

BPS Formative Assessments and BLS Updates

Dear BLS Students and Families,

A normally festive time of year of awards ceremonies, proms, and increasingly lovely weather certainly carries a different and somber feel this season. As we all continue to navigate the global pandemic, with many having direct connections to the more than 100,000 lives lost in the United States alone, we also watch events as they unfold in Minnesota and around the nation, with some of us struggling to conduct business as usual through the pain of our current reality. It often feels uncomfortable to write with updates about nuts and bolts that, in the grand scheme of things, are fairly minor. This week feels particularly difficult to do so, but I will share a few items in service of consistent communication and ensuring common understanding.

District Formative Assessments:

Boston Public Schools requires that all students in grades 3-11 take short online assessments in English and math to measure how remote learning has impacted their learning this year. During a normal school year, our students in Class VI-III would have taken the MCAS this spring; without this measurement, the district would like a common tool to gauge how students are faring, so that it can better assess preparedness for next year.

With the exception of students in Class I, BLS students will need to take four assessments, two for English (ELA) and two for math. These assessments will be given on the Illuminate online platform, and students will receive full instructions from their English and math teachers. Most of the questions are multiple choice, but some require an open response. Each assessment should take students about 20-30 minutes to complete and will be given as part of their virtual class time during the weeks of June 1 and June 8.

While students are required to complete these four assessments, their actual scores will not have bearing on their grade for the term, as long as they engage in the assessment with their best and honest effort.

Last Day of School:

When the last day of school is finalized by the district, we will promptly inform you of that date, as it will determine the end date of online classes. Classes will conclude before the official last day, so that teachers have time to determine and submit final grades. Report card availability will be communicated at a later date.

P-EBT Cards:

We hope that families who may be experiencing food insecurity will take full advantage of the P-EBT (Pandemic food assistance benefit) card as well as the [seventeen food distribution sites](#) serving breakfast and lunch on weekdays. All BPS students are eligible for the P-EBT card, regardless of income. This card is unique to your student and is not transferable. For families who wish to donate the proceeds, you may

use the card to purchase food, which you can then donate to a local food bank. For more information, contact the Greater Boston Food Bank at 617-427-5200 or by visiting gbfb.org. If you did not receive a card by mail or have additional inquiries, please call the FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333.

BLS Athletic Recognition Events:

While we sadly had to cancel our spring season and annual Sports Banquet, we will be honoring our student athletes over the course of four evenings through virtual events: Fall sports, June 10; Winter sports, June 15; Spring sports, June 16, and a final tribute to our graduating senior athletes on June 17. More information on these celebrations will be emailed soon.

Class of 2020 Information:

We will be sending communication to Class I students and families next week. Please look out for important information about June obligations and activities for graduating seniors. We are engaged in continuous planning as new information and regulations evolve. We appreciate your understanding in waiting for the details of how we will help seniors close out their BLS careers and celebrate them as a school community. Continue to check your BPS email with regularity; your accounts will remain active until mid-August.

It is an important time to listen with empathy, give each other grace, and to commit to allyship. I am grateful to be a member of this school community, and I know that in the coming weeks and months, though there are many uncertainties, we will unite around the shared goal of an emotionally and physically safe existence for all.

Sincerely,

Rachel Skerritt '95

Headmaster