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Framingham Public Schools
Robert A. Tremblay, Ed.D.,
Superintendent of Schools

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Priscila Sousa, Chair • Jessica Barnhill, Vice Chair • Valerie Ottaviani, Clerk
Adam Freudberg • David Gordon • Beverly Hugo
William LaBarge • Tiffanie Maskell • Jennifer Moshe
Charlie Sisitsky, Mayor
Farley Building, 19 Flagg Drive, Framingham, MA 01702
Telephone: 508-626-9121 | www.framingham.k12.ma.us/schoolcommittee

SCHOOL COMMITTEE: OPEN MEETING MINUTES

DATE AND TIME: November 30, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Memorial Building - Blumer Room
150 Concord Street, Framingham
Remote Option via Zoom
MEETING CALLED BY: Chair Priscila Sousa
PRESENT: Jessica Barnhill
Adam Freudberg
Beverly Hugo
William LaBarge
Tiffanie Maskell*
Jennifer Moshe
Valerie Ottaviani
Priscila Sousa
ABSENT: David Gordon
Mayor Charlie Sisitsky
ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Robert Tremblay, Superintendent
Nilufar Noorian, Student Advisory Committee Chair
Lincoln Lynch, Executive Director of Finance and Operations
Joanna Hastry, Executive Assistant for the School Committee

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m., noted all in attendance, and said that School Committee member Jessica Barnhill and Student Advisory Chair Nilufar Noorian were joining remotely, School Committee member Tiffanie Maskell would not be in attendance due to a family emergency, and Mayor Sisitsky would not be in attendance due to a conflicting appointment. She said that the meeting is being broadcast live on the Government Channel and can be viewed live on Facebook on the Framingham Public Schools Facebook Page. She noted information on how to participate in public comment in person and through Zoom. She asked for a moment of silence to think about all those lost and who are suffering in our community, nation, state, nation, and world.

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*Ms. Maskell joined the meeting remotely from 7:12-7:25 p.m.

Public Comment

There were no participants for public comment.

Announcements from the Chair

The Chair noted that the School Committee met earlier tonight in Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining because an open meeting might have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declared pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, s. 21(a)(3), specifically for Units A, B, C, N, S, & T and for approval of Executive Session minutes pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) and G.L. c. 30A, s. 22(g)(1), specifically October 3, 2022 and October 19, 2022. She noted that the minutes were not yet ready for approval so will be placed on a future agenda.

Mayor's Update

There was no report as the Mayor was not in attendance due to a conflicting meeting.

Student Advisory Committee (SAC) Presentation

SAC Chair Nilfuar Noorian introduced the other SAC members in attendance: Natalie Stevens, Sam Perlman, Jordan Cohen, and Scarlett Creedon. They shared their presentation on Community Week Feedback which included the procedure for their survey, the questions asked regarding community week and demographics, and their conclusions that included areas of strength for the week being learning about new policies and more career based surveys, areas of improvement for the week being that activities were not engaging for students and the suggestion that there be a variety of team building activities that are completed in groups or as a homeroom, that 300 students responded to the survey, most students though that community week activities would be beneficial to 9th graders, along with additional conclusions.

Members thanked them for their hard work. Mr. Freudberg asked if the administration had any response or any actionable items for the future with Community Week. Dr. Tremblay said that this was the first year for it and they felt that after COVID-19 they had to do something. He said that the feedback in this presentation was very helpful, he will be sharing it with staff, and he thinks there is a need to move Community Week forward to future years and this feedback can be used as a starting point to look at how to make it a more effective use of everyone's time.

Superintendent's Update

Dr. Tremblay said that there was discussion this week around looking at the start times in the District and said that although the science is clear that adolescents would do better with a later start time it is more a question of logistics. He said that he would like to work with the SAC in order to get student input on this and to have student voice as part of the conversation on looking at a balanced approach and what impacts there could be, such as with after school sports.

