



**Town of Bedford**  
97 McMahon Road

[Bedfordps.org](http://Bedfordps.org)

## Superintendent Update

If you need this document translated, please call your child's school principal - Si necesita este documento traducido, por favor comuníquese con la escuela de su hijo - Se você precisa este documento traduzido, entre em contato com a escola dos seus filhos - Si vous avez besoin de traduire ce document, s'il vous plaît contacter l'école de votre enfant - 如果你需要这份文件翻译，请联系您的孩子的学校 - إذا كنت تحتاج /تحتاجين إلى ترجمة هذه الوثيقة إلى اللغة العربية يرجى الاتصال بمدرسة، - طفلك/طفلاتك

Friday, August 13, 2021

Hello Bedford School Community,

### Message from Commissioner Riley

Late this morning DESE Commissioner Jeff Riley announced that he will ask the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to grant him the authority to mandate masks for all public K-12 students, educators, and staff through October 1 to ensure schools fully reopen safely and to provide time for more students and educators to get vaccinated. The mandate would include exceptions for students who cannot wear a mask due to medical conditions or behavioral needs. After October 1, the commissioner's policy would allow middle and high schools to lift the mask mandate for vaccinated students and staff only if the school meets a certain vaccination rate – at least 80 percent of students and staff in a school building are vaccinated. Unvaccinated students and staff would still be required to wear masks. The DESE Board will meet at 10:00am on Tuesday, August 24, 2021 to consider his request. Read the complete document at [DESE Press Release 8/20/2021](#)

### School Committee Meeting Recap

On Wednesday night (8/18/21) the school committee met to consider COVID-19 protocols for the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Thank you to everyone who took the time to share their thoughts with the committee and me. After hearing from community members I recommended to the committee that we continue to encourage everyone who is eligible to become vaccinated, continue to maximize airflow through our HVAC system, continue to use MERV-13 filters in our HVAC system, utilize HEPA filtration machines in all occupied spaces, stock and encourage the use of hand sanitizing stations, participate in DESE's pooled testing program which will include weekly safety check testing, rapid diagnostic testing, and a "test and stay" testing protocol for

close contacts, continue to stock and make available personal protective equipment (PPE) to all, and begin the year with a mask mandate for all students and staff. These protocols, if approved, would allow us to prioritize the health and safety of everyone in our school buildings. The school committee will vote on these recommendations on Tuesday, August 24, 2021 at their next meeting.

At the meeting many speakers referenced to the following documents:

[AAP's guidance](#) from 7/19/2021

[CDC guidance](#) from 7/27/2021

[MA DESE/DPH guidance](#) from 7/30/2021

DESE/DPH [Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios SY21-22](#) from 8/13/2021

#### METCO and Hanscom visits

This week I had the opportunity to visit two important leaders. I visited with Colonel Katrina Stephens on Hanscom Airforce Base in her office. Colonel Stephens is Commander of the 66th Air Base Group based at Hanscom Air Force Base. At the meeting Colonel Stephens and I were joined by our Military Educational Liaison Laurel Wironen. Our conversation focused on how we could continue to strengthen our relationships to assist the students of our military families. After the meeting Laurel was able to give me a tour of the base so that I could see the base for myself. It was a wonderful opportunity to visit the neighborhoods of our students.

I also had the opportunity to meet with METCO President and CEO Milly Arbaje-Thomas. Milly oversees the operations of METCO HQ and I was able to meet with her in Nubian Square in Boston to see the operation in action. Joining me for the meeting was our Bedford METCO Director Akil Mondesir. At our meeting we discussed items related to assisting our Bedford METCO families transition from Boston to Bedford and helping them maximize their educational experiences. Prior to the meeting Akil and I were able to drive the middle school/high school bus route. It was a wonderful opportunity to visit the neighborhoods of our students. Thank you to Bedford Charter's Butch O'Leary for driving us throughout the city. Butch has been driving our Bedford METCO students to Bedford for the past seventeen (17) years! Thank you Butch!

#### Survey for METCO families

METCO HQ has launched its second summer survey for parents of METCO students. The questions range from children's experience in school to the value of HQ's programs to areas of improvement in the application process. We encourage all of our Bedford METCO families to take a few minutes to share their perspective anonymously with METCO HQ. Please access the survey at <https://forms.gle/FZrgEhYizZhc1HFq7>

#### Pool Testing/ COVID Safety Checks

We have engaged with CIC Health and DESE so that we can provide weekly safety check testing, rapid diagnostic testing, and "test and stay" testing for close contacts. Our Lead Nurse Tracy Fernald and I have been attending meetings and will continue to plan for testing in the fall. More meetings are planned and we will be sure to follow the progress as we prepare to take

advantage of DESE's new routine COVID safety check protocols. DESE has engaged CIC Health as its state-wide testing provider. More information will follow on the COVID Safety Check protocols. For more information please review the [COVID Safety Check Information 8 20 2021](#) document prepared by Nurse Leader Tracy Fernald.

#### First days of school

As we prepare for the first days of school please keep the following dates in mind:

Monday, August 30, 2021 Teachers Workshop Day

Tuesday, August 31, 2021 Teachers Workshop Day

Wednesday, September 1, 2021 First Day of School for all students

Thursday, September 2, 2021 Second Day of School for all students

Friday, September 3, 2021 No School for ALL

#### Athletics

Our fall athletic season begins today, Friday, August 20, 2021 for the football team. All other sports will begin on Monday, August 23, 2021. Some athletes have already begun their pre-season training and may be training on roadways so please be cautious as you drive through town.

As always, thank you for your patience, your participation, and your continued commitment to our schools,

Sincerely,

Philip Conrad  
Superintendent