



**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, October 1, 2021

Hello Bedford School Community,

### National Bullying Prevention Month

October is National Bullying Prevention Month. A time to focus on bullying prevention and to raise awareness about the effects of bullying. During this month, many groups across the country will release new resources, campaigns, and efforts aimed at bringing awareness to the issue of bullying. For more information go to [National Bullying Prevention Month Information](#)

### DESE and Masks

On Monday, September 27, 2020, the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education extended the current state-wide mask requirement through at least November 1, 2021. In his announcement Commissioner Riley also outlined steps districts can take if individual schools can demonstrate a vaccination rate of 80 percent or more of all students and staff in the school. Whether or not a school or district avails itself of the 80 percent vaccination off-ramp is a local decision to be made by school and district leaders in consultation with local health officials. In alignment with statewide guidance, unvaccinated students and staff would be required to continue wearing masks. We will work with the School Committee, the Bedford Department of Health and Human Services, and the Bedford Board of Health to review this information. To read the Commissioners mask mandate please click on [Mask Mandate Extension](#) or to click on the [Vaccination Rate Guidance](#).

This new guidance and the potential for an off-ramp is yet another incentive for all of us to be vaccinated.

### Streamlined COVID Communication

Beginning on Monday, September 27, 2021, the Bedford Public Schools changed our reporting of COVID-19 cases within our school community. Cases are immediately reported on the [Town of Bedford COVID-19 Statistics Page](#). This page is continuously updated by the Bedford Department of Health and Human Services in conjunction with our School nurses and the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network (MAVEN) and has the most up-to-date information. While we changed our communication about COVID-19 cases we did NOT change our COVID-19 protocols. Cases are still being identified, close contacts traced, and notification made to those affected as well local and state agencies. I will only send emails to the entire community if we experience a spike or have signs of an in-school transmission.

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

Again, this will not change the process of contact tracing and ensuring that everyone who needs to know about exposure is aware and the needed steps are taken. This new process will allow the nurses to focus their attention on caring for our students and staff and will streamline our communication about COVID-19 cases in our schools.

### COVID-19 Testing Programs

Please! Sign up for testing as another way to keep our community safe. We offer Test and Stay which allows non-symptomatic close contacts to come to school, get tested, and if negative go to class. If a child tests positive they are sent home. Symptomatic testing allows us to test a student who starts to have symptoms of COVID-19 at school; students should not come to school if they are feeling sick while at home. And Routine COVID-19 safety checks (previously called Pooled testing) allow students and staff to be tested on a regular basis. This year each of us will be providing two samples so that in the case of a positive pool each individual can be tested in the lab and the positive COVID-19 case easily identified. The samples will be taken via nasal swab at school.

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

### Vaccination Rate Update

Our school nurses are working to update our vaccination rate information. The nurses at GJMS and BHS are using the [Massachusetts Immunization Information System](#) (MIIS) as well as direct outreach to have an accurate account of our student vaccination rates.

### 2021 Military Impact Aid Survey

As we do each October, we are asking for each parent/guardian's cooperation in filling out a survey form to meet the requirements of Public Law 874. Under the provisions of Public Law 874, Bedford Public Schools must conduct an annual Military Impact Aid Survey. The Town of Bedford receives a substantial sum of money under this provision, which lowers the cost of education for all taxpayers.

This year the survey is fully electronic with an e-signature! Parents/Guardians will receive an email with a survey link for each student. It is very important that all surveys are completed and electronically signed for each student, as reimbursement is made for all eligible students on a per-pupil basis. This survey is repeated annually. We thank you very much for your assistance with this important annual survey.

### MCAS

DESE has released the Spring 2021 MCAS results to school districts throughout the state. State-wide results show that many more students had gaps in their knowledge of math and, to a lesser extent, English language arts, compared to students in the same grades before the COVID-19 pandemic, and that fewer students met or exceeded grade-level expectations.

Our Bedford MCAS data is being analyzed currently, by district-wide and school-based teams. We are examining the results carefully, and are using this information in our grade level, and department level data meetings, along with our internal student assessment data to continue to inform our instruction, our RtI (Response to Intervention) planning, and our differentiation work with students. Families will receive individual MCAS student reports as they have in the past. We will also be presenting an overview of our Bedford MCAS results to the school committee this fall.

### Communication Interruption

To secure our district communications we installed the spam-filtering tool Mimecast. It is designed to provide security to our system. However, Mimecraft did not perform as expected leading appropriate emails to be sent to spam folders. Therefore, we disabled Mimecast and will be working on a resolution. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

### 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](#).

Double letters today. In addition to the usual Friday Letter, you are also receiving an update on our COVID-19 testing programs. Please take a close look at this information and please sign up for testing!

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

Sincerely,

Philip Conrad  
Superintendent