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He said that he is finishing up his 9th elementary during his residency and will start at Cameron Middle School next week. He said that he will be setting up a meeting with the leadership team with Principals to discuss emergent themes and common trends that have been seen across the elementary schools, how the connection between central office and building administrators can be improved, and how to provide support at the building level. He said that he will do a similar wrap up at the middle school level and high school.

The Chair asked to take the agenda out of order due to a presenter having technical issues and to have the Report on the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey Results next. All in agreement.

Report on the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey Results

Director of Health and Wellness Courtney Balacco presented her presentation on Key Findings from the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey (MWAHS). The presentation included key characteristics of the MWAHS, 2021 Framingham Public Schools Student Participation, when students respond truthfully, and key findings from the survey on: trends in cigarette smoking and vaping, the use and perception of risk for electronic vapor products, trends in alcohol use, trends in marijuana use in high school, misuse of prescription drugs, bullying and victimization, cyberbullying, trends in stress in middle school and high school, specific populations, COVID-19 and mental health, trends in online behavior by middle school and high school and by sex, associations of social media use and other risk behaviors, hours of sleep, and school connectedness and engagement.

Due to technical issues in the Blumer Room the Chair asked for a five minute recess and all were in agreement. The Chair called for a recess at 8:23. The Chair called the meeting back to order at 8:28 p.m.

Enrollment Statistics for the 2022-2023 School Year

Director of Student Registration Mikaele Neves shared her presentation on Enrollment Statistics for the 2022-2023 School Year which included the October District summary with the difference between the past two years in enrollment by grade, the estimated enrollment by school, data on the new registrations from July 1, 2022 to November 21, 2022 which included 810 students and included information on how many are still enrolled and how many have withdrawn, the schools that received the highest number of new students, the Country of Origin for the new students, the amount of new students in the English Language Learner and Special Education programs, and the grades with the highest enrollment, and data on withdrawals from July 1, 2022 to November 21, 2022 which included 806 students and included information on the grades and schools with the highest amount of withdrawals, the Country of Origin for the students that withdrew, the number of students in the English Language Learner and Special Education programs who withdrew, and the number of students who transferred to another in state public school, an out of state school, or an in state private school.

Ms. Neves, in response to a question from Ms. Moshe, said that for all elementary students families fill out a school choice form for their choices of schools and if they want a dual language program, and her department then works to try and get families their first choice and

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if not possible second choice, etc. as long as there is space in the program and school. Mr. Freuderg spoke to how close the projection report from 2019-2020 is based on these enrollment numbers, such as at the elementary school level 8 out of the 9 schools are almost exactly at the numbers projected. He said that he would like to see what is actionable when it comes to the recommendations from that report, how we are doing with what we have known from that report about enrollment growth, and how we have done in measuring ourselves and preparing the right spaces, staff, and budget, as well as any analysis on why the one elementary school wasn't as close in enrollment as the others, which was McCarthy Elementary School. Dr. Tremblay said that he is surprised with COVID-19 that the numbers are as close as they are, how they have mechanisms to help right size the needs which continues to be a work in process, including looking to right size the amount of mental health needs that have come out of the pandemic. He said that it is concerning that we continue to hear that people feel overcrowded at the high school even after freeing up space by moving the Technology Department and he will be taking a good look at how space is being utilized during this residency there and if needed resurface the space utilization study that was done a few years back. He said that they are also working with the City to make sure we are aware of new construction and to be able to use the algorithm to help predict what that means for students moving into the District. Executive Director of Finance and Operations said that they are soliciting quotes from three different vendors to provide a new projection enrollment report, they should know in the next month and a half who the vendor will be, and it may not be the same as the last report. Dr. Tremblay said that we are using every space available in the schools and need to look at the spaces being used to make sure they are the best for learning and to maximize space. Ms. Neves spoke to how so many things can affect enrollment in the different schools, such as students leaving.

