

Franklin School Committee
November 9, 2021
Municipal Building – Council Chambers
7:00 P.M.

*Meetings are recorded by Franklin TV and shown on Comcast channel 11 and Verizon channel 29
Any individual who also wishes to record this meeting must notify the Chair*

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 Zoom. We will now use the Zoom Webinar feature. You may access 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.

Zoom Webinar:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86323855086?pwd=TytnSlRlclhxVGJ6cUVldjM4OWZqdz09>

Passcode: FSCMTG

Or One tap mobile :

*US: +13017158592,,86323855086#,,, *380791# or +13126266799,,86323855086#,,, *380791#*

Or Telephone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

*US: +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656 or +1 253 215 8782
or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 720 707 2699*

Webinar ID: 863 2385 5086

Passcode: 380791

International numbers available: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86323855086?pwd=TytnSlRlclhxVGJ6cUVldjM4OWZqdz09>

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. Ahern called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

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. Nipun Goel; Mr. Ravin Chaudhury

Pledge of Allegiance

November 9, 2021 School Committee Minutes - FINAL

Olivia Best is a 5th grader at Jefferson in Ms. Tracey's class. Every day, Olivia comes to school and greets her peers and the staff with a smile. She is a kind and respectful friend to all, and a hard worker, always putting forth her best effort on her school assignments. Olivia especially likes literacy lessons at school, as she loves to read, and Wonder by R.J. Palacio is one of her favorite books. Outside of school, she plays indoor and outdoor soccer, and she started violin lessons this year too. Olivia exemplifies the Jefferson core values of safe, respectful, inclusive, creative, and invested with her "Paws-itive" attitude every day!

Moment of Silence

Organizational Meeting:

Election of Chair

Dr. Ahern asked for a nomination of Chair.

Ms. Stokes nominated Ms. Spencer as Chair. The nomination was seconded by Ms. Bernstein. A vote was taken:

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Ms. Bernstein
Approve: 7 Oppose: 0
Motion Carries 7-0

Election of Vice Chair

Ms. Spencer asked for a nomination for Vice Chair.

Mr. McNeill nominated Ms. Stokes. The nomination was seconded by Mr. Callaghan. A vote was taken:

Motion: Mr. McNeill; Second: Mr. Callaghan
Approve: 7 Oppose: 0
Motion Carries 7-0

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

Ms. Spencer also read the following statement in regards to Citizen Comments:

The Franklin School Committee welcomes public comment and participation at School Committee meetings. School Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 39, s. 23B. The public should have an opportunity to comment to the Committee on issues that affect the school district and are within the purview of the Committee's responsibilities. Therefore the Committee has set aside a period of time at each School Committee meeting to hear from the public.

Public Comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between or among citizens and the School Committee. Rather, it is intended to offer citizens an opportunity to express their opinion on issues of School Committee business. While the Committee and/or administrators will not typically respond to citizen comments or questions, the Chair, as presiding officer of the meeting, may answer or request an answer to a question if she deems it appropriate. Further, should the Chair believe that an issue or question falls outside the purview of the School Committee, she may request that citizens direct it to the appropriate person or body so that the matter is given proper consideration.

Items outside of the school committee's purview should be resolved using Policy KE Public Complaints. School Committee level airing of grievances should be a rare exception after all other avenues have been exhausted. Both Policy KE and BEDH are available at the table at the front of the room.

As a new committee, we would like to be proactive so we may conduct an effective business meeting. As such there are now expectations of conduct within council chambers. Certain behavior will not be tolerated. If an audience member persists in improper conduct they will be afforded a warning. If the behavior continues, the chair is authorized to have the individual removed.

