



Town of Bedford

97 McMahon Road

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، - 学校 - يرجى الاتصال بمدرسة طفلك/طفلاتك - Если вам нужна помощь с переводом этого документа, позвоните директору школы вашего ребёнка

Friday, January 14, 2022

Hello Bedford School Community,

Secretary of Education

On Friday amidst the snowstorm I was able to attend a webinar with United States Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona, United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, White House Covid Response Team Member and Massachusetts native Mary Wall, and the CDC's Education Lead Dr. John Neatherlin. This was an opportunity for us to hear from national leaders about the Federal government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the expectations for the future. Dr. Cardona pointed to the strong collaboration between agencies and Dr. Murthy discussed the evolving nature of scientific knowledge. He also discussed how community spread is leaking into our schools. He pointed out that schools remain an important partner in mitigating the spread of the virus.

Commissioner Riley

On Monday, January 10, 2022, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley notified us that he will again extend the mask requirement in all K-12 public schools through February 28, 2022. The mask requirement remains an important measure to keep students, teachers, and staff in school safely at this time. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in consultation with medical experts and state health officials, will continue to evaluate public health data. To read the press release please navigate to [Mask Requirement Extension](#). Additionally, the department has updated its [COVID-19 Updated Flowchart 1 2022](#)

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

Monday, January 17, 2022, is the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday in the United States. The federal holiday is in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The third Monday each January is a national day of service. For more information about service opportunities please visit the [MLK Day of Service](#) website. For more information about Dr. King please visit the National Park Service [MLK Memorial](#) website. To learn more about Dr. King please visit the [King Center Website](#). Please see below to join local celebrations of Dr. King's life and legacy.

Bedford Embraces Diversity, Parent Diversity Council, and Bedford METCO Events

Monday, January 17, 2022 at 9:30 am

Please join Bedford Embraces Diversity, the Parents Diversity Council, and Bedford METCO for a virtual Martin Luther King Jr. Day event beginning at 9:30 am on Monday, January 17, 2022. The event will feature Regie Gibson of Lexington, a poet, songwriter, author, workshop facilitator, and educator who has been teaching and performing for the past generation. BED and PDC are working with Akil Mondesir, our METCO coordinator, to assemble a panel of current and former METCO parents. The question-and-answer format will explore the families' assessment of the strengths of the program in Bedford and what could be improved, as well as ways in which local residents can learn from their fellow students and families from Boston. To obtain the Zoom link email: bedfordembracesdiversity@gmail.com.

Friday, January 21, 2022 at 6:30 pm

Saturday, January 15th marks Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 93rd birthday, and January 17th is the federal holiday recognizing the Civil Rights leader. In partnership with Bedford Public Schools METCO Director/DEI Coordinator Akil Mondesir, our school communities will honor Dr. King's life and legacy with a virtual event on Friday, January 21, 2022, at 6:30 pm on Zoom.

Our keynote speaker is Ron Jones, an Emmy Award winner and Executive Director/Artistic Principal of [Dialogues on Diversity](#). Mr. Jones will present a performance lecture titled: MLK and the Strength of Shared Dreams. Through live character portrayal and video, MLK and the Strength of Shared Dreams depict how MLK's "Poor People's Campaign" was a turning point in intersectional advocacy. I hope that you will join us for this event on January 21st. Please [click here for the event flyer](#), and [RSVP in order to receive a zoom link in advance](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Andrew K. Nyamekye, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Concord and Concord-Carlisle Public Schools at anyamekye@concordps.org.

