



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 September 8, 2020 School Committee Meeting

School Reopening Update

First Ten Days of PD

We have had five excellent days of professional development so far. The administrators and faculty/staff alike appreciate the training on workplace safety standards and professional development on digital tools and SEL. They are most appreciative of the afternoon time to collaborate, plan, and implement new learning.

We continue with five more professional days this week, which include a focus on assessing students' knowledge and skills upon return to school, more training on digital tools, and anti-bias education for faculty, staff, and administrators. We are working with a consultant, who built capacity among the leadership team. This will be an extension of that work with staff across the district.

Communication

Families can expect a multitude of communications to be forthcoming this week -- cohort information, schedules, and class placements will all be issued. Additionally, Anne Marie Tracey is developing a presentation for families on the numerous things that they can expect -- from appropriate mask wearing, to monitoring of symptoms, and how to be ready for remote/hybrid instruction.

Air Quality

The Franklin Public Schools, in preparation for welcoming staff and eventually students back to school, will implement processes to increase air circulation from the outdoors. For one week prior to the start of the school year, commencing with the return of faculty and staff to campus on September 1st, the dampers will be open greater than their typical 20-35% to promote circulation throughout the buildings. HVAC settings will be adjusted to increase the flow of outdoor air daily and will be set to extend the hours of ventilation beyond the school day. Windows and doors will be open to promote air circulation when appropriate and safe.

The District proactively services all units and changes filters through a maintenance contract with Automatic Temperature Controls, Inc.. (ATC). ATC services the HVAC twice per year for preventative maintenance and as needed for repair work. Preventative maintenance occurred on all systems in the summer of 2020. This included the changing of filters, all of which are rated as appropriate for each system.

Carbon dioxide readings are automatically maintained between 200-800 parts per million. Air transfer is a minimum of 20 cubic feet per minute per individual in a classroom.

The District is beginning the project to upgrade the HVAC systems with Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI). This project will occur over the fall months with a goal of completion by the end of December. This upgrade is not a requirement, but rather is a suggestion by ASHRAE, and will help to promote better air quality not only for COVID but also in protecting against other viruses in the future.

All classrooms are equipped with indoor fans, which may be placed in an exhaust mode in classrooms. Air conditioning units may be used only with District approval.

Mike D'Angelo is preparing an additional statement on the status of our HVAC systems and what has been done to promote even greater air quality.

Notification of COVID Cases

The District needs to maintain student and staff confidentiality at all times. The District, however, will also weigh the community's need to know in order to prevent further spread of the Coronavirus. The facts and specifics of each case's circumstances will determine the nature of the communication. The greater the exposure for people in the district, the more communication and direct guidance there will be.

We are also mindful, however, that there is a stigma attached to COVID-19 and appeal to the community to be generous and kind to each other. We can not tolerate harassment based on medical status.

The COVID Handbook addendum contains additional information about partial and full closure of schools and/or the district. In these instances, the facts would support widespread communication so that individuals can monitor symptoms.

The local Health Department and Public Health Nurse will be responsible for contact tracing, although FPS will assist with these efforts.

Mandatory Influenza Vaccine

I'd like to clarify my statement from last time related to the mandatory influenza vaccine. Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, influenza vaccine will be required for all students. Documentation of immunization status should be submitted to schools within 60 days of school start. This immunization is required in all models of learning, including Remote. Vaccinating against influenza is important for several reasons. Influenza vaccine is always important to receive to reduce the risk of getting sick with influenza, reduce the severity of disease if one does get sick (including the risk of hospitalization) due to influenza, as well as preventing the spread of influenza to others. During the COVID-19 pandemic, influenza vaccine will be especially critical to reduce the overall impact of respiratory illness on the population, protect vulnerable populations from severe illness, and decrease the overall burden on the healthcare system.

Exceptions may be granted for those for whom the vaccine is medically contraindicated. This needs to be supported by a statement from the child's pediatrician. Exceptions may be granted for families who attest in writing that the vaccine violates sincerely held religious beliefs. Document should be submitted to the school nurse by December 31, 2020.