr. Kaufman offered an overview of the VLA. There were 2 teachers per grade in K-5, 3 special educators, an Interventionist, and 6 regular ESP teachers with 2 helping with the larger enrollment classes like grades K and 2. In October there were 270 plus students in K-5 and 220 students ended the year in VLA with some going back to their home schools.

Mr. Kaufman noted that VLA had a 5 day schedule with a routine each day. He said each week teachers collaborated with math and literacy specialists, himself, and school psychologists and counselors. He also stressed the importance of having Digital Learning Integrationists and a big thank you to Kate Merten for her assistance.

Mr. Kaufman noted bumps in the roads and the repairs made. With communication not in person, they created opportunities for face to face google meets and use of breakout rooms also social interactions during snack time and

lunch time meets, took screen breaks, and created projects and demonstrations. There were also check-ins with teachers in breakout rooms as well as group/partner work in breakout rooms.

Mr. Kaufman spoke about building a strong community in VLA and the 3 C's - creativity, communication, and collaboration. An example of this is through staff meetings where teachers talked together how to create opportunities for building community. Community was accomplished through classroom meetings, small group work, movement breaks, social interactions, and making posters about interacting with one another.

Mr. Kaufman spoke about how VLA had spirit days, dressing up for Halloween, and virtual author visits as well as virtual field trips. He also spoke about math projects with partners, STEAM projects, literacy activities and games. Students also showcased their work to their teacher and classmates. This was an important part of VLA.

Mr. Kaufman shared some of the 5th graders favorite things from the year.

Mr. Kaufman shared some of the 4th graders using one word to describe the year.

Ms. Spencer departed the meeting at 7:37pm and was absent for the remainder of the meeting and any roll call votes.

Mr. Kaufman showed a video from Mrs. Alison Finley's 3rd grade class modeled after Maya Angelou's Poem *And Still We Rise*.

Dr. Bergen asked the committee for any questions/comments?

All members thanked Mr. Kaufman for the presentation.

Ms. Stokes thanked Mr. Kaufman. She said she has two kids who are in VLA so she saw all the growth and elevation and it was such an experience to be a part of. She commends the district for supporting VLA.

Dr. Bergen thanked Mr. Kaufman for stepping up and doing a great job this year. She added that it was an extraordinarily wide system effort to make all of this happen.

Mr. Kaufman said it has been a pleasure and honor to work in Franklin this year in the VLA and administrators across the district.

B. DIP #1 Social Emotional Wellbeing – Sara Ahern, Lucas Giguere, Paula Marano

**See slides presentation for detailed information.*

Mr. Giguere started the presentation by inviting everyone to take part in a reflective breaths practice. He said many teachers do this routinely and it becomes part of the routine lesson.

Mr. Giguere presented on the ways social emotional learning is accomplished through Student Wellness Advisory Council; Substance Abuse Task Force; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Restorative Justice Practices; School Based Student Support Teams; and the SEL District Leadership Team.

Ms. Marano and Mr. Giguere spoke about and detailed three guiding questions asked in order to identify SEL needs. How are we identifying students' social emotional strengths and needs? How are we supporting students in these areas? How are we monitoring student progress?

Mr. Giguere spoke on supporting students and universal supports as well as targeted supports.

Mrs Marano spoke about the Direct Counseling Services through School Based Supports, Mental Health Services, and Partnerships. She also noted that three School Adjustment Counselors have been added at the elementary level next year.

Mrs. Marano also spoke about supporting the counseling staff and did a needs assessment this year to help strengthen their skill set. There were meetings held every month where there was increased collegiality and collaboration between the staff. She said how they partnered with outside consultants, DCF, Dr. Chris Bellonci, and Scott McCleod and the Boston Children's Study. She mentioned that staff felt they were in a lot of meetings so they looked to shorten meetings and ensure that only one service provider instead of two went to the meetings.

Mr. Giguere spoke about ways to monitor students and the assessment tools such as DESSA mini and DESSA full. He said the plan for next year is to roll DESSA out to all the elementary schools paired with a multi level system of support. There were three pilot schools this year.

Dr. Ahern spoke on SEL for faculty and staff, being a challenge this year navigating through the pandemic. Dr. Ahern reflected on everything learned and some of the practices adapted and like to strengthen going forward.

Mr. Giguere and Mrs. Marano spoke about takeaways and priorities

Dr. Ahern spoke about next steps for teachers and staff.

Dr. Ahern also spoke about supporting SEL through Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and some of the outcomes from the committee this year. She mentioned there will be a newsletter communicating the group's vision going out on 6/23/21 that was delayed due to Anne Marie Tracey's departure.

Dr. Ahern said the sub-committees that have been established to tackle a smaller set of action items will continue through the fall.