January 27, 2022, at 7:00 pm

Please join the Parents Diversity Council for a special workshop for parents and caregivers entitled The ABCs of Racism: Fostering Conversations about Race and Action with Kids. This virtual event will be held on January 27, 2022, from 7 until 9 PM, via Zoom. This program is geared for all audiences as it explores fundamental concepts of systemic racism, the barriers that block us from engaging with kids around race and racism, the social science of race awareness in children, and strategies to start and sustain antiracist action in school and at

home. Presented in collaboration with Wee the People. To RSVP for the zoom link, email pdcbedford@gmail.com

NEW COVID-19 Email Addresses

As I wrote to you on Wednesday, January 12, 2021, due to the recent surge in COVID-19 related illness, the health offices are experiencing a much higher than usual volume of telephone calls, emails, and office visits. Much of this increased volume is inquiries related to tests, testing, quarantine, and isolation procedures. Please note that because of the higher volume our school nurses may not be able to reply as they would like or as quickly as has been their practice in the past. Please know that they are doing everything possible to meet the needs of our students and families during these challenging times and that they truly appreciate your support, cooperation, and patience.

In order to streamline communication from families to our schools about COVID-19, we created school-based COVID-19 email addresses. Beginning immediately we would ask that ALL COVID-19 related inquiries be sent to the following COVID-19 email addresses.

For the Davis School please email: daviscovid@bedfordps.org

For the Lane School please email lanecovid@bedfordps.org

For JGMS please email jgmscovid@bedfordps.org

For BHS please email bhscovid@bedfordps.org

Please note that if you are reporting that your child has tested positive to COVID-19, please include the following information:

- Name of child
- Grade of child
- Date of symptom onset (if no symptoms were experienced, please note the date the test was taken)
- Date of testing, type of test performed (home, PCR or antigen).
- If the positive test was obtained from a home test, if possible, please schedule a PCR lab test to confirm.
- Date the last time your child was present in school
- Does your child attend school activities or sports and list the activity or team

Current DESE/DPH/CDC COVID-19 Management FAQs

Below is a restating of the information included in my message from Wednesday, January 12, 2022. As a district, we continue to follow the most recent guidance regarding COVID-19 management in schools. Below is a summary of FAQs based on the latest updates.

1. What do I do if I am a close contact (outside of the school setting - household or other out-of-school settings) of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

- Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts are exempt from testing or quarantine. You may return to school.
 - If you are a close contact and develop symptoms within 5 days of the initial exposure, stay home and get a PCR test.
 - For out of school close contacts - household close contacts, or other out of school close contact and you are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated (2 weeks since the 2nd dose) and you are a close contact, please stay home for 5 days and wear a mask for an additional 5 days. A COVID-19 test (PCR, Antigen, and/or home test is acceptable) is recommended on Day 5. You may return on DAY 6.
2. What if I am ill and have symptoms on the COVID-19 symptom checklist?
- If you are ill, please stay home and get tested for COVID-19. You may return to school after you have received a negative PCR or antigen test result. An antigen home test may be self-administered. If you test negative, you may return to school as long as your symptoms are improving and you are fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.
3. What if I test positive for COVID-19?
- For anyone who tests positive, they will need to stay at home and isolate for 5 days. Day 0 is the date of the onset of symptoms or date of the positive test, and they may return to school on day 6 as long as you have:
 - Been without fever for 24 hours (and without taking fever-reducing medications),
 - Experienced improvement of other symptoms
 - Following the day 5 isolation period, individuals must mask for 5 additional days when around others.
4. Can I continue with weekly pooled testing after I tested positive for COVID?
- No. If your child has tested positive by home test, antigen or PCR - they should **NOT participate in weekly testing**. It is not recommended that any individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days participate in routine COVID-19 testing.

Masks

The district has purchased a large amount of disposable child-sized masks. These masks are available at each of the health offices of Davis, Lane, and JGMS. Please let your child know they are there and available. BEST (Bedford Elementary Schools Together) is still pursuing child-sized KN95 masks. As soon as those are available we will let you know.

We have also purchased a large amount of adult-sized KN95 and N95 masks. These masks are available at all four schools. Please stop by the main office to pick up a mask if you need one.

I am happy to share with you a document prepared by Professor Patricia Fabian, a BPS parent. Dr. Fabian and her colleagues created a document entitled [COVID and Face Masks FAQ](#). Dr. Fabian is an Associate Professor at the Boston University School of Public Health. We appreciate her sharing this with us so that we could share it with you.