Discussion and Vote on a Resolution on the Safe Storage of Firearms

Teaching and Learning Subcommittee Chair Jessica Barnhill said that the subcommittee met yesterday and were joined by members of the Be Smart Program who presented on a secure firearm initiative, gun violence prevention, and gun safety, and Brittany Moscoso from Be Smart is also present tonight for any questions. She said that the subcommittee unanimously voted to support a resolution on the safe storage of firearms which is included in the packets.

Motion: To accept the resolution which formally expresses a desire to raise awareness, begin proactive messaging, and reduce preventable gun violence issues.

Moved: Ms. Barnhill **Seconded:** Ms. Hugo

Discussion: Ms. Moshe said that she is concerned with gun safety being taught in our schools, as we are not gun experts, and asked where the information would be coming from that is to be shared with students and families. Ms. Barnhill noted that there is nothing in the resolution that mentions teaching in the curriculum. Ms. Moscoso said that the idea behind the secure storage notification resolution is just a preventative proactive measure to have the school community involved in preventing gun violence tragedies and about raising awareness within the community about secure firearm storage. She said that there is plenty of information available and a ton of resources that they can provide and work with the administration on spreading the knowledge. Members spoke in support of this resolution and spoke to their own experience with gun safety storage. Mr. Freudberg said that in the past the School Committee had a previous resolution that did ask for curriculum changes and civics education and as the

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liaison to the Youth Council he thinks they would be interested in this, and suggested that a possible next step is distributing this resolution to others, such as the City Council or State Legislators. Members asked what the School Committee's responsibilities would be once this was passed and what other Districts have passed similar resolutions. Ms. Moscoso said there are many different options for where the work could begin and her team would work with the necessary people on specific communication that can go out to the community and there is also an option to participate in training programs, all at no cost. She said that within Massachusetts there were four Districts who passed a similar resolution, but nationally there are close to 3 million students within districts where there is some form of resolution in place or Be Smart programming.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-1

(Yes: Hugo, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Barnhill, LaBarge. Abstained: Moshe)

Executive Director of Finance & Operations Update

FY23 Operating and Capital Budget

Mr. Lynch said that the FY23 YTD shows a 44.11% spend rate and they continue to monitor spending with Principals and Directors and will continue to do so throughout the year.

FY24 Operating and Capital Budget

Mr. Lynch said that all Principals and Directors have submitted their FY24 budget requests including expenses, salaries, additional salaries, and any new position requests. He said that his office has been working with Principals and Directors to iron out what they submitted to make sure there are no duplicate requests to get to the first pass of the FY24 budget. He said that in the future they will work with the City and collaborate on a budget number that works for the City and supports all our staff and students

Transportation Update

Mr. Lynch spoke to his transportation update that included information including the number of drivers each day, the percentage of late runs by school with 11.57% being late overall this year, 9 candidates in the NRT training pipeline, the bus tracking app was down one morning, but was up and running in the afternoon, and there was 1 athletic trip requested that was accommodate by NRT. He said that they meet with NRT on a weekly basis to brainstorm and come up with solutions to make the late run rate better. Mr. Lynch said that he would look into Ms. Moshe's requested clarification on the late bus data that had the note that a bus was at DND for 12 minutes.

NRT staff Dave Lathbury and Peter Delani shared their presentation that included an overview of routes, bus status, driver training pipeline, and licensed drivers hired/road tests passed by month and a November Check-In that included that eight drivers were added to the Framingham contract since September 1st, three drivers left the contract since September 1st, four drivers are on long term leave of absence since October, there is a concentrated CDL training pilot program starting November 28th, and the next driver will be uploaded for a road test the week of December 5th. They noted that as they came into the school year they had said that there would be 60 runs, within 7 days leading up to the school year they had several

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drivers tell them that they would not be coming back, but with their spare driver contingency they were able to still supply the drivers needed for the 60 routes.

