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Superintendent Update

August 5, 2020

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كثلفط/كثلفط قسردمب لاصتال اى جري قىبرعلا غللا لى لى قىثول هذه قمجرت لى لى نىجاتحت

Hello Bedford School Community,

I wanted to let you know that as we await a school committee decision on which model (all in-person, hybrid or all remote) we have received more information on the state sponsored remote and Learning Management Systems (LMS) options. Please keep in mind that if the school committee decides on the all remote model this information is moot as we will all be remote together. Here is the information from the state. DESE has updated their plans to include five potential remote learning options. Each is briefly described below.

The first option from DESE would be for us to operate a fully district-designed and district-run remote program. To date we have not thought this possible for us because of our size. Our concern is whether or not we have the capacity to teach an all in-person or hybrid model and a remote model simultaneously. However, as we gather information from our families and we combine it with the commitment of our teachers to teach all of our Bedford students regardless of the model. We are encouraged this may be possible. I know that we would all prefer all of our Bedford students to be taught our Bedford curriculum by our highly qualified, experienced, and wonderful Bedford teachers.

The second option available from DESE is to adopt and implement a high-quality curriculum that easily spans in-person and remote settings. In this approach DESE would purchase a curriculum through the United States Department of Education. That curriculum would be taught to our students by our teachers but would not be the content currently offered in the Bedford Public Schools.

The third option would be a combination of pre-existing instructional materials with online virtual teaching materials. This material could be used as primary material for remote learners and could supplement hybrid or in-person instruction. Again, this plan would rely on Bedford teachers to plan and deliver the remote instruction.

The fourth option is new information, it would allow the Bedford Public Schools to purchase courses through Commonwealth Virtual Schools (CMVS) of which there are two. These courses would be

stand-alone programs. There would be a per course cost to the school district of around \$350 to \$375 dollars per course.

The final option would be for us as a school district to purchase full course content from an Learning Management System (yet unnamed). This would be a stand alone program designed for a large or small group of students and would need to be staffed by Bedford teachers. The cost for the district could range from \$200 to \$400 dollars for a full suite of courses.

Please see [On the Desktop July 24, 2020 Attachment: Fall Remote Learning Guidance](#) for the information from DESE. While the title is labeled for 7/24, the information was expanded on 8/4.

As much as we appreciate this information, our preference, and the preference of our parents and teachers is for us to find a way for our Bedford teachers to teach our remote Bedford students a Bedford curriculum. We all appreciate the commitment of our teachers to our students and will work with them to find ways that may help us bridge the gap created by the current COVID-19 pandemic including blended learning, simulcasting, and other technological options. Our desire is to fully utilize our entire Bedford staff so that they can have meaningful engagement with our students.

In our draft plan we discuss our three models and add the LMS as a backup. Our reliance on the DESE LMS, which we still do not have a great deal of information about, was based solely on our concern for our capacity to operate an all in-person or a hybrid model and an all remote model simultaneously.

I think all of us would agree that if we can have our Bedford teachers teaching our students we would all prefer that. Tomorrow we will be surveying families to see how many may need to rely on a fully remote model. If it is possible for us to marry our teaching staff that also needs to work remotely with the needs of our families that would be an ideal and we are committed to making that happen, if it is possible.

As you know the school committee will meet tonight via Zoom to discuss our three return to school models. The link to tonight's meeting can be found at [School Committee Agenda 8/5/2020](#). Once a model for the beginning of the school year is chosen we will work to operationalize it and simultaneously see if we cannot develop our own remote learning option.

Please keep in mind that the school committee will be choosing a model to begin the year. Depending on a variety of factors we will all need to be prepared to flex between all three models.

As always we appreciate your patience, your participation, and your continued commitment to our schools.

Wishing you continued health,

Sincerely,

Philip Conrad
Superintendent

DESE COVID-19 Information: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>