



Franklin Public Schools

*Office of the Superintendent
355 East Central Street; Suite 3
Franklin, Massachusetts 02038
Phone: 508-553-4819*

Superintendent's Report to School Committee December 8, 2020 School Committee Meeting

Updates from DESE

In recognition of the scheduling and logistical challenges that schools and districts are experiencing, DESE is adjusting the schedules and expectations for MCAS high school testing and ACCESS testing as follows:

January-February High School MCAS ELA and Mathematics Tests:

- Students in grade 11 (class of 2022) will no longer participate in testing during the January-February window. Testing for this class in English language arts and mathematics is being postponed until later in the year.
- Students in grade 12 (class of 2021), as well as adult test-takers, will remain eligible to participate in one or both tests beginning in January to earn their Competency Determination.
- The testing window for eligible students is extended through Friday, February 12, giving schools an additional week to complete testing. The full testing window will be Thursday, January 14 through February 12.

ACCESS for ELLs:

- The testing window for the ACCESS tests is being extended for several months. Schools will be able to administer the ACCESS tests at any time between Thursday, January 7 and Thursday, May 20.
- Results will be returned in late summer

The Commissioner announced that DESE has worked with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency to distribute adult- and youth-size cloth masks from the federal government at no cost to school districts. Mask allocation is based on enrollment and is equivalent to at least 1 per student. The three-ply, 100 percent cotton jersey face masks have an antimicrobial treatment incorporated into the fabric. We will be picking our masks up from a location in Quincy in the coming days.

Additionally, as noted in the Status Update, we are pleased to share that DESE has provided the district with portable air purifier units at no cost to us, using Coronavirus relief funds

designated to the agency. This will augment the units that we purchased with the Facilities Department. Units are being delivered and inventoried this week for quick distribution.

Cybersecurity Position

The topic of a Cybersecurity Professional came up at the Town Council meeting last week and we have been having a discussion with Town Administrator Jamie Hellen about the need for such a position to support both the Town and Schools. We are all more susceptible to cyber attacks now than ever before, including schools, especially in light of the expansion of remote working environments related to the pandemic. Some of the responsibilities of the position would include items such as:

- Administration and deployment of Cybersecurity Training Platform
- Oversee other third party security testing, assessments and auditing of information security.
- Conduct regular risk assessments and ensure adherence to best practice techniques for system security
- Maintain and assess current security posture and recommend changes for up-to-date improvement.
- Create and continuously update a cyber response plan to ensure compliance with Town and School cyber-insurance policies.
- Required to attend training and workshops to stay abreast of changes in technology, security issues, cyber threats, local, state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to the department and as well as City ordinances.

This is something that warrants further conversation.

Tech Support

We are aware that some concerns have arisen related to Technology Support. We continue to refine the support of various aspects of our instructional technology, which breaks down into several different categories:

1. Support within the Google domain
2. Support for hardware
3. Support with third party applications
4. Support within school (in-person) and support when remote

The technology department meets with our Remote Support service on a weekly basis to understand the help tickets, to problem solve, and to refine the system for those seeking support.

Support is provided by our Remote Support service, Digital Coordinators within our schools, Digital Learning Integrationists, and staff from the technology department. We are working to

further clarify how to seek help and from whom on our technology support website. If students are having difficulty with an assignment, we will always recommend that they reach out to their teacher in advance.