

Portrait of a Graduate

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What does 21st Century education look like, what are the accompanying competency demands for our students, and how do we provide this type of education? Authors Sara Hallerman, Colon Lewis, and Brad Dresbach address this topic in an article called “What is a 21st Century Education?” which can be found at www.battelleforkids.org/learning-hub/learning-hub-item/what-is-a-21st-century-education.

The authors state that “If we want to provide every student with a 21st Century education, we must foster deeper learning through the purposeful integration of rigorous academic content with experiences that intentionally cultivate the skills, mindsets, and literacies needed for students to become lifelong learners and contributors in our ever-changing world.”

The Franklin Public Schools have engaged in this work by launching our Portrait of a Graduate (POG) visioning process this year. Throughout the year we have surveyed and/or met with hundreds of people to ask what skills and competencies our students will need upon graduation from high school. As we heard from students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members, key themes were repeated frequently. Together these themes present a picture of our hopes and dreams for all of our students. We are very grateful to the community for their open and honest dialogue and for sharing their thoughts with us.

Each theme came with dozens of bulleted descriptions and suggestions. Some of the most significant ideas that emerged included the need for students to be invested in themselves and others. This included the ideas of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), self-care, and emotional intelligence. Another way to think of this is that collectively, we wish to graduate teenagers who demonstrate integrity, compassion, and young adults who can be resilient and self-sufficient.

Another theme that emerged was that of global citizenship, recognizing that students will need skills, knowledge, and abilities that will take them beyond the town limits of Franklin in order to be successful in the world at large. Other major themes were identified as instilling the ability for students to think critically, communicate, collaborate, and innovate. Lastly, but certainly equally important, was the area of academics through which students learn academic content and develop skills in the required and elective subjects. The areas noted by participants included financial literacy and other necessary life skills.

Our next steps are to take the massive collection of data we acquired this year and to create a draft version of the Franklin Portrait of a Graduate. This work will be done by the Steering Committee that was formed at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. The committee is comprised of central office and school administrators.

We plan to go back to the community in the fall for feedback on our draft and we will also begin work on a graphical representation of the Franklin Portrait of a Graduate. We hope that many people will again participate in providing input to the Franklin POG vision and we look forward to meeting and speaking with you. As the graduating class of 2032 comes to kindergarten in the fall, it is critical that we craft our plan so that our future graduates have the required skills for college, careers, and life when they graduate from Franklin High School.