LEXINGTON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Julie L. Hackett, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

(781) 861-2580, ext. 68040
jhackett@lexingtonma.org
Fax: (781) 861-2560

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT— March 9, 2021

1. Congratulations and Celebrations!

LHS Science & Engineering Fair

Any educator will tell you that it is quite a challenge to pull off a Science Fair under normal circumstances, and to do so during a pandemic may seem nearly impossible. Thanks to our incredible team of educators, the LHS Science & Engineering Fair went virtual this year! Many contributed to our students' success, including Mr. Reginald Hobbs, Science Department Head, and all of the LHS Faculty members who made the event possible, including: Mr. Daniel Abramovich, Dr. Kari Darling, Mr. Ryan Grams, MS. Kelly Kilts, Dr. Parul Kumar, Ms. Patricia Lyons, and all the teacher sponsors for individual projects. A special thanks to our community judges who volunteer their time and provide valuable feedback and advice on projects!

Please click here to learn more about our students' fascinating projects in various branches of science, including behavioral and social sciences; biochemistry; botany; computer science; earth and space science; engineering; environmental science; and medicine and health. Congratulations to all of the students who participated and those who qualified to represent LHS at the Region IV Science & Engineering Fair, including: Humaira Afia, Gabriel Aguirre, Vikram Anantha, Rohan Bandaru, Vedanti Bhargava, Asritha Bodepudi, Jack Brenner, Atticus Colwell, Anuprabha Dandapat, Avni Gokarn, Zahra Karim, Andrew Kochi, Wilson Kooi, Thomas Lane, Nichols Lam, Hanna Matusik, Vidushi Meel, Sarah Meyer, Nagamitesh Nagamuralee, Alex Ordentlich, Noah Quadri, Aaroosh Ramadorai, Shinyeong Rho, Uma Sanker, Samir Stevenson, Varun Suraj, Aditi Swamy, Alex Tang, Artha Tavshikar, Yiming Wei, and ZhengZhe Yang.

National Oceanic Science Bowl

The National Ocean Sciences Bowl (NOSB) is a fast-paced competitive science team at LHS. Students on this team study all aspects of oceanography, including geology, marine biology, marine technology, history, and social sciences, physical and chemical oceanography, and marine policy.

For the second year in a row, two Lexington High School teams (Teams A and B) battled it out to the finish in the regional competition, the Blue Lobster Bowl, which is held on a Saturday at MIT in either February or March. Both teams were undefeated in the second day, single-elimination rounds, and it was a nail-biting finish separated by just four points! In the end, LHS Team A was declared the winners, and they are headed to the national competition. Congratulations to the

following students: SunWoo Baik, Yul Kim, Jasper Nevis, Ethan Wang, and Jamie Yu and their coach, Dr. Kari Darling! Please visit www.nosb.org for more information about the National Ocean Sciences Bowl.

LHS Choir

Congratulations to our Lexington High School Chamber Singers on their first virtual choir video! If the world's got you down and you are in need of a little inspiration, please be sure to click here to view this unbelievably moving performance.

2. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The DEI Student Advisory Council has met several times this winter to begin their work in three key areas: (1) educator recruitment; (2) curriculum; and (3) promotion of our "We All Belong" core value. The Director of Equity and Student Supports has organized nearly five dozen students in grades 7-12, who have been engaging in some group learning and community building. I am so impressed with all of their DEI efforts!

- The "We All Belong" subcommittee, co-chaired by Sara Mei ('22) and Sarah Meyer ('23), is considering how to increase all students' sense of belonging in our schools by supporting the work of other student organizations and clubs and planning original projects.
- The curriculum subcommittee, co-chaired by Sophia Alacer ('25), Madelyn Chu ('23), Suhanee Mitragotri ('21), and Defne Olgun ('23), is meeting with curriculum leaders throughout the district to provide student feedback and voice about what and how students learn their academic content. They also meet periodically with the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Learning to discuss the curriculum review process and the integration of "student voice" in that process.
- The educator recruitment subcommittee, co-chaired by Heath Fox ('23) and Nidhi Inamdar ('25) is creating recruitment materials and attending job fairs with the Director of Human Resources to attract diverse candidates to apply for LPS staff positions. Finally, members of the steering committee are providing student representation to the K-8 equity teams of staff devoted to promoting DEI work in their respective buildings.

