



Franklin Public Schools

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

Reopening of Schools 2020-2021

Status Update

March 19, 2021

Health Metrics -- Past Four Weeks of Data

	Franklin				MA			
Report Date DPH	Avg Daily Cases per 100,000	Trend	% +	Trend	Avg Daily Cases per 100,000	Trend	% +	Trend
2/25	14.7	Lower	1.36%	Lower	23.3	Lower	2.15%	Lower
3/4	11.8	Lower	1.11%	Lower	21.3	Lower	1.93%	Lower
3/11	14.5	Higher	1.40%	Higher	20.3	Lower	1.83%	Lower
3/18	18.7	Higher	1.80%	Higher	19.5	Lower	1.83%	No change

Past Four Weeks of Cases in Franklin Public Schools

Positive Cases Week of	Positive Cases Cumulative FPS*	Number of Students in Quarantine (% of 4089)	Number of Staff in Quarantine due to self or children (% of approx. 750)
11 Individuals (week of 2/20)	253 (9/16-2/26)	48 (1.2%)	7 (0.9%)
8 Individuals (week of 2/27)	261 (9/16-3/5)	39 (1%)	8 (1.1%)
13 Individuals (week of 3/6)	274 (9/16-3/12)	26 (1%)	TBA
8 Individuals (week of 3/13)	282 (9/16-3/19)	57 (1.3%)	TBA

Pool Testing Data

As of March 16, 2021	1979 Swabs	338 Pools	0 Positive Pools
Median % of Student participation	36%	Median % of Staff participation	58%

Open Questions

1. Will the district continue with pool testing following the initial pilot stage?

Return to Full and In Person Learning: General Update

Teaching and Learning

Elementary (K-5) families have submitted requests for changes to their child's instructional model. No families are seeking the VLA from hybrid instruction. Nineteen families are seeking seats in the classrooms, which we should be able to accommodate. High school families have submitted their commitments to full and in person learning or remote learning for the remainder of the year. The high school administration is analyzing results from the survey and will determine feasibility of in person learning by March 25. Middle school surveys went out on March 17 and families are completing their commitments at this time. We anticipate being able to accommodate the middle school families' choices for either in person or remote instruction.

We are applying the new DESE guidance on return to in person learning, particularly as it relates to virtual learning during absences. In the model we are developing, all in person students will be expected to be in person for school to be counted as present. The students will be marked absent when not in school. If their absence is due to a COVID-19 related quarantine or isolation, K-5 students will receive support from a Quarantine Coach, who will be working to implement instruction as provided by the teacher of record. This model is being used successfully in other districts who have been full and in person for longer. In grades 6-12, these students will be permitted to "remote in" for instruction. These options are narrowly limited to COVID-19 related attendance situations.

At this time, we are also anticipating summer learning programming for our students (in addition to our annual Extended School Year programs through the Office of Student Services). We are planning to advertise for summer teachers for ELA and mathematics as well as a counselor for SEL supports in order to see interest/availability among our teaching staff to provide summer interventions for students. As noted below, we are looking for grant opportunities to support this and/or use Coronavirus relief funds. We would also like to pursue a formal summer school program at Franklin High School, similar to summer schools for credit recovery that are established in other high schools. In order to do this, we would need to stipend a staff member to coordinate its development. We envision offering credit recovery courses for a fee in English and mathematics where teachers are supporting students in a blended learning model using the Plato platform for content delivery in addition to direct instruction.

Action Steps:

1. Continue to plan for in person instruction. Move furniture throughout the district to accommodate additional seating needed for lunches.
2. Advertise for positions: substitutes, quarantine coaches (2), volunteers, summer school positions.
3. March 31 professional development day reserved for teacher planning for in person instruction.
4. Continue communication with families in advance of April 5 and April 12 start dates.
5. Continue to plan for summer programming.

Whole Child Supports

As schools make plans for more students returning to school in person, we are actively planning for social-emotional needs upon return. This includes, for all students, a “new beginning”, as if the school year were starting anew. Tiered supports are available for students as well. We have also been in touch with Community Organizations supporting remote learning (Adirondack Club, YMCA, and Elementree House) and informing them of our reopening plans.

Action Steps:

1. Schools are preparing supports and transition activities for students upon return to school full and in person.

Health and Safety

We are planning to open our playgrounds for use, based on input we have received from DESE and our Franklin Health Department. The biggest area of focus will be on maintaining distance when outside, which will require supervision. We will also be posting signage to support safe practices.

Classroom and school spaces are continuing to be modified for the 3-6 feet distancing standard in instructional spaces and 6 feet for lunches. This is consistent with what is being reported in the news media about anticipated new CDC guidance for schools that discusses 3 feet with masks.

Pool testing is running smoothly. Schools are continuing to recruit and sign up additional students and faculty/staff who are opting in to pooled testing. We will be revising the pool testing schedule when we return to five days a week of instruction.

On March 18, 2021, the Governor issued new guidance on opening Phase 4, step 1. He also announced that the travel order was becoming a travel advisory. Our team is currently in the process of reviewing this against our attendance protocols for faculty/staff and students and we will be updating communications and handbooks accordingly.

Action Steps:

1. Continued communication within school communities about health and safety practices.
2. Continued recruitment for participants in pool testing. Revise pool testing schedule when full in person learning resumes.
3. Review Travel Advisory and adjust attendance policy and expectations for families and faculty/staff accordingly.

Digital Learning

With a return to in person school, the schools are planning for continued use of Chromebooks, particularly at the elementary level where, in the early grades, they will no longer go back and forth between school and home. More information will be forthcoming to families about bringing Chromebooks back to school. Our

technology department and school principals are currently working to put carts and charging stations around classrooms to boost capacity in this area.

Personnel

With a return to in person school, we continue to reach out within our networks to pursue opportunities for local vaccinations. We are also working with employees regarding the new instructional model and individual circumstances that may result in requests for leaves or accommodations, all of which must be approved. The advent of vaccines for educators is very helpful in this regard. We are reviewing our staffing needs and hiring as appropriate. We anticipate bringing additional cafeteria staff into our schools. Other positions are listed above in the area of Teaching and Learning.

Other

We do not have information about the third round of Federal stimulus funds as specific to Franklin Public Schools, but we are anticipating an additional resource to support our efforts related to the impact of the pandemic. We are also on the lookout for grants through DESE for summer programming.