



Town of Bedford

97 McMahon Road

Bedfordps.org

Superintendent Update

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Friday, August 13, 2021

Hello Bedford School Community,

It is hard to believe that stores are already touting their back to school sales. With the change of the calendar to August we all have one eye on summer and another turning towards fall. As I write this we are already gearing up to welcome our students back into our schools. It is the most exciting time of the year for many of us and while we had hoped that COVID-19 was behind us. Alas, we find that it is not.

COVID-19 Update

As we plan for the 2021-2022 school year we do so knowing that health and safety protocols as they relate to COVID-19 will continue to be an important consideration for all of us. To date we have received guidance from The American Academy of Pediatrics on 7/19/2021 [AAP's guidance](#) which "includes a recommendation that everyone older than age 2 wear masks, regardless of vaccination status." We also received guidance from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on 07-27-2021 which suggests a return to indoor mask-wearing in this [CDC guidance](#), stating that the "CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status." At the end of the month on 07-30-2021 we received localized guidance that was a collaboration between the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MA DESE/DPH guidance](#) for Massachusetts PK-12 public schools which has the support of Governor Baker.

So what to do in the face of inconsistent and somewhat conflicting guidance and recommendations? The Bedford Public Schools have continued to prioritize the health and

safety of our students, families, faculty, and staff and will continue to do so in a collaborative and cooperative manner. With that in mind we will be holding two virtual (2) School Committee Meetings. The First will be on **Wednesday, August 18, 2021** so that parents, caregivers, staff, and community members can be heard by the committee on their thoughts, concerns and ideas regarding the reopening of school. We will then meet on **Tuesday, August 24, 2021** to allow the committee to set the policy under which we will begin the school year.

Continuing COVID-19 Practices

Please keep in mind that out of an abundance of caution we will continue to maximize airflow through our HVAC system, continue using MERV-13 filters, utilize HEPA filtration machines in all occupied spaces, stock and utilize hand sanitizing stations, make personal protective equipment available to anyone who wants it, and to do periodic disinfecting. These items will allow us to prioritize the health and safety of everyone in our school buildings.

COVID-19 Vaccination

We are happy to report that the rates of vaccinations continue to grow! To date 74% of our JGMS student population that are eligible to be vaccinated and 73% of our BHS student population has been vaccinated. We encourage everyone to get vaccinated.

Pool Testing/ COVID Safety Checks

DESE has announced that they will be offering a variety of testing options for districts again this school year. On Wednesday, August 11, 2021 DESE held its first meeting on the subject with school and nurse leaders. Our Lead Nurse Tracy Fernald and I attended. More meetings are planned for the next few days 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.

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

New JGMS Principal Jonathan Hartunian

This summer, as all summers have seen a number of personnel changes. None bigger than the leadership change at John Glenn Middle School. On July 1, 2021 we welcomed Mr. Jonathan Hartunian to the Bedford Public Schools and to JGMS. If you have not had a chance to meet Jon yet please check out this article from the Bedford Citizen that was published earlier this summer. [Citizen article about Jonathan Hartunian](#)

Athletics

Our fall athletic season begins on 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.

In Memoriam

This summer we lost two dear colleagues and I would be remiss if I did not pause for a moment from all of the activity of reopening school to reflect on what has been lost this summer. I would ask all of us to remember both Armand Sabourin ([An Appreciation of Coach Sabourin](#)) and Ryan Kilian ([An Appreciation of Ryan Kilian](#)). Both of these gentlemen taught and coached in Bedford and will be sorely missed.

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

Sincerely,

Philip Conrad
Superintendent