Rev. Dr. Jacob Junker, Marvin Ave., Franklin United Methodist Church
Rabbi Tom Albert, 38 Jefferson Rd., Temple Etz Chaim

Rev. Junker spoke about representing the Franklin Interfaith Council. Rev. Junker spoke about the school committee meeting on 10/26/21 and how Kenzie Atwood said at that meeting how she and her friends were being discriminated against for being in the LGBTQIA+ community. He said the interruption that occurred can not and should not be tolerated. He said the Interfaith Council has become aware of the uptick of hate filled rhetoric and vandalism in the community and it will not be tolerated. He said we cannot become numb to the hate filled language and actions. He said for the community to commit to #LOVEfranklin. He said as of 11/2/21 this statement has been signed by 12 interfaith representatives from 8 communities of faith in Franklin, three organizations, and 356 community members. He encouraged everyone to #LOVEfranklin to help make Franklin a more inclusive community. He also encouraged everyone to add their name. He said anyone can do this by going to the Interfaith Council Facebook page or contacting any of council member's houses of worship. He said the council will support the school committee and school

administration in any way it can to help build a more inclusive community. He shared a #LOVEFranklin poster with the School Committee.

Leo Covarrubias, 55 Skyline Drive

Mr. Covarrubias said he has a 2nd grader at Keller and a preschooler. He spoke about the novel, *The Bluest Eye*. He realizes the subjects and language surround sexual violence towards minors but he said the book is critical. He said this novel is a call to action to consider the ways in which racism continues to impact the black community today. He said he does not believe this book should be banned or removed from a recommended reading list. He asks that the school committee commits to challenging and empowering the students and not aim to protect them from controversial literature.

Kevin DiCrescenzo, 51 Miller Street

Mr. DiCrescenzo spoke out against vaccines for children. He said the FDA said that they will not know how safe the vaccine is until they start giving it. He said that the kids are the test subjects. He references the VAERS database for the death by vaccine number count which he states is up to 18,000. He said this information should put a pause on the schools encouraging vaccinations for children and let it be parent's choice. He said many people feel mandates are unconstitutional, unethical, and immoral.

He said the Superintendent needs to take a stand. He asked Superintendent Ahern if she believes that vaccines are safe and effective and wants her to explain her answer by quoting the science. He said silence by Dr. Ahern or the committee can only be assumed they share his hesitation. He wants Dr. Ahern and the committee to share their views citing scientific evidence and not hide behind DESE.

Jackie Maciel, 95 Elm Street

Ms. Maciel said with a new committee in place, she would like to make a suggestion. She would like citizen comments to follow student representative comments. She noted what happened at the past two meetings and said this will give the students a chance to do homework and not violate the rules. She said that the school committee gives citizen's three minutes to speak and the school department uses 70% of the tax money while the town council allows five minutes to speak and only uses 30% of the tax money. She would like to know where the equity is.

She also cited the *9/26/21 meeting after the student gave a report, she then gave further comments that elapsed over four minutes. She stated this also happened at the 10/26/21 meeting with the student going over five minutes. She said this is more than the three minutes tax paying citizens receive to speak.

**Note: there was not a Franklin School Committee meeting on 9/26/21.*

C. FHS Student Representative Comments

Nipun Goel, senior class president, spoke about the current FHS sports playoffs. The football team beat Braintree last Friday evening 42-6 in the first playoff round. This Friday's playoff game will be at home against Methuen at 7:00pm. He asks that the community continue to show up to show support. He said the FHS theater production of Mamma Mia will be this Friday night at 7:00pm, Saturday afternoon at 2:00pm, and Saturday night at 7:00pm. He shared that members from the band, orchestra, and chorus have submitted their audition videos for the Central District Senior Musician Festival. It is a very prestigious festival. Finally, he said it is time for members of the senior class to order caps and gowns and Nov 19th is the deadline.

Ravin Chaudary, junior class president said that the FHS girls soccer was currently playing and the score was 0-0 at halftime. They previously beat Reading 1-0 with an overtime goal from Kelly O'Connor. Volleyball also posted a victory and is in a deep playoff run. Field Hockey also has won their playoff games. Boy's Soccer fell short in their game on Saturday to Framingham. He reminded the community that tickets for the football game need to be purchased online. There is more information on the Franklin athletics Twitter page. The cost is \$5 for seniors and students and \$10 for adults. Winter sports begin after Thanksgiving. He said the last day of Quarter 1 was 11/9/21 with grades closing next Monday. He also noted that Wednesday and Friday this week are half days for parent-teacher conferences and Thursday is a day off for Veterans Day. Thanksgiving week will have spirit days leading up to the pep rally. The class of 2023 are selling pep rally tee shirts and there is a raffle calendar coming up.

