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September 9, 2021

Dear LPS School Community:

Today marks the fifth day of school for the 2021-2022 school year! There's nothing like being back together again and learning in person! I have visited all ten of our schools, and we are off to a great start! Our students and staff are doing a terrific job following our health and safety protocols, and we are grateful to our families for reinforcing these expectations. Thank you to our staff members for being ever-vigilant about keeping masks on and getting students outside whenever possible. I have a number of important updates to share based on questions we are fielding from you. Thank you in advance for taking the time to read this important communication.

- I. **Transportation Challenges.** It's always great when we can share positive news, but when things don't go well, we do our best to own it. Along those lines, we had a bit of a rocky start with transportation this year for a host of reasons, including new drivers, ongoing construction in Town, schedule changes, and implementation of a later school start. Families and staff have been impacted by these challenges with children arriving home later than expected and staff staying to supervise students when buses arrive later. It's only the fifth day of school, but we recognize these challenges aren't easy on anyone, and we appreciate your patience. Our team is working hard to address these transportation issues, and principals will keep you updated on our progress.
- II. **LPS COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions.** We published [LPS FAQs](#) in the beginning of August. As we field more questions from you, we continue to update the FAQs. You can read the entire document for a refresher, or simply scroll to the end (starting at #26) to access the newest FAQs. In addition, our Director of School Health Services is in the process of updating the LPS Staff Handbook, which will be sent to staff within the next two weeks.
- III. **LPS COVID-19 Testing.** The State "Test and Stay" program is off to a slow start, which has created some challenges for those of us eager to implement. We are awaiting a supply of tests from CIC, our state-assigned vendor, and we have been told that we will receive them soon. If you wish to participate, all students (or parents/caregivers) and staff must sign this [consent form](#) that you should have received from your principal. IF YOU DO NOT SIGN THIS CONSENT FORM AND YOUR CHILD IS IDENTIFIED AS A CLOSE CONTACT, THEY MAY BE REQUIRED TO QUARANTINE FOR 7 DAYS. As a reminder, we are participating in three types of testing this year. For more information, please see [LPS FAQs #17](#).
- IV. **Staff Vaccinations.** Great news! **91.5% of our staff members are fully vaccinated!** As of August 26, 2021, 1234 out of 1348 staff (or 91.5%) submitted documentation of full vaccination,

including a handful of exemptions. Staff numbers reported here do not include temporary staff (e.g., substitutes, coaches, Lexington Community Education).

- V. **Student Vaccination Requirement for Extracurriculars.** All LPS students who are age-eligible (12 years and older) must be vaccinated or have a medical/religious exemption to participate in LPS-sponsored extracurricular sports and activities. The Lexington School Committee unanimously passed this new [extracurricular vaccination policy](#) recently, and here's what you need to know:

For Families/Students

- If a student is 12 years of age or older, they must be vaccinated to participate in school-sponsored sports and/or rostered extracurriculars that occur outside of the school day.
- Students who will become vaccine-eligible during the extracurricular season must be vaccinated within six weeks of becoming age-eligible in order to participate.
- Students who are currently enrolled in school-sponsored sports and/or rostered extracurriculars that occur outside of the school day have until October 1, 2021 to get their first vaccine.
- There are several "drop-in" clubs at the high school, which we consider "unrostered" extracurricular clubs or activities. The LPS vaccine mandate only applies to students officially enrolled in school-sponsored sports and/or rostered extracurriculars that occur outside of the school day.
- Students may participate in extracurricular sports or activities with an approved medical or religious exemption. Please use this [student vaccine exemption form](#) and submit it to your school nurse to add to your student health record if approved.
- If a student is awaiting a vaccine and wishes to continue to participate in school-sponsored sports and/or rostered extracurriculars that occur outside of the school day, they are expected to participate in the school-sponsored weekly COVID-19 testing. This expectation applies to the following circumstances:
 - a. Any unvaccinated student who is currently enrolled in school-sponsored sports and/or rostered extracurriculars that occur outside of the school day and are happening now;
 - b. Any student who is not yet age-eligible;
 - c. Any student with an approved medical or religious exemption.

For Staff

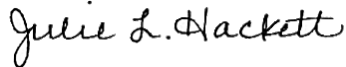
- If you are an LPS staff member who supervises school-sponsored sports and/or rostered extracurriculars that occur outside of the school day, you will be asked to submit this [extracurricular roster](#) to ASPENsupport@lexingtonma.org. We will then upload the data to Aspen to cross reference against vaccination status.
- If you are currently supervising a school-sponsored sports and/or rostered extracurriculars that occur outside of the school day, your students will have until October 1, 2021 to get their first COVID-19 vaccine -OR- submit a medical or religious exemption. Your school nurse will notify you if anyone on your roster is ineligible.
- If you are a staff member who oversees a "drop-in" club, which we consider an "unrostered" extracurricular sport or activity, then the student vaccination requirement

does NOT apply to you or your students. The LPS vaccine mandate only applies to students officially enrolled in a school-sponsored sports and/or rostered extracurriculars that occur outside of the school day.

- Your school nurse will notify you if you have a student on your extracurricular roster who has an approved medical or religious exemption or is ineligible for participation. The nurses will verify that all unvaccinated students have participated in the school-sponsored weekly COVID-19 testing program.

Thank you for your hard work, trust, and patience, as we continue our efforts to implement a later school start, along with the new COVID-19 testing programs and policies that keep our school community safe during the ongoing public health crisis. It's not easy to educate young people during a pandemic, and I hope you know how truly grateful I am for your dedication, support, and partnership. The health and well-being of our students is at the heart of all that we do, and this focus keeps our children actively engaged in their own learning at a time when they need it most. I know there will be no shortage of challenges this year, but the past year and a half has taught us that together we can do hard things!

All my best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie L. Hackett". The script is cursive and fluid.

Dr. Julie Hackett
Superintendent of Schools

Translation: If you need this information translated, please copy and paste it into Google Translate. The link to Google translate is <http://translate.google.com/>. You can also translate using Google Drive. [Here's](#) how.