

Franklin School Committee

June 8, 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/94436249132?pwd=Zk9LMFY3aVdiNCtSUlpiWVF2M3FtUT09>

Meeting ID: 944 3624 9132

Passcode: FSC

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,94436249132#,,, *721758# US (New York)

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Meeting ID: 944 3624 9132

Passcode: 721758

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.

Dr. Bergen read the executive order from Governor Baker regarding the open meeting law and stated this will be the last time reading this message.

Roll Call Attendance were: Ms. Jennifer D'Angelo - absent; *Mr. Timothy Keenan - absent; Atty. Judith Pond-Pfeffer - Yes; Ms. Mary Jane Scofield - Yes; Dr. Anne Bergen - Yes; Ms. Denise Spencer - Yes; Ms. Elise Stokes - Yes.

*Mr. Keenan was present after the roll call attendance.

Also in attendance were: Dr. Sara Ahern; Mr. Lucas Giguere; Dr. Joyce Edwards; Mrs. Miriam Goodman; Mrs. Paula Marano; Dr. Edward Quigley

Pledge of Allegiance

This evening, the pledge will be a little different. Usually the school being highlighted has one student lead the pledge. Tonight we are pleased to have all the students of the Davis Thayer Elementary School lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. The children of the Davis Thayer Elementary School are representative of all the students who have attended Davis Thayer throughout its history. They come from families that speak multiple languages and represent many cultures, races, and ethnicities. While each member of the school community brings their own uniqueness to the school, together they have created a community of learners who study hard, play hard, and work hard. They're singers and dancers, musicians, athletes, readers, and scholars. They're funny, serious, happy, loud, quiet, and sometimes crazy in the best way. In short they are Franklin. While we would have loved to have them all here in person, we'll settle for having them here via a digital recording.

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

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer expressed her disappointment that only three School Committee members were present at the FHS graduation.

Mrs. Donna Grady - President of the Franklin Education Association.

Mrs. Grady spoke about the town council meeting a couple of weeks ago. She said there were disparaging remarks about the School Department despite how hard they worked over the last year. She also stated that it is wonderful that the budget Dr. Ahern and Mr. Hellen worked on was passed and to suggest any budget issues facing Franklin is anything new is wrong. She stated that the budget has never fully funded the school department. As President of the FEA, she stated how proud she is of the school department.

C. FHS Student Representative Comments - there were none

D. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Ahern extended her congratulations and thanks to Mr. Hanna and the high school administrators for a safe and festive senior week of events. The senior class advisors, DPW, Facilities Department, Police Department, Fire Department, and Administrative Assistants worked for months to put together ceremonies. Also, an outdoor and safe prom at Lake Pearl was held. The awards ceremony on Thursday highlighted so many talented young people. Dr. Ahern also noted the generosity of the Franklin community. Dr. Ahern said graduation was memorable and she took note of the maturity, wisdom, and humanity in the student speeches. She said the car parade was festive and such a nice way for the town to celebrate the graduates when some other events could not be held this year.

Dr. Ahern said she has been enjoying some casual moments talking to parents and guardians through Superintendent Coffee chats. The next one is scheduled for 6/10/21 at 7:00am. The link will be shared again on Twitter but it is the same one used before.

Dr. Ahern said Elementary Night of the Arts is 6/9/21. A link will be shared for access to this virtual presentation.

Dr. Ahern said the Empty Bowls event this year will be on 6/10/21 at FHS and will be modified. This event supports the Franklin Food Pantry.

Dr. Ahern said 5th and 8th celebrations are planned for the coming days.

Dr. Ahern echoed Dr. Bergen's statement regarding public access to the School Committee meetings starting at the meeting on 6/22/21 in chambers.

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

Ms. Scofield asked about the open meeting law and the Governor and Atty. General making a decision at the end of August/beginning of September as to whether remote participation will be allowed.