Nipun Goel said he wanted to read something that he wrote and felt compelled to speak from his point of view after what happened at the last school committee meeting. He said there is still a lot of work to do in the schools and the community to ensure a safe learning environment for everyone, not just most people. He said it was inspiring to see the way the School Committee and the community rallied against what had happened. He said at FHS, they need, want, and support diversity, equity, and inclusion and it is the goal to make sure everyone knows they matter. He said the lifeblood of Franklin is its students and its public schools. He said members of the School Committee should not take for granted the awesome power they have and keep the needs of those they serve in mind.

Ms. Spencer asked for any comments or questions from the committee?
there were none

D. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Ahern said sometimes she will use the Superintendent's Report to respond to a citizen's comment. She wanted to remind people that there are policies that govern curriculum and instruction. This is located in Section I: Instruction in the School Committee Policy Manual. There are policies that explain rationale and procedures as related to curriculum and instruction including adoption and public complaints.

She said parent teacher conferences are this week except for ECDC which does conferences differently. She said teachers have been busy preparing.

Conferences are being offered in person and virtually on Wednesday and Friday. Also, there is no School Thursday for Veterans Day. Dr. Ahern thanked all the veterans and those in active duty.

She stated this week is National School Psychologist's Week. She said the school psychologists are critical team members and an integral part of the team. Dr. Ahern shared that she will be hosting a parent/family coffee chat on Zoom on 11/17/21 at 7:00am. She will be answering questions. There will be a link sent soon on Regroup and Twitter.

She noted that Parmenter recently hosted artist Bren Bataclan who worked with art teacher Caroline Whelan on some murals that will be displayed across the Parmenter School. The murals are focused on the school's core values. She encouraged anyone to take a look at the Parmenter Twitter Feed and she will be posting some photos in the Superintendent's Report as well.

Finally, she said to stay tuned for an upcoming radio show she was invited to be on, Pete Fasciano's Toward A More Perfect Union. The topic of conversation was Portrait of a Graduate and ways in which Franklin is striving to meet that vision.

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

Mr. Charles said he likes that the parent teacher conferences are virtual and in person and asked how many would be in person vs. virtual?

Dr. Ahern replied that she would bring back data after the conferences.

Mr. McNeill said the radio show is an excellent opportunity to speak about the Portrait of a Graduate.

Ms. Spencer asked if at a future meeting there could be information shared on the role of the student representatives?

Dr. Ahern replied yes there can.

II. Guests/Presentations

A. none

III. Discussion/Action Items

A. Policy 2nd Reading/Adoption

I recommend adopting policy GCRD - Tutoring for Pay as detailed.

Dr. Ahern said this came up at the last meeting and was recommended for a second reading and adoption. She also said the Policy sub-committee has been working through the G policies and this came up in the Policy meeting as needing a revision as it had been about 8-10 years. She noted the proposed changes are in green.

There was a Motion from Ms. Stokes and a Second from Mr. McNeill. See below for the proposed change from Mr. Callaghan so a vote was not taken here but instead a vote to amend the motion.

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

Mr. Callaghan asked about the literature and how it says **may not** (paragraph 2) and the next line down says **should not**. He asked if it should just read **may not** for consistency?

Mr. Giguere and Dr. Ahern both agreed with Mr. Callaghan for consistency.

Mr. Callaghan also asked about paragraph 4 and where it mentions that a public school employee cannot use a school or district website. He asked if social media should be added?

Dr. Ahern replied she thinks the first sentence covers it where it says cannot use school resources.

Mr. Giguere also added that it could be added to say district social media accounts.

Ms. Spencer asked for a motion to amend the motion to approve as discussed.

GCRD - Tutoring for Pay as detailed.

