Franklin Public Schools Franklin, Massachusetts 02038

Action Required

Subject: Policy Adoption Date: August 24, 2021

Dept: School Committee

Reason: Required Vote Enclosure: yes

Recommendation:

Policy Adoption

I recommend adopting policy EBCFA - Face Coverings as discussed.

Action Requested of the School Committee:

Majority vote of the School Committee is required.

Vote Tabulator

A Bergen: Y / N T Keenan: Y / N

J D'Angelo: Y / N M J Scofield: Y / N

J Pond-Pfeffer: Y / N D Spencer: Y / N

E Stokes: Y / N Action: _____



Franklin Public Schools

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

To: Franklin School Committee From: Sara Ahern, Superintendent

Date: August 20, 2021

Re: Agenda Item for Discussion/Action - Policy EBCFA Face Coverings

On Friday, August 20, 2021, Education Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley announced that he will ask the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to grant him authority to mandate masks for all public K-12 students, educators, and staff through October 1. After October 1, the commissioner's policy would allow middle and high schools to lift the mask mandate for vaccinated students and staff only if at least 80 percent of students and staff in a school building are vaccinated. Unvaccinated students and staff would still be required to wear masks. The mandate would include exceptions for students who cannot wear a mask due to medical conditions or behavioral needs.

The press release can be found here.

The Franklin policy subcommittee forwarded policy EBCFA Face Coverings to the full school committee at its August 19, 2021 meeting. The item remains on your agenda as a reflection of the policy subcommittee's action. Should BESE approve the Commissioner's request when they meet on Tuesday, August 24, 2021, it is my recommendation that the School Committee remove this agenda item during the "Review of Agenda" portion of the meeting on Tuesday evening, August 24, 2021.

File: EBCFA

FACE COVERINGS

The Franklin Public Schools is committed to providing a safe environment in schools during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Maintaining a safe environment is critical to the District's ability to returning students to a full-time classroom learning experience.

According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus, and its variants, and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks or face coverings. Therefore, using the guidance and recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the District has established the following requirements which will remain in place until further notice.

A face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings and on school transportation. Face coverings must also be worn outside when social distancing cannot be observed.

Individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons, per CDC guidance:

The individual:

- has trouble breathing.
- is unconscious.
- is incapacitated.
- cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance.

In addition, masks or face coverings will not be required for anyone who has a medical, behavioral or other challenge making it unsafe to wear a face mask or face covering. A written note from a qualified health professional physician is required for a requested exemption. Parents/guardians may not excuse their child from the face mask requirement by signing a waiver.

Additionally, face masks or face coverings will not be required when appropriate social distancing is enforced:

- during mask breaks.
- while eating or drinking.
- during physical education classes.
- while outside.

Exceptions to this policy under certain circumstances, such as for students with medical, behavioral or other challenges who are unable to wear masks, must be approved by the building principal in consultation with the school nurse or local Board of Health. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative in some instances.

A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their own face coverings. However, the Delistrict will supply disposable face covering for individuals who arrive at a building, or board school transportation, without one.

If students are in violation of this policy, the building principal will consult with the parent/guardians to determine whether an exception is appropriate, or the student may be removed from the school building for in-person learning until such time as they can comply with the requirement, or the requirement is lifted.

Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy.

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/district facility.

This policy will remain in place until modified or rescinded by the School Committee.

Guidance Statements

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

https://www.mass.gov/doc/updated-advisory-regarding-masks-and-face-coverings-july-30-2021-0/download

Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools Updated August 5, 2021 -

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html

Center for Disease Controls – Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention on Public Transportation

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – Fall 2021 Covid-19 Guidance

https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2021-0730fall-2021-covid19-guidance.pdf

Adopted by School Committee: 9/8/20

Reviewed: 7/28/21; 8/12/21;

To School Committee for Adoption 8/24/21

SOURCE: MASC