Dr. Tremblay said that although he is committed to working together with NRT he is stunned by the ongoing problem every month which he has seen through a different lens through his residency. He spoke of how the District has been doing everything they can to communicate out to families and FPS staff are having to cover, such as by driving the Flyer buses and with MWRTA partnerships. Ms. Moshe asked for information on how NRT is recruiting and retaining staff, if there is any data on local recruitment events and what events have been done locally, and if there was any data on Framingham specific candidates who have applied and started on routes. Mr. Delani said that they are recruiting year round and in December in conjunction with the RMV and Department of Education they are having a driver certificate exam event in Framingham. He said that they are seeing this in all regions, not just Framingham, and there is a 10-20 deficit of driver shortages across the state and nation. He said that they went to D.C. in October to meet with the new Chairperson of the Department of Transportation and met with the Congressional Bus Caucus to discuss what means that the federal government can take to help state governments with CDL licensure process, such as allowing it to occur in multiple languages, and noted that their efforts are at the local, state, and national levels to address the situation. Mr. Delani said that they have increased driver salaries across the state from last year to this year to incentivize recruitment, use the Framingham Sheraton on multiple occasions for events, increased recruiting staff, and he can ask for Framingham specific data on recruiting. He said that the biggest challenge with CDL licenses are the failure rates, some of the regulations do not really apply to school buses, such as identifying all items under the hood which are more interstate trucking regulations. In response to a question from Ms. Hugo Mr. Delani said that although he does not have the data he would estimate that close to 50% of CDL candidates do not make it through. Mr. Freudberg said that the event at the Framingham Sheraton is only for 7d testing and not CDL and that does not directly impact the 60 driver shortfall. Mr. Lathbury said that a lot of candidates that go into CDL training come out of 7d pool and will drive 7d while training for CDL, he said that out of the 9 drivers listed in the training pipeline probably about half of them are current 7d drivers.

Mr. Freudberg said that the impact is dramatically higher with the morning late bus data compared to a year ago and gave percentages for different schools, such as how Brophy Elementary School last year had a 6.72% late rate and this year has a 38% late rate. He asked what their thoughts are on this and if these levels with morning lateness and staff shortfall are similar or different to the other communities they serve. Mr. Lathbury said they are trying to get as many kids on the buses that are available which means routes are essentially not going to be on time until there are more buses and they can unwind the routes. Mr. Freudberg asked what specifically NRT has done per Article 11 of the contract with the City in relation to soliciting subcontractors as options to make up for the staffing shortfall and if they utilize long term multiyear contracts or other similar methods to try and ensure the number of drivers between now and next school year will not get lower. Mr. Lathbury said that they have not brought in subcontractors or explored bringing in subcontractors. He said that they have a one year service agreement for a license to make sure the drivers are there for the next year and there is a financial penalty for breaking that contract. Mr. Freudberg said that his strong

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recommendations are to increase pay, seek multi year commitments with benefits to those who commit, work directly with the FPS Human Resources Department to present their strategy to them and seek their feedback as they are local experts on hiring for Framingham, and use Article 11 to hire subcontractors to fill this gap. Ms. Sosua said that she is the incoming State Representative as part of the Framingham Delegation and put herself entirely at their disposal to help at the state level.

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. LaBarge said that the warrants were signed for a total of \$972,599.62 and a payroll total of \$5,333,931.56 on the dates of November 14, 2022 and November 21, 2022.

Mr. Freudberg, as the Chair of the Finance and Operations Subcommittee, said that at the next full School Committee meeting there will be a discussion on the FY24 Budget process and the School Committee wish list and after that meeting it can be decided if a subcommittee meeting is needed before the new year or not.

Ms. Barnhill filled in for the Policy Subcommittee Chair Ms. Maskell, who could not be at the meeting, and said that the policies that are listed on the agenda are all up for a first reading.