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Mr. McNeill

Approve: 7 Oppose: 0

Motion Carries 7-0

IV. Discussion Only Items

A. Superintendent Update on DESE Mask Waiver for FHS

Dr. Ahern shared an update from the last meeting regarding the mask waiver. She received approval from DESE on 11/8/21. Should they proceed forward, those vaccinated at the high school would be able to have masks be optional. She said there is a lot of conversation happening amongst the districts and the Superintendents how they may be proceeding. She noted that Hopkinton has moved forward and while Medway has approval, they have not moved forward

yet approving a process. She noted that Medway has not met the pool testing criteria yet.

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

Mr. Charles asked about a timeframe for this process?

Dr. Ahern said she gets the sense at the high school that they would welcome the opportunity to have the mask option for those vaccinated. Dr. Ahern would like to gather more information about metrics and a proposal and what the requirements would be to have to put the masks back on.

Mr. McNeill asked if this is effective as soon as there is a plan for it?

Dr. Ahern replied yes that it would come to the School Committee for a decision based on an outlined plan.

Mr. McNeill followed up asking how Hopkinton is doing so far?

Dr. Ahern replied that they have moved forward with masks being optional, there is a permission form that will need to be signed for underage students to remove their mask, and she said it seems to be going fairly uneventfully.

Ms. Spencer asked what the permission form was?

Dr. Ahern replied it is a permission form granting their vaccinated child the okay to not wear a mask.

V. Information Matters

A. School Committee Sub-Committee Reports

1. **Community Relations** - was this past Saturday. All 9 resolutions approved. Resolution #2 was amended to Pre-K as well.

B. School Committee Liaison Reports

1. **School Wellness Advisory Council** - met this morning. Will meet 12/7.
2. **Substance Abuse Task Force** - Mr. Giguere said they will be hosting an event called Critical Conversations: identifying and addressing mental health and substance use among families and within our community on 11/18/21. This event will be held from 6:00pm - 8:00pm in the auditorium and on livestream in partnership with SAFE Coalition.

Ms. Spencer asked all members to review the subcommittee and liaison descriptions within the next week and send her their top 3 choices. There will be an update for the next meeting.

VI. New Business

A. To discuss any future agenda items

Dr. Ahern shared the anticipated items for the 11/23/21 meeting:

- A School Committee only workshop at 6:00pm to discuss norms and key policies.

Starting at 7:00pm

- Presentation on MCAS results and other assessments.
- A job description for the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion job posting.
- Possible mask follow-up

VII. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes

I recommend approval of the minutes from the October 26, 2021 School Committee Meeting as detailed.

This vote was taken separately due to only two committee members being present at the 10/26/21 meeting.

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Ms. Spencer
 Approve: 2 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 5
 Motion Carries 2-0-5

B. Athletics Gift

I recommend acceptance of a check for \$1,000.00 from the NE Patriots Foundation for Supplemental curriculum materials as detailed.

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Mr. McNeill
 Approve: 7 Oppose: 0
 Motion Carries 7-0

VIII. Payment of Bills

TBD; will be assigned

IX. Payroll

TBD; will be assigned

X. Ms. Spencer asked for a motion to adjourn and enter into Executive Session and not return.

- Executive session pursuant to Purpose 1 (M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(1)) to consider an Open Meeting Law complaint against public officers, namely the members of the School Committee, filed with the Committee by Christina Black and dated October 29, 2021.
- 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.
- Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the FEA/RN unit as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee and the chair so declares.

Motion: Ms. Stokes; Second: Mr. McNeill
Ms. Bernstein-Yes; Mr. Callaghan-Yes; Mr. Charles-Yes; Mr. McNeill-Yes; Ms.
Stokes-Yes; Ms. Whitmore; Ms. Spencer-Yes;
Motion Carries 7-0

XI. Adjournment at 7:58pm

Respectfully submitted,
Christina Tocci, Secretary

SCAgenda 11-9-21 Org
Discussion Action A - Policy.pdf
Consent Action A - Minutes.pdf
Consent Action B - Athletics Gift.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2209 Summary.pdf
Payroll Warrant #2209.pdf
FPS Summary & Sign Off.pdf
SC Warrant 102121.pdf
SC Warrant 102821.pdf
Executive Session Minutes 10-26-21 DRAFT.pdf
Budget2Actual.pdf
Pledge Student.pdf