At Lexington High School, we are moving forward with plans to view the documentary I'm Not Racist...Am I? in May. This opportunity is generously funded by the high school and middle school PTOs. A staff viewing on March 12, 2020, was canceled due to the COVID pandemic, and our plans for this spring's viewing will include all LHS students and staff. Working with the Director of Professional Learning and Special Projects, PK-8 staff members also will have an opportunity to participate.

3. LPS COVID-19 Updates

We continue to move in the right direction! Lexington's COVID-19 positivity rates have decreased from a high of 29.1 cases per 100,000 in December to **6.7 per 100,000, as of March 4, 2021.** LPS community members can find COVID-19 metrics here on the LPS COVID-19 Reporting page This is also where LPS will now report summary results for our pooled COVID-19 testing program. Each week pooled testing is scheduled, LPS will post updates no later than Friday at 5:00 p.m. LPS also sends individual notifications to those who are in positive pools, along with notifications to impacted school communities.

Recently participation rates in our pooled testing program has ranged from 31% to 55% among non-remote staff and 36% to 49% among secondary students. Our goal continues to be as close to 100% participation as possible in every LPS building, and I know we can get there! I am strongly encouraging everyone who is able to participate in our upcoming surveillance testing to do so. Participation is confidential, painless, and easy to do!

LPS COVID-19 pooled saliva testing will be extended until the April break and expanded to elementary students in grades K-2, starting March 8th. On Wednesday, March 3, 2021, the LPS Surveillance Testing Team held an Elementary Parent Forum on the COVID-19 testing roll-out at 7 p.m. For those who missed this forum, please click here to view the recording.

Upcoming drop-off and pick up dates for students are as follows:

Secondary Student Cohort A Screening Schedule	
KIT PICK UP DATE	**SAMPLE DROP OFF DATE**
Thursday, 2/25	Monday 3/8
Thursday, 3/11	Monday 3/22
Thursday, 3/25	Monday 4/5

Secondary Student Cohort B Screening Schedule	
KIT PICK UP DATE	**SAMPLE DROP OFF DATE**
Thursday 3/4	Monday 3/15
Thursday 3/18	Monday 3/29
Thursday 4/1	Monday 4/12

Elementary K-2 Cohort A Screening Schedule*	
KIT PICK UP DATE	**SAMPLE DROP OFF DATE**
Monday 3/8	Tuesday 3/9
Monday 3/22	Tuesday 3/23
Monday 4/5*	Tuesday 4/6
Monday 4/12	Tuesday 4/13

Elementary K-2 Cohort B Screening Schedule*	
KIT PICK UP DATE	**SAMPLE DROP OFF DATE**
Monday 3/15	Tuesday 3/16
Monday 3/29	Tuesday 3/30
Monday 4/5	Tuesday 4/6
Monday 4/12	Tuesday 4/13

*** Full time students can test each week**

LPS staff can pick up kits anytime from their school nurse or from other designated pick-up locations the week before their scheduled drop off date.

LPS Staff COVID-19 Testing Schedule	
Testing Group	**SAMPLE DROP OFF DATE**
Secondary Staff	Monday 3/8
Elementary Staff + CO	Tuesday 3/16
Secondary Staff	Monday 3/22
Elementary Staff + CO	Tuesday 3/30
Secondary Staff	Monday 4/5
Elementary Staff + CO	Tuesday 4/13

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On March 1, 2021, DESE updated its guidance for Arts and Physical Education. The guidance provides adaptations for spacing of students, masking, cleaning shared materials, and other mitigation strategies that help prevent the transmission of SARS-CoV-2. We have asked the Board of Health to weigh in on the DESE guidance, so it has not yet been adopted by Lexington Public Schools.

4. Full Return to School Process

A question on the minds of many these days is when LPS students will return to a full-time, in-person education? **The short answer is that all LPS K-5 students will return to full-time, in-person school on April 5, 2021, and plans are in the works to increase in-person learning opportunities for middle and high school students.**

On February 12, 2021, we announced our plan to return elementary students to full-time, in-person classes by April. On March 5, 2021, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to adopt a recommendation giving Commissioner Riley the authority to return K-5 students to full-time, in-person school in April.