Finally, we just received testing documentation for the KN95 masks provided to us by DESE in December. These masks were tested by MIT at Lincoln Labs and found to have a filtration efficiency rate of over 98%. We will deploy these masks at a later date as needed. Please navigate [here](#) to see the MIT/Lincoln Labs Report.

Please note that masks are required in all of our buildings and that proper use of masks will be particularly important during the current Omicron surge.

Case Update Information

Moving forward we will continue to track reported positive student and staff cases via self-administered home-style antigen tests, as well as point of care tests (either PCR, rapid PCR, or rapid antigen). DESE guidance has been updated, and with the shortage of testing available, self-administered home-style antigen tests are accepted and treated as a positive case of COVID-19. The dashboard is now up-to-date and can be accessed here:

[Link to COVID-19 Cases in the Bedford Public Schools This Week](#)

Please be sure to report any positive COVID-19 test results to the absence line or your school's covid email address listed above.

Please note that masks are required in all of our buildings and that proper use of masks will be particularly important during the current Omicron surge.

DESE/DPH and CDC Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines

DESE and DPH have reviewed their isolation and quarantining protocols to be in line with CDC guidance. Isolation is the time someone who is COVID-19 positive must spend in isolation and away from others. The protocol previously was ten (10) days and has been reduced to five (5) days. This information can be found at [DESE/DPH Protocols COVID-19 Scenarios Updated 12/30/2021](#).

Isolation is for anyone regardless of vaccination status who has tested positive for COVID-19. Quarantine is for close contact with a positive COVID-19 individual. The current information from DPH is at [About COVID-19 isolation and quarantine](#) and the DESE update is at [DESE/DPH Protocols COVID-19 Scenarios Updated 12/30/2021](#).

If you test positive for COVID-19 (regardless of vaccination status) you should:

- Stay home and remain isolated for 5 Days
- Consider the first day with symptoms or the day you test positive as Day Zero (0)

- As long as you have NO SYMPTOMS
 - You may return to school on Day Six (6)
 - Continue to wear a mask around others for an additional five (5) days
 - You have been fever-free without fever-reducing medication for Twenty-Four (24) hours

As a reminder, isolation keeps someone who is sick and has tested positive for COVID-19 away from others (even in their own home) while quarantine keeps someone who is in close contact with someone with COVID-19 away from others.

Finally, to assist all of us DESE has created an updated FAQ document that can be found at [DESE COVID-19 FAQ January 6, 2022 Update](#)

Safety Check Testing

It is important to note that our COVID-19 safety check testing protocol is up and running weekly at each school. We urge everyone to sign up to be part of our protective testing program.

This week it was necessary to switch from our double swab pooled testing collection to a single swab collection due to the unacceptable delay in results last week. With the single swab collection, we are placing 2 swabs in a “pool” to be processed by the lab, and if the pool detects a positive result, the school nurses will retest those 2 individuals with rapid antigen tests, and if positive families will be notified and instructed on isolation procedures. If the rapid test is negative and the individual is symptom-free, they will be retested the following day, and if still negative and symptom-free, they can resume weekly COVID-19 testing. We will return to double swabs once the lab is able to ensure a faster turnaround time for results.

Pooled Testing Results Week of January 10, 2022

BHS 136 students, 63 staff, 2 positive cases

JGMS 207 students, 62 staff, 2 positive cases

Lane 352 students, 56 staff, 10 positive cases

Davis 292 students, 42 staff, 7 positive cases

Due to the Monday holiday, JGMS will be testing on Tuesday, January 18th.

If you have not done so already and would like to you can sign up for testing at

[BPS COVID-19 Testing Sign Up Link](#)

By signing up for testing you provide an additional layer of protection for your child, your family, and our schools. I cannot urge you strongly enough to participate in this free service. The percent of students and staff who are participating in Safety Check Testing has increased. At Davis and Lane, we are at about 60% of students and staff, at JGMS we are at about 40% of students and staff, and at BHS about 15% of students and staff have signed up for testing.