Dr. Ahern shared what she knew but was not definitive. The state of emergency in Massachusetts ends on 6/15/21. This would signal a return to open meeting law and would mean the public body would need a quorum present in person. She said Franklin's School Committee policy allows for one person to be remote with advanced notice. She stated that she heard that the Governor will extend the current situation while the legislation gets developed to revise open meeting law in light of zoom and the success of municipalities and public bodies have had. Some information should be coming out soon in light of the 15th coming up.

II. Guests/Presentations

A. Davis Thayer Highlights – Dr. Edward Quigley, Principal

Dr. Quigley said he is honored to be presenting and to represent 97 years of educational history. He gave a history of the Davis Thayer School. He said in 1924 the HS opened and at the time on average less than 25% of people graduated high school. He said this was a commitment and investment to the future. He said the school was named after Davis Thayer who made straw hats in Franklin. The hats he made in Franklin were a fashion craze. In 1812, the factory which was across the street from where the school is now, made 6,000-8,000 hats a year. By 1869, they were manufacturing 1.5 million hats a year. Davis Thayer was also Franklin's first postmaster, opening the post office in 1819 at his hat store. Dr. Quigley shared a photo of how the school year began with the distribution of supplies starting the year remotely. He showed another photo of the whole school gathering to recite the Pledge of Allegiance that was presented at the beginning of this meeting.

Dr. Quigley shared DT's Core Values which is a R.E.C.I.P.E for Success (Respect, Encourage, Challenge, Include, Persevere, Engage)

Dr. Quigley noted how hard the teachers worked and persevered during hybrid learning. He noted how the teachers would partner students who were in person with students who were at home to create a classroom community. He said he

couldn't be more proud of the dedication the staff showed this year. He noted they kept traditions alive like the 100th day of school and virtual field trips. He also noted how specials like music continued to play an important role in the student's lives through virtual chorus and the use of simple instruments. He spoke about art as well and shared some examples of art hanging in the hallways. Dr. Quigley spoke about returning full time in April and the signs each grade made to commemorate the occasion. Finally, he spoke about physical education and the creativity needed especially for virtual students.

Dr. Quigley expressed his thanks to the children, the Davis Thayer families, the PCC and all the teachers and staff.

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

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer said it was a great presentation and thank you.

Ms. Scofield said it was a terrific presentation and thank you to everyone who stepped up this year. She also asked if the presentation will be posted.

Dr. Ahern replied that it is in packet material.

Ms. Spencer said thank you to Dr. Quigley for stepping in this year. She said the presentation showed what a close knit community really is. She said thank you to the amazing staff and teachers.

Ms. Stokes echoed what Ms. Spencer said. She said it was great to see all the photos and pledge at the beginning. She said she will always be grateful for DT.

Dr. Bergen also said thank you to Dr. Quigley. She said that he captured the community of DT and it's the people. She said it was an honor to be at Davis Thayer for 19 years.

B. Communication - Dr. Ahern & Anne Marie Tracey

**See Communication Presentation slides in the meeting packet.*

Dr. Ahern said that Anne Marie Tracey was unable to join the presentation tonight.

Dr. Ahern noted that Communication is District Improvement Plan #4: Effective Two-Way Communication. Ensuring that stakeholders are engaged with the school community in support of all of our goals - social emotional well being, curriculum and instruction in the FPS.

Dr. Ahern shared some highlights from this past year in effective communication starting with Portrait of a Graduate.

Dr. Ahern stated that Anne Marie Tracey is leaving Franklin and the FPS and will be missed.

Dr. Ahern stated how communication has really changed over the past year. Instead of communications coming from the schools, it shifted to the central office.

Dr. Ahern said for the 2020/2021 school year a reopening website and a central mailbox were created. Dashboard data was published for transparency of COVID case counts but will soon be fading. Also, Ms. Tracey had put together a what will school look like video, kid friendly signage was created as well as three staff training presentations. Links are included in the meeting packet.