If you are interested in knowing more about our plans, please click here to see my letter to the school community. The LPS Path to A Full Return to learn more about our plans. For those who are interested in learning more about the CIT for Full Return and our planning process, here are some additional updates.

Planning Timeline: An Important Reminder - The information below reflects the planning process; therefore, the planning details (e.g., dates and times) may differ from those outlined in the LPS Path to A Full Return. Plans are still in development and subject to change.

February 12, 2021 - The Superintendent announces plans for a full-time, in-person return in this letter. The preliminary plan starts with a return of our youngest learners (K-2) by April. The names of members of the Community Input Team (CIT) for Full Return also are announced on this date. A diverse group of approximately 37 participants, including educators, staff, and administrators are invited to become members of the CIT.

February 26, 2021 - Two-hour meeting of the Community Input Team for Full Return. The groups reviewed the proposed parameters, the charge (short-term goals and associated challenges), and other topics of interest. Small working groups reviewed draft plans and offered feedback, suggestions, and input.

- Agenda
- Meeting Minutes
- Meeting Recording

March 2, 2021 - Joint Council meeting with approximately 80 district administrators to examine and discuss and preliminary plans.

- Agenda
- Joint Council PowerPoint
- Joint Council Working Drafts

March 5, 2021 - Two-hour meeting of the Community Input Team for Full Return. We reviewed the feedback from the CIT, as well as feedback from our Joint Council. CIT members were asked to give feedback on critical decisions related to the full return, as well as a family preference form. We also reviewed our most recent version of the working draft of the LPS Draft Plan for Full Return. Keep in mind that the draft is in development and dates and times are changing.

- Agenda
- Meeting Recording
- Minutes (currently being drafted)

5. Letter from Middlesex League Superintendents

On February 23, 2021, Commissioner Jeff Riley announced a full return to school by April 2021. On March 2, 2021, the Middlesex League Superintendents issued this joint statement in response to the announcement. We highlighted the need for an educator vaccination plan and pointed out that if the State had dictated a common starting point in August, making uniform adjustments now would be far less intrusive. On March 5, 2021, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) voted in support of the Commissioner's recommendation.

What is the impact of the BESE's vote on Lexington's planning process? As you will see from the CIT for Full Return update below, there is no radical change to the full return plans that were already underway in Lexington prior to the announcement. Our initial plan was to stagger the full return of LPS students in grades K-2 and fully return students in grades 3-5 two weeks later. I have modified that plan, and we will be moving forward with a full return of students in grades K-5 on April 5, 2021. Curriculum has been consistent between RLA and Hybrid classes in all grades this year. As we bring K - 5 students back together again we will be able to more easily coordinate learning for all students even if they are in different class configurations.

6. LHS Statement of Interest MSBA Timeline

We continue to receive questions about the status of a new or renovated Lexington High School. The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) has delayed the announcement of which schools were accepted into the Core Program for this year. Typically, announcements are made in December, but due to the pandemic, they will not be made until spring or summer this year. I have prepared this memo to update the community about the MSBA's timeline on the LHS Statement of Interest.

7. Tiered Focus Monitoring

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recently conducted a review of Lexington's English Language Learner program. The State review used to be called "Coordinated Program Review," and it is now referred to as "Tiered Focus Monitoring," the purpose of which is to "monitor compliance with regulatory requirements focusing on English Language Learners." As noted in Lexington's Tiered Focus Monitoring Report, there was only one finding related to the translation of report cards for English Language Learners. Dr. Lyons, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Learning and her team

have addressed this finding, and the K - 8 report cards (amended during COVID-19) are now being translated via Google Translate for the remainder of this year. As report cards return to normal and reflect the regular curriculum, they will be professionally translated by Verbatim (an LPS vendor) beginning next year. We also plan to find a more suitable solution for LHS report cards as those grade reports vary by student schedule. Congratulations to Dr. Lyons, Robin Dowling-Grant, and our ELL educators who have a history of excellent compliance reviews with only one finding this year, one finding in 2019, no findings in 2013, and one finding in 2006. We appreciate all of the hard work of our ELL team of educators who help our students find joy in learning every day!