



Franklin Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent
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Phone: 508-553-4819

July 23, 2020

Dear Franklin Families:

We hope that you are having a good summer. We also recognize that it looks and feels quite different amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. We are thinking of you at this time and hope that you find some relaxing moments amidst the worries and uncertainty you are facing. This update is quite long and contains the following information:

1. Update on the reopening of schools in the fall
2. A Save the Date note regarding upcoming Family Virtual "Chats" to learn more about reopening of school plans and opportunity to provide important input
3. Reminders about online registration, bus transportation for the fall, and summer food services
4. A budget update

Update on the Reopening of Schools in the Fall

We acknowledge that this is a time of anxiety and fear for all - students, faculty/staff, and families. We are in a fluid situation with new health information and guidance from multiple agencies (DESE, CDC, MA DPH) emerging regularly. We aim to provide certainty with what we know at this time but recognize that it is subject to change, and we don't yet have all the answers.

New guidance from DESE and other agencies is emerging regularly, beginning with the initial guidance issued on June 25, 2020. At this time, the FPS Reopening Taskforce of nearly 60 individuals is working on a Reopening Plan. A preliminary plan will be submitted to DESE on July 31st, and then a Comprehensive Opening Plan will be submitted in early to mid-August. Our taskforce is a large group of administrators, teachers/counselors, FEA representatives, community reps (Facilities, SRO, school physician, and Health department), parents/guardians, and two School Committee representatives.

The plan will address health and safety requirements as well as three different student learning models:

1. In-person instruction

This model involves students attending in-person instruction following health and safety protocols defined by the CDC and DESE. Student desks would be arranged in rows, all facing the same way. Where possible, individuals would maintain 6 feet of physical distance and 3 feet of distance would be the minimum. Among other safety procedures, mask wearing would be in effect and handwashing/hand sanitizing protocols would be implemented. Staff and students would experience training on new practices.

2. Hybrid instruction

This model involves separating students into cohorts so that approximately 50% of students would attend school on certain days and approximately 50% of students would attend school on the alternative days. Cleaning and disinfecting would occur in between attendance of the different cohorts. When students are not present in school, they would be engaged in remote learning. Remote learning for the 2020-2021 school year is expected to be more robust than what students experienced in the spring.

Families and faculty/staff will have the opportunity to provide input on two different hybrid models that are being considered:

Option 1: Alternating weeks

	Week 1	Week 2
Cohort A	Monday -- Friday: In person	Monday -- Friday: Remote learning
Cohort B	Monday -- Friday: Remote learning	Monday -- Friday: In person

Option 2: Wednesday -- Students are remote to allow for cleaning/disinfecting

	Every Week
Cohort A	Monday -- Tuesday: In person Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: Remote learning
Cohort B	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday: Remote learning Thursday -- Friday: In person

3. Full remote learning.

This model involves all students learning in the remote setting. As described above, remote learning is expected to be more robust than what students experienced in the spring.

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Jeffrey Riley is asking that districts hold off on announcing any final decisions about what reopening school will look like until early August. He acknowledges that planning needs to go forward but that we ought to wait for key information about financial resources and possible changes in COVID-19 transmission rates.

For planning purposes, our administrative team is completing feasibility tests of our physical spaces with both 3 feet of distancing and 6 feet of distancing between desks. By doing so, they are evaluating how many student desks can fit into a classroom. As part of the feasibility test, we are also considering alternative learning spaces such as outdoor spaces, cafeterias, gyms, and auditoriums for possible use, if necessary.

We are also looking at input gathered from previous surveys, such as reflections on remote learning, as well as professional resources, which we will use to improve. We will issue further surveys to understand the needs of our community (students, families, faculty and staff), including but not limited to medical concerns that preclude

attendance in person. We also wish to understand the needs of essential workers and/or parental job requirements that necessitate in-person school or additional Solutions before or after school care. We are also assessing transportation needs. Physical distancing will also be required on our buses; as such, this is another big consideration in our planning.

The next survey is being finalized and will be issued shortly as noted below.

COMING SOON! Important Family Survey on Reopening School

To assist our efforts, we will be asking families to complete a more specific survey for each of your children so that we may understand your intentions with respect to the reopening of school in the 2020-2021 school year. We also ask you to save the following dates if you wish to join us for a virtual “Chat” where you can learn about the plans that are developing and to assist you in completing the survey. The information is as follows:

Parent/Guardian Chat Schedule

Monday, July 27, 2020 at 6 PM
Tuesday, July 28, 2020 at 7:30 AM

Links to the virtual chat will be sent when surveys are distributed.

District and School Offices

Our district and school offices have begun to open. We have been implementing the workplace safety standards at our offices which include:

- a. Physical distancing expectations
- b. Hygiene protocols
- c. Staffing and operations -- including training
- d. Cleaning and disinfecting
- e. Isolation and contact tracing

Our staff is continuing to work remotely, where possible, but employees are also coming in on a rotating basis. We are so excited and relieved to see each other! We will adjust our work schedule based on guidance from the state and in consultation with our local BOH. At this time, e-mail continues to be the best way to reach our school staff.

Our offices remain closed to the public. Please see the link later in this message regarding the online registration process.

We are looking forward to the 2020-2021 school year, as we are always thinking about the health and growth of our students and their well-being. Franklin Public Schools educators are working hard to make sure that students’ social, emotional, and academic needs are being met during this very difficult time.

Online Registration

Although staff have begun working in our offices, our district and school offices remain closed to the public at this time. If you or another Franklin resident wishes to enroll their child in the Franklin Public Schools, please use our online registration link to follow the process:

<https://www.franklinps.net/district/prek-grade-12-student-registrationchange-address-online-form>

Bus Transportation for the Fall

Bus registration for the fall is active. Please complete the following form to access bus transportation:

https://www.franklinps.net/sites/g/files/vyhli4431/f/uploads/communication_to_families_re_20-21_busing.pdf

Food Service

Our Food Service Department is still providing breakfast and lunch in a “Grab and Go” fashion in the loop behind Franklin High School. It involves no-contact pick up. The hours are from 11 AM to 1 PM. Meals are available to anyone 21 years of age and younger who needs breakfast or lunch. Six meals are provided on Fridays. If transportation is a concern for you, please email the Director of Student Services, Paula Marano (maranop@franklinps.net), so that we can coordinate a drop-off.

Budget Update

Our faculty and staff play a crucial role in our efforts to meet students’ social, emotional, and academic needs. Although the final FY 21 budget continues to remain uncertain amidst discussion of decreased state tax revenues as well as a possible federal stimulus package, our team has been busy behind the scenes analyzing our budget and staffing needs in preparation for reopening. We continue to review the list of non-professional status educators who had been non-renewed in early June. At this time, 71 educators have received re-appointment letters for positions within the district. The budget remains uncertain as the state legislature is still determining the FY 21 local aid. However, we hope to be able to re-appoint additional non-PTS faculty soon.

Sincerely,

Franklin Public Schools

Please contact the Superintendent’s Office at 508-553-4819 with any questions. Please leave a voicemail. All voicemails are sent to email and will be responded to in a timely fashion.