

SUPERINTENDENT GOGUEN'S NEWSLETTER

January 5, 2022



Dear Student, Staff and Families,

Happy New Year! May 2022 bring us all good health and happiness!

Snow Call Procedures:

With the prediction of snow this Friday, this is a reminder that any delay or school cancellation will be announced through our ONE Call systems, placed on our website, and local TV news channels.

COVID Update:

The safety of our staff and students continues to be our focus.

Our return from the holiday break has brought forth additional challenges associated with increased COVID cases amongst our students and staff. As such, we continue to ask everyone to wear their masks properly and to adhere to our existing COVID protocols that include staying home when you are feeling ill. Given the contagious nature of the Omicron variant, and the high spike in cases in our community and Massachusetts at large, we are sticking to our existing COVID protocols with a 10 day isolation period for positive cases at this time. The COVID Leadership Team meets weekly and we plan to reassess this decision and keep you informed.

For in-school close contacts we are now offering the Test and Stay program, which requires parental permissions. Through this program, students/staff who are unvaccinated and deemed in-school close contacts, can test for 5 days in a row and remain in school as long as they are not symptomatic or testing positive. It is important to note that out-of-school close contacts are NOT eligible for the Test and Stay program (per the State). For an unvaccinated close contact from exposure in the community, a 10 day quarantine will continue to be in place. These individuals can test on day 5, 6 or 7 after their exposure, and if the results are negative and provided to the school nurse, the nurse can clear them to exit quarantine and return to school on Day 8.

As you can imagine, the number of absences for both students and staff are on the rise. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will not allow districts to go remote during this time as in-person learning is their priority and they have deemed that remote learning does not count towards the required time on learning requirements. While in-school learning is also our priority, we need to plan for the unexpected experience of not having enough staff to monitor and teach our students. If that does happen, Principals will be notifying the Superintendent and the Superintendent will notify the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education **and the school day for the particular school with a staffing shortage will be canceled and made up at the end of the school year. A ONE Call announcement will be made to notify families and staff.** It is our hope that this

never occurs, but in a proactive manner, I feel it is appropriate to let everyone know the plan of action should it occur.

The COVID Dashboards are attached for your review. These numbers include cases from December 15th, 2021 thru January 4th, 2022.

Sports COVID related Update:

The Southern Worcester County League of Athletic Directors met to discuss sports protocols and they will be making **the following changes effective January 5th until at least January 19th:**

- **The ability to hold practices and games will be evaluated on a team by team basis.** If an individual team has an increase in cases, they may need to postpone or cancel games and/or practices for individual teams. Similarly, as one school navigates their teams' challenges, others may be dealing concurrently with similar outbreaks. As a result, games may be postponed or even canceled outright. Athletic Directors and administrators are in daily communication with each other and will make decisions according to the most recent data.
- **Through at least January 19th, spectators will be limited to immediate same household family members of each athlete (siblings must be accompanied by at least one adult).** They will reevaluate at the end of two weeks (or sooner) to determine if changes need to be made. They recognize that this is not ideal, but limiting the number of spectators will hopefully allow for continued games. At this time, no students outside of the immediate family members will be allowed to attend games. Please note that families that require an exception to this limit, need to communicate with individual school administrations.
- **No food or drink will be consumed in the gymnasium, other than the water/drinks of athletes and coaches.** There will be no concessions offered.
- **If a student-athlete is experiencing any symptoms, the student-athlete must not attend practices or games** and should be in contact with his or her primary care physician and the school nurse.
- **Close contact determinations are made as school health staff.** Parents, coaches, and student-athletes do not determine close contact designation or quarantine rules.

EL PAC Meeting- Flyers attached

ACCESS TESTING
FAMILY INFORMATION MEETING

We will be holding a ZOOM Meeting on
Thursday, January 6, 2022
@ 6:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://webster-schools-org.zoom.us/j/82113628345?pwd=YnpjUk02QW9VeEs3b0dMWit1c1pCQT09>

Meeting ID: 821 1362 8345
Passcode: 975643

Each year, students in English learner programs take the ACCESS for ELLs language proficiency test. The test measures academic English Language proficiency for students learning English in our school and throughout our state.

Important Reminder: ACCESS is administered to all students currently receiving ELL services **AND** to all students whose families opted out of ELL services.

Upcoming Dates:

January 11th - School Committee Meeting 6:00 p.m. /Central Office

January 17th - No school - Martin Luther King Day

January 18th - No school for students/Professional Development Day for Staff

January 20th - School Building Committee Meeting 6:00 p.m. /Central Office

Kind Regards,

Dr. Ruthann Petruno-Goguen, Superintendent