Dr. Ahern talked about how they streamlined and strengthened communication during the pandemic. She talked about the use of School Councils this year and how they were critical resources in reopening at the school level.

She noted dismantling a system and building a whole new one for the Virtual Learning Academy.

Dr. Ahern discussed goals other than reopening. She mentioned that this year brought open more formal opportunities for family education where in the past it was informal. She noted the recent mental health/substance abuse panel and how they continue to strengthen the partnerships with the SAFE Coalition, YOU, Inc., and William James College. She also noted that Leap into Kindergarten was virtual again this year and was effective.

Dr. Ahern spoke about Human Resources Communications and anti-bias education. She stated that it is important to hire candidates who have the same belief system and the values to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Dr. Ahern noted that a lot went on in Human Resources in terms of communications in the past year due to the pandemic.

Dr. Ahern spoke about district updates to the community. As well as Twitter and Facebook, FPS also has a YouTube account as well as a LinkedIn account.

Dr. Ahern said in looking ahead, instead of adding more, it will be more of leveraging existing communication.

Dr. Ahern noted there will be an update from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEI) at the next meeting. This will be folded into the update on DIP #1 - Social Emotional Well-Being.

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

Mr. Keenan said thank you for the presentation. He stated that there are lots of forums for communication and is asking educators and the community if there are areas where there are any specific concerns.

Ms. Scofield asked about any progress in replacing Anne Marie?

Dr. Ahern replied that she will be sitting with Mr. Hellen and Ms. Tracey to reflect and there is a draft posting to go up and will work on recruitment for a shared position.

Ms. Spencer said she is happy to hear a replacement will be recruited for Ms. Tracey as it is a crucial position and hates to lose communication momentum.

Ms. Spencer asked about the mental health/substance abuse panel from May 24th and if it has been put online?

Mr. Giguere replied that he will verify where it is located and will communicate it out.

Ms. Stokes said thank you for putting this together and it was helpful to see it all laid out.

Dr. Bergen said in all her years in education, this is an unprecedented amount of communication. She appreciates the school committee always having a heads up and being kept in the loop. She noted the crucial roles school council members play.

Dr. Ahern noted as the year has gone on there is a bit of a reset where district communication is coming down and school communication is going up so Dr. Ahern wants to give accolades to the principals, assistant principals, and teachers for their communication.

Dr. Ahern also noted that with summer coming and a new person coming on board, if momentum is lost it is okay because it is summer but will pick up again for the new school year.

III. Discussion/Action Items

- A. there are none

IV. Discussion Only Items

- A. Reopening Schools Status Update – June 4, 2020-2021

Dr. Ahern said there is a status update from June 4th that captured the numbers but apologized for not changing the color coding and will make the correction and post on the website.

She noted that Franklin should be shaded green for May 13th and May 20th and should be shaded gray for May 27th and June 3rd.

Dr. Ahern noted that the cases and positivity cases have come down in Franklin and in Massachusetts. There has been a small number of positive cases and the number of individuals in quarantine has gone down.

Dr. Ahern said pool testing has continued but proposes to have it end on Thursday (6/10/21) this week. She said the numbers are low enough to support this change. Also, LPN's from Tri County have been participating and are no longer available. She said this has been a reassuring program since March and is thankful to the Department of Education for funding it.

Dr. Ahern said there is lots of planning happening for the fall including how to apply ESSER funding to support students. The ESSER II application is being completed now.

Dr. Ahern said school meals will continue to be served this summer at the back of Franklin High School Monday - Friday from 11am-12pm.

Dr. Ahern said that recent information from the Department of Education was recently conveyed to families. Students no longer need to wear masks outside and also vaccinated teachers do not either. She also added that summer programs will follow the same practices in place right now.

Dr. Ahern stated that the plan for fall is full and in-person. Remote only instruction is not permitted but alternatives may be available for extenuating circumstances. She added that DESE has hinted that physical distancing requirements will be lifted for fall and she wonders if there will be a clarification of what lunch will look like. More guidance is expected this summer on mask wearing with the initial memo hinting at masks for elementary students.

