



Franklin Public Schools

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Superintendent's Report to School Committee October 27, 2020 School Committee Meeting

National Principals' Month

I'd like to begin by honoring and recognizing the principals in the Franklin Public Schools. They are instrumental in all years as instructional leaders of their schools. However, this year, as we know, is one like none other and their steady, calm and courageous leadership is helping the entire community provide children what they most need -- social and emotional growth, academic skill development, and support for basic needs such as food and agency services. This is a time where we take nothing for granted; every aspect of our operations have been upended and they, along with the talent of the committed and dedicated Assistant Principals have rethought arrival/dismissal, attendance, breakfast and lunch, hallway traffic, code of conduct, supplies and materials, staffing and much more. I don't want October to end without us saluting our principals and assistant principals for all they do to support students, families, and faculty/staff.

Some may say that these folks are working tirelessly. They are not. They are exhausted and working Herculean hours in order to meet the academic and SEL needs of students. This exhaustion extends to our faculty and staff and I want to be sure to convey our awareness of this. Where possible, we are seeking opportunities to provide some relief. Later in this report, I will talk about professional development. We also want to create additional planning time for staff while students engage in independent/asynchronous work. This is already being done at the elementary level on Wednesday afternoons; it is valuable time that our educators are putting to good use. We would like to expand this practice to the secondary level, providing additional time for teachers to plan and collaborate on Wednesday afternoons. The school day would continue for students with structured independent work. Many districts are operating with this model. The teachers are working so very hard and need time for additional planning in this new environment. More information will be forthcoming.

Budget Update

Governor Baker refiled a state budget for FY 21 based on level funding Chapter 70 and local aid at FY 20 numbers (with a small increase for inflation). This has been the basis of the interim budget that the state had passed through the end of October.

Despite decreased revenue, the Governor's message around the budget was maintaining a commitment to schools and local government aid at this most difficult time, planning to use funds from a possible second federal stimulus package or the state's rainy day fund to support

the rest of FY 21. This is, cautiously, good news for school districts, including Franklin, and there is not discussion at the moment of needing further reductions/budget cuts in the current fiscal year. The state budget is not finalized; it is now in the hands of the state House of Representatives and state Senate.

FY 22 continues to be a concern and we anticipate a difficult fiscal year going forward but it is early to project any specifics.

School Reopening Update

Photo Highlights from October 2020 were shared.

Transition to Hybrid

We have been phasing into hybrid over the past two weeks, and are planning to welcome the first cohort to the high school on Monday, November 2. Although COVID cases are going up locally and within the state, DESE urges districts to use three weeks of data regarding health metrics, shown below. Franklin has been green and yellow in the past three weeks.

	Franklin				Norfolk County				MA			
Report Date DPH	Avg Daily Cases per 100,000	Trend	% +	Trend	Avg Daily Cases per 100,000	Trend	% +	Trend	Avg Daily Cases per 100,000	Trend	% +	Trend
10/7	3.2	Higher	0.96	No change	5.1	Higher	0.80	No change	7.3	Higher	1.04	Higher
10/14	5.5	Higher	1.26	Higher	6.2	Higher	0.97	Higher	8.7	Higher	1.17	Higher
10/22	7.2	Higher	1.54	Higher	6.51	Higher	1.05	No change	9.2	Higher	1.24	Higher

Based on the average daily cases being below 8 per 100,000, I suggest that FPS continue to move forward in a hybrid instructional mode, including bringing high school students into the school beginning on November 2.

A recent communication was issued about decision making, should Franklin become designated as red. The district would not automatically resume fully remote instruction. We would look at three weeks' worth of data as well as the demographics of the cases and whether or not clusters of cases were present, accounting for the increase in numbers. If there was evidence that transmission was not occurring in schools, we would continue to move forward with hybrid learning.

https://www.franklinps.net/sites/g/files/vyhlif4431/f/uploads/october_20_reopening_update_faculty_families-english.pdf

COVID-19 Communications

CDC just released new guidance on the definition of a close contact. We are awaiting further guidance from MA DPH and DESE to direct us locally.

Professional Development Preview

The next professional development day for FPS faculty will be on November 3, 2020 -- which is election day. Polling in Franklin is at Franklin High School. Faculty will have the option to report to the schools for PD or to work remotely, which should help with parking.

Recognizing that teaching in the hybrid and remote environments require new skills and significant planning, the District is providing professional development opportunities that allow educators to reflect on initial experiences within the remote and hybrid environments, and time and guidance to plan for future curriculum, assessment, instruction, and support of students. This will occur in academics across all subject areas as well as with social-emotional learning and guidance.

A few additional specifics:

- Illustrative Math Pilot teachers will engage in training and planning specific to this pilot program.
- Middle school social studies teachers will engage in training and planning specific to the new social studies curriculum and Discover Ed materials.
- Our digital learning integrationists will provide technology training sessions throughout the day.
- Nurses will be attending a workshop related to supporting students' mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.