Contact Tracing

As you can imagine with the large number of cases that increased this week, the school nurses in conjunction with the Bedford Department of Health and Human Services are doing their very best to contact trace our school cases.

Please understand that our nursing staff will be triaging contact tracing in the following order:

- If your child tests positive you will receive notification if your child tests positive through our Safety Check Testing, or at school symptomatic testing
- For the elementary schools all families will be notified when someone in your child's class reports a positive test result for COVID-19
 - If your child is fully vaccinated you should monitor symptoms for 10 days
 - If your child is unvaccinated your notification will include information about options for participation in our Test and Stay Program or quarantine.
 - The school nurses will triage the classroom situation, and if there are multiple cases in one classroom, will offer test and stay to unvaccinated close contacts.
 - If there is a positive case at your child's school those cases will continue to be reported on the Bedford [COVID-19 Dashboard](#)
- School cases at Davis, Lane, and JGMS and BHS will be added to the COVID-19 dashboard daily.
- At JGMS and BHS due to the increase in cases during this current surge, the school nurses are working with the Bedford Health Department and their contact tracers. The contact tracers will follow up with the positive cases to help determine close contacts and advise on isolation and quarantine timelines. All individuals who test positive for COVID-19 are encouraged to reach out to their close contacts.

COVID Case Updates

Please check the link below to review current and past cases of COVID-19 cases within our school community. Thank you to our school nurses who have been continuing to update the case numbers daily. From Friday, January 7, 2021, to Thursday, January 13, 2021, we have had a total of 109 cases reported to date. Please note that these numbers have not yet been reported on the [Bedford COVID-19 Dashboard](#) as cases are still being added. Our case information to date is broken out by school below

Davis School had 29 cases

Lane School had 30 cases

JGMS had 21 cases

BHS had 29 cases

BPS had 109 cases

[Link to COVID-19 Cases in the Bedford Public Schools This Week](#)

COVID-19 Symptoms Reminder

As a reminder, please keep in mind that people with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported. Symptoms can range from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. The CDC continued to update this list as they learn more about COVID-19. For more information please navigate to the [CDC Symptoms Web Site](#)

Superintendent's Blog

Please take a moment to review the latest news on the [Superintendent's Blog](#). Assistant Superintendent Dr. Tricia Clifford has outlined our continuous focus on student learning and our use of the [DESE Acceleration Roadmap](#) this academic year.

Budget

On Tuesday, January 18, 2022, the budget process will continue with a line item review. A budget hearing and final vote are scheduled for Tuesday, January 25, 2022, with a presentation to the Bedford Finance Committee on Thursday, January 27, 2022. Please feel free to join us virtually for the meetings. If you are not able to join us, know that all of the presented materials will be posted to our BPS website later next week.

Bedford Dollars for Scholars Trivia Night

Registration is now open for the Citizens Scholarship of Bedford Dollars for Scholars Trivia Night! Trivia Night will be held on Saturday, February 12, 2022, from 7:00 pm until 8:30 pm. Get your team ready for some Trivia Fun. Similar to last year, this will be a virtual event, brought to you by Stump! Trivia. Virtual Doors open at 7:00 pm, the Trivia game is from 7:30 pm until 8:30 pm. Teams of 6-10 players, \$25 per person. REGISTER EARLY, as this event sells out! Proceeds go to scholarships for Bedford/Hanscom graduates who plan to continue their

education. Team Captains, please register your team [HERE](#), for more information please visit the CSF of Bedford website at <http://www.bedfordma.dollarsforscholars.org>

Positions available

The Bedford Public Schools are seeking substitute teachers and Special Education Teaching Assistants. If you are interested please apply at [BPS Substitutes](#) or to [BPS Special Education Teaching Assistants](#).

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

Sincerely,

Philip Conrad
Superintendent