Dr. Ahern said there is a plan for a vaccine clinic. She said about 230 people had expressed interest but they are not seeing the same level of commitment with consent forms going out. A reminder will go out urging people to sign up because there needs to be 35 people per school to have the mobile unit there. She said the low number is a good sign as people are able to find vaccine appointments. Finally, Dr. Ahern said she was so happy about what was able to happen for the class of 2021. She said the prom was a very delightful evening.

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

Mr. Keenan said it is great to hear numbers keep going down and getting back to normal.

Ms. Spencer said it was nice to have normalcy and see her nephew go to prom.

Dr. Bergen said she is grateful for the planning of a vaccine clinic and that proms were able to happen.

V. Information Matters

A. School Committee Sub-Committee Reports

1. Budget - Public hearing was 5/26 and 5/27 and was passed. Dr. Bergen thanked Dr. Ahern and Mrs. Goodman for the data they shared. She said many town councilors expressed their thanks for shining the light on this critical information and their frustration at unfunded mandates. But the budget issues go beyond unfunded mandates. Dr. Bergen also added the fiscal forecast a few years ago by the town manager has been accurate and all departments are feeling the strain. She said they will be trying to get the budget flyers out to the community to keep educating people.

2. Community Relations - no update

3. Policy - next meeting 6/17/21

4. Ad Hoc Superintendent Evaluation - met on 6/1/21. For the committee members, more information will be given out at the workshop on 7/27/21 from 4pm-8pm.

B. School Committee Liaison Reports

1. Joint PCC - no update

2. Substance Abuse Task Force - no update

3. School Wellness Advisory Council - no update

Dr. Bergen spoke about the YMCA, the largest charitable non-profit in the town. From the beginning of the pandemic, they helped with childcare, remote learning, and meals.

VI. New Business

A. To discuss any future agenda items

Dr. Ahern shared the anticipated items:

- Update to District Improvement Plan #1 - Social and Emotional Well-Being of Students and Faculty/Staff.
- Virtual Learning Academy school highlight
- Possible Policy update

VII. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes

I recommend approval of the minutes from your May 25, 2021 School Committee meeting as detailed.

B. American Heart Association - Kid's Heart Challenge Donation

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$3,350.00 from the American Heart Association for the Kid's Heart Challenge for supplemental supplies to be distributed as follows:

- Parmenter \$500
- Davis Thayer \$300
- Jefferson \$700
- John F Kennedy \$850
- Oak Street \$300
- Keller \$700

C. FHS Scholarship

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$10,000.00 from Fidelity Charitable Donor Fund (advised) for a scholarship.

Motion: Ms. Spencer; Second: Ms. Scofield

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

Motion Carries 6-0

VIII. **Payment of Bills**

Dr. Bergen

IX. **Payroll**

Atty. Pond-Pfeffer

X. **Executive Session**

Dr. Bergen asked for a motion to adjourn, to enter into executive session.

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

B. Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

Motion: Ms. Spencer; Second: Ms. Scofield

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

Motion Carries 6-0

XI. Adjournment at 8:15pm

Respectfully submitted,
Christina Tocci, Secretary

SCAgenda 6-8-21
Davis Thayer slide show for SC mtb 6-8-21.pdf
DIP#4 update to SC 2020-2021.pdf
Reopening Schools Status Update June 4, 2020-2021.pdf
Consent Action A - Minutes.pdf
Consent Action B - Heart Assoc.pdf
Consent Action C - Scholarship.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2123M Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2123M.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2124 Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2124.pdf
SC Warrant 052021.xlsx
SC Warrant 052721.xlsx
FPS Summary & Sign Off 060821.pdf
SC Warrant 052021.pdf
SC Warrant 052721.pdf
Executive Session Minutes 5-25-2021 DRAFT.pdf
BIO of the Pledge Leaders.pdf
Budget2Actual.pdf