Franklin West Supervisory Union

Community Update

January 30, 2026

It's hard to believe that we are just about to roll into the second month of 2026. Students have been engaged in academics since they returned from the holiday break. They have also been taking advantage of the winter weather during recess and school skiing programs.

Speaking of winter weather and in light of our first snow day of the year, I want to take a moment to remind you how we make decisions around school closure. This week's storm was a pretty obvious and easy call, but just like on TV, the weather is not easy to predict. We get updates from NOAA anytime there is a potential weather event. Typically, we get updates at 4 AM and 4 PM for days in advance. This helps us to see changes in severity or timing of the storm. On the morning of the event, NOAA hosts a 4:45 AM zoom call to give us the most accurate information they have. Their weather folks can tell us how the weather is in Western Franklin County vs Eastern Franklin County. They never tell us to close school or not; they just tell us the weather impact and timing. At around the same time, we are checking in with our road crews and bus companies for the on-the-ground assessment. This helps us determine the safety for our buses and other drivers. I also am in contact with the other Franklin County Superintendents (and monitoring Chittenden County as well). We recognize that our school districts are interdependent, as some of our staff live in towns outside of ours. Given all these factors, we try to make a decision by 5:30 AM. We will tend to err on the side of caution and hope that we don't get caught off guard by a squall or unexpected freezing rain. Rest assured that we do our best to make the right call with student safety foremost in mind. It feels good to be sharing this process with you after a really obvious snow day. I can only wish for similar storms in the near future (and an early spring!).

The other aspect of the winter season is the adoption of budgets by all of our school boards. This has been a difficult budget season overall, but your boards will present budgets that meet student needs with the least possible impact on learning and your bottom line. Over the next several weeks, we will be sharing a series of videos that provide detail and insight into your town's school budget. These will be shared directly with you through our usual methods and will be available on our website. Please plan to attend upcoming school board meetings and the information sessions scheduled for each town. You can vote as early as February 11th, so if you or a household member will be out of town on March 3rd, please request an absentee ballot from your town clerk.

As your school boards have been adopting budgets, we have kept a close eye on the work of our legislators in Montpelier, particularly related to Act 73. Education reform that will impact spending, taxes, and school district configuration is all under consideration as part of Act 73. If tax rates are to become more stable and predictable for Vermonters, there will need to be actual change in these areas. Any changes that come from Montpelier during this session will not impact this year's school budget, but will take effect in the coming years. We talk about Act 73 at board meetings and recommend that you reach out to your legislators with questions and concerns.

As always, I thank you for your continued support of our schools. It is a pleasure to work with our staff to prepare our students for the opportunities of their future. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

John T. Tague

Superintendent