Motion: To approve all policies listed on the agenda (AC: Non-Discrimination and Harrasment, Title IX Language for All Student and Employee Handbooks Document, Framingham Civil Rights Procedures Title IX Sexual Harrasment Document, New Policy: Framingham Civil Rights Procedures Title IX Claims, City of Framingham's Fleet Efficiency Policy, EBCF: General District Goals Affected by the Pandemic, JCA - ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS TO SCHOOLS, JL - STUDENT WELFARE, IC/ICA - SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR, IIB - CLASS SIZE, ID - SCHOOL DAY, IKE - PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS, IKF: Local Graduation Requirements, IHB - SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM WITH SPECIAL NEEDS), IHBA - PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, IHBAA - OBSERVATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS, IHBF - HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION (tutoring) FOR NON-SPED STUDENTS, GCA - PROFESSIONAL STAFF POSITIONS, JIE - PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS, JLC - STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES AND REQUIREMENTS, IHBG - HOME SCHOOLING, KLG - RELATIONS WITH POLICE AND FIRE AUTHORITIES, JJ - CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, KI - VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS, JLCC: Illness and Contract Tracing, EEA - STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES, EEAA - STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION, EEAE (also JICC) - STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES, EC - BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS MANAGEMENT, and ECA - BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS SECURITY) for a first reading.

Moved: Ms. Moshe **Seconded:** Mr. LaBarge

Discussion: Mr. Freudberg asked if it was discussed or if there was any provision that should be added to the Electric Vehicle Policy in the case that the City changes their policy, such as if the changes get automatically adopted or if the policy goes back to the School Committee to adopt any changes they make. He said that at a previous Policy Subcommittee meeting the MASC staffer said that the Title IX policies should be put on pause as the Attorney General and MASC sent out updated guidance and asked if that guidance was incorporated into the policies up for approval tonight. Ms. Barnhill said that she would recommend approving these for first readings and then there can be discussion on those questions in the Policy Subcommittee prior to the second readings.

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Roll Call Vote: Unanimous (7-0-0)

(Yes: Hugo, Moshe, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Barnhill, LaBarge)

Ms. Hugo, as the Chair of the Climate Change, Environment, and Sustainability Subcommittee, said that the next meeting will be on December 13th from 4:00-5:30 p.m.

Ms. Barnhill, as the Chair of the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee, said that at the last meeting in addition to the Be Smart Program there was also a dual language program expansion presentation and the next meeting is on December 14th at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes and Field Trip

Motion: To approve the field trip (Framingham High School Science Department Costa Rica Trip through Ecology Project International, Pacuare Reserve and Tirimbina Reserve) with the updated dates.

Moved: Ms. Hugo **Seconded:** Mr. LaBarge **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (7-0-0)

(Yes: Hugo, Moshe, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Barnhill, LaBarge)

Motion: To approve the Open Session minutes of October 19, 2022.

Moved: Ms. Ottaviani **Seconded:** Ms. Moshe **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (7-0-0)

(Yes: Hugo, Moshe, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Barnhill, LaBarge)

Additional Public Comment

Robert Bolles asked if there are any statistics showing how many elderly people are leaving the City for senior housing or selling their homes to people who have children. He spoke about the turnover he is seeing in his neighborhood.

Dr. Tremblay said that when they determine a demographer they can see if they can find out that data. He said that he is unsure if they look at the age of residents when they move out, but from the demographer we do know that the neighborhood turnover is more impactful to student enrollment than some of the new construction of apartments.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Ms. Moshe **Seconded:** Mr. LaBarge **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (7-0-0)

(Yes: Hugo, Moshe, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Barnhill, LaBarge)

Meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Student Advisory Committee Presentation - Community Week

FPS Student Enrollment Update Presentation

2021 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey Highlights Presentation

Draft Framingham Secure Storage Notification Resolution

FY23 YTD

Mayor and City Solicitor Letter to NRT

NRT Response Letter

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NRT Transportation Update

FPS Transportation Update

Warrants

Policy Summary and Edits for First Readings

City's Municipal Fleet Efficiency Policy with Tracked Changes

City's Final and Signed Municipal Fleet Efficiency Policy

Updated FHS Field Trip Proposal to Costa Rica

Draft October 19, 2022 Minutes

Analysis by Adam Freudberg on NRT Late Bus Data

Analysis by Adam Freudberg on Student Enrollment Comparisons 2020-2022