Dr. Ahern shared the graphic that Ms. Tracey put together for the group and its design features. Dr. Ahern also talked about some D,E,I highlights from 2020-2021. She talked about meeting with 8th grade students and their civics projects related to D,E,I. She and Mr. Giguere met with some students to discuss the handbook. Students identified some areas they had some suggestions on.

Dr. Ahern discussed D,E,I next steps. She said they had been asked to present on The World of Difference Peer Leadership Program but this was put on hold due to COVID. She said Franklin is recognized as having a strong peer leader program. Finally, Dr. Ahern talked about SEL and school safety and how this year the focus was on the COVID response and prevention. She also discussed next steps.

Dr. Bergen asked the committee for any questions/comments?

Ms. D'Angelo said she looks forward to seeing next steps. She does have concerns over the SEL faculty and staff. She said she was disappointed to not see a survey for staff members and culture until this spring. She said it has been a long time without that staff being surveyed. She is hoping to see the results of that survey soon and see an action plan put in place. She sees a new norm for the fall but with new challenges.

Ms. D'Angelo spoke about D,E,I and how she is concerned about the topical level of it. She said there are great resources for people who are actively engaged and looking to expand their knowledge but she is concerned that at student level it isn't enough. She said there are kids and families that need to be educated in the district in a more direct way.

Mr. Keenan asked how do we know if we are lagging in these areas or at the forefront?

Dr. Ahern replied that similar to surveying the staff, surveying the students is something they are interested in exploring. Also, Dr. Ahern talked to the Anti-Defamation League and there is a survey they recommend and sent over for review. She said another measure would be cataloging instances, one of the caveats there is with greater awareness, sometimes the number goes up as more

is reported but seeing the number decrease over time is something we'd like the students to experience over time.

Mr. Giguere also added that in speaking with students this year regarding the handbook, he said kids want real and relatable language with examples. He said the goal is to get to all kids and create educational experiences prior to an incident.

Ms. Pond-Pfeffer said it was an excellent presentation but her concern is if kids are learning from Kindergarten onward about everyone being equal and important then how are there instances with the recent Swastika found and kids getting bullied in class?

Dr. Ahern replied that we are one part of a larger society and there is a lot of work to do community wide. She said she is proud to work with the Franklin Freedom Team. She added that these matters are big and extend beyond the schools but FPS has an awesome responsibility with the education component.

Ms. Scofield said thank you for the great presentation. She asked when the Equity Audit will be done, who will do it and the cost?

Dr. Ahern replied they are in the process of getting quotes from various vendors. She anticipates it being next fall and would love to have the results in the spring to plan for the 2022/2023 year. She said Mrs. Goodman isn't there to confirm but states she believes about \$25,000 for a budget for the audit.

Ms. Stokes asked about the three counseling interns if they are full year.

Mrs. Marano confirmed they will be full year, full time.

Ms. Stokes asked about SEL coaches and if it will be all levels?

Mrs. Marano and Mr. Giguere answered they would like to but are exploring if that is feasible. But he said it will definitely be K-8 and in-house people.

Dr. Bergen asked if there was a piece of this program addressing stigma and if kids are coming forward who are in pain.

Mrs. Marano answered that pre-COVID for example the HS had Mental Health Awareness Week and different programs at the MS level. She added that educating classroom teachers. Also educating counselors so that they can educate faculty.

Mr. Giguere added that a lot of the work is reworded to now say a trusted adult. He said there was a survey given and if students did not say they had a trusted adult, these students were connected with an adult to make a possible connection. He also said that mental health is a component of SWAC and mental health is a routine that should be regularly practiced like nutrition and being physical.

Ms. Stokes also asked if there are advisories happening at the middle schools?

Mr. Giguere said this is still in the schedule. Also, in the fall, the middle school principals are partnering and promoting all of the opportunities for students because of the disconnected year.

Mr. Andrew Bissanti, Town Council Member.

Mr. Bissanti asked what was the outcome of the swastika graffiti?

Dr. Ahern replied she would be happy to share the letter that went out and said that Mr. Hanna sent a letter out last week summarizing a conclusion, action steps, and plans going forward.

III. Discussion/Action Items

A. Policy - First Reading

I recommend moving the following policy to a second reading at the next meeting as discussed:

JFAA-R - School Admission/Residency

Mr. Giguere added the following regarding this policy:

1. Adding students who are in foster care
2. Removed some language contradictory to policy JFAB
3. Cross reference homeless and foster care policies

Motion: Ms. Scofield; Second: Ms. Stokes

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

Motion Carries 6-0

IV. Discussion Only Items

A. Reopening Schools Status Update – June 18, 2020-2021

Dr. Ahern shared that the last four weeks of data in the June 17th report has Franklin with 0 cases per 100,000. She believes this to be a rounding issue. The numbers continue to decrease. With the school year ending the COVID monitoring is concluding as well.

