JUNE 5, 2026

FWSU

Community Update

As I write this final update for the year, it is hard to imagine that we have such a short amount of time left in the school year. Next week, we will hold all of our culminating ceremonies at all of our schools: BFA 8th grade on Thursday, Fletcher 6th grade and Georgia 8th grade on Friday, and BFA High School graduation on Saturday. It will be a week filled with tradition, celebration, nervousness, and mostly joy. Our official last day of school is Monday, June 15th. I want to share information about employees who will be retiring and an update on school restructuring based on recent legislation.

One of the positive aspects of all of our Franklin West schools is the longevity of our employees. Folks find this to be a great place to work, so they end up staying for a good stretch of their educational career. This stability translates into better educational outcomes for our students as teacher turnover is a major detriment to continuous student growth. Please join me in congratulating the following educators who are retiring from our schools this year:

BFA-Fairfax

- Janet Cormier, ES Special Educator
- Deb Mucia, ES Paraeducator
- Dana Hamm, MS Math Teacher
- Mike Brown, HS P.E. and Health Teacher

Fletcher Elementary

- Nancy Hurt, Classroom Teacher
- Diane Dayvie, Paraeducator

Georgia Elementary and Middle School

- Steve Emery, Principal
- Pam Toof-Norton, Interventionist
- Melissa O'Brien, Speech and Language Pathologist
- Barb Dow, Interventionist

As you may be aware, the Legislature came to an agreement on H955, a bill that further addresses the education structure reforms started in Act 73 of 2025. This bill clarifies the process and timeline for potential consolidation of school districts and the onset of a foundation formula to fund schools moving forward. The first portion of this bill is to set up the Cooperative Educational Service Area (CESA) to facilitate opportunities for special education, professional development, and business services to be shared across the region. Franklin West will be part of the Champlain Valley North CESA with the Maple Run, Missisquoi Valley, and Franklin North East school districts.

The other responsibility of the CESA is to facilitate conversation regarding district consolidation. Franklin West has been grouped with Maple Run (St Albans and Fairfield) for these initial conversations in H955. This does not mean that that is the only possibility to consider, but it is the starting point. Board members from all existing districts will meet from October 2026 through December 2027 to examine the feasibility of a merger. If the group decides that some form of a merger is a viable option and the Agency of Education agrees, the towns involved would vote on Town Meeting Day 2028.

If the redistricting proposal is approved by the voters, the new district would assume operation on July 1, 2029. This would also lead to the implementation of the Foundation Formula to fund schools equitably across the state. Essentially, our schools would be allocated a specific amount per student, and we would build budgets based on that amount. Typically, FWSU schools spend less per student than is proposed in the legislation, so our schools would be in a good position to provide opportunities for our students. I believe that the major benefit of the Foundation Formula will be stability and predictability of the tax rate from year to year.

There is a lot of uncertainty and a long runway for this process. I admittedly have only provided a broad overview of this 120+ page bill, and am committed to keeping you informed as discussions and decisions are made or if the process changes along the way. I'm happy to dig deeper if you desire, just reach out.

In closing, I want to thank you for sharing your learners with us this year. It has been a pleasure to watch them as they become effective communicators and problem solvers prepared for the opportunities of their future. Enjoy the extra time with them over the summer break. We look forward to seeing them again when school starts on August 26. Thanks for your support of our schools. Please let me know if you have questions or concerns. Have a fantastic summer!

Sincerely,

John T. Tague

Superintendent