Dr. Ahern said the cumulative pool testing data had 17 positive pools and 5 false positive pools with false positives getting better over time.

Dr. Ahern also said the Project Beacon statistics are also listed in packet on page 2. She said thank you to the nursing staff and the Tri County LPN students.

Dr. Ahern said the Department of Education released a statement over the weekend about summer programming about mask requirements. They are not requiring masks but are encouraged for those unvaccinated.

Finally, the vaccine clinic was held last week with a mobile bus set up outside each middle school and the high school. There were 120 appointments and the buses will return 7/6/21 and 7/7/21 for follow-up. Thank you to Mrs. Marano and Patti Elias for putting the clinic together and Dee Miller for helping to put together appointments.

Dr. Bergen asked the committee for any questions/comments?

Ms. Stokes said this has been so helpful to have part of School Committee meetings and it's an optimistic closure for the end of the school year.

V. Information Matters

A. School Committee Sub-Committee Reports

1. **Budget** - Dr. Bergen reminded the committee about the brochure with budget facts
2. **Community Relations** - N/A (Ms. Spencer absent)
3. **Policy** - next meeting 7/28/21
4. **Summer Workshop** - Dr. Bergen reminded the committee about the summer workshop on 7/27/21 from 4pm-8pm in the conference room. She will be sending out an agenda.

B. School Committee Liaison Reports

1. **Joint PCC** - have not met
2. **Substance Abuse Task Force** - have not met
3. **School Wellness Advisory Council** - have not met

VI. New Business

A. To discuss any future agenda items

Dr. Ahern shared the anticipated items:

- There will be no presentations. Future presentations will be discussed at the workshop.
- Second read of the policy and routine items

Ms. D'Angelo said there have been conversations around the budget with a lot of questions. She is aware that some schools have engaged in a school audit or efficiency study. She said she has

put some information together and would be happy to connect with Dr. Ahern. Dr. Bergen said this will be great to bring up at the workshop.

Dr. Bergen said thank you to everyone who got us through the past school year and the awesome responsibility it was to do that. She said how people respond in a crisis says so much.

VII. Consent Agenda

Ms. D'Angelo stated she will need to abstain from voting on A. Approval of Minutes from the 6/8/21 meeting and D. Approval of Executive Session Minutes from the 6/8/21 Executive Session due to her absence from the 6/8/21 School Committee meeting.

A. Approval of Minutes

I recommend approval of the minutes from the June 8, 2021 School Committee meeting as detailed.

Motion: Ms. Scofield; Second: Ms. Stokes

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

Motion Carries 5-0 with 1 abstention

B. Approval of Executive Session Minutes

I recommend approval of the minutes from the Executive Session of the June 8, 2021 School Committee Meeting as detailed to be released.

Motion: Ms. Scofield; Second: Ms. Stokes

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

Motion Carries 5-0 with 1 abstention

C,D,E were combined as one vote per usual and included Ms. D'Angelo.

C. Transfers

I recommend approval of the budget transfers as detailed.

D. FHS Gift

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$20.00 from the Blackband Giving Fund for supplemental supplies at FHS as detailed.

E. Parmenter Gift

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$75.00 from the Parmenter PCC for a field trip as detailed.

Motion: Ms. Scofield Second: Ms. Stokes

Roll Call Vote: Ms. D'Angelo-Yes; Mr. Keenan-Yes; Atty. Pond-Pfeffer-Yes; Ms. Scofield-Yes; Ms. Spencer-absent; Ms. Stokes-Yes; Dr. Bergen-Yes
Motion Carries 6-0

- VIII. Payment of Bills**
- IX. Payroll**
- X. Executive Session**

Dr. Bergen
Atty. Pond-Pfeffer

Dr. Bergen asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Ms. Scofield; Second: Ms. Stokes
Roll Call Vote: Ms. D'Angelo-Yes; Mr. Keenan-Yes; Atty. Pond-Pfeffer-Yes; Ms. Scofield-Yes; Ms. Spencer-absent; Ms. Stokes-Yes; Dr. Bergen-Yes
Motion Carries 6-0

XI. Adjournment at 8:48pm

Respectfully submitted,
Christina Tocci, Secretary

SCAgenda 6-22-21
VLA School Committee 6_22_21.pdf
District SEL summary_Update.pdf
Discussion Action A - Policy 1st Reads.pdf
File_JFAB - Student Moving Procedures.pdf
Reopening Schools Status Update June 18, 2020-2021.pdf
Consent Action A - Minutes.pdf
Consent Action B - Transfers.pdf
Consent Action C - FHS Gift.pdf
Consent Action D - ES Minutes.pdf
Consent Action E - Parmenter Gift.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2124M Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2124M.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2125 Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2125.pdf
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FPS Summary & Sign Off 062221.pdf
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