



NBPS Newsflash

November 2021

Greetings Team NBPS,

As the recent powerful nor'easter reminded us, being ready to respond to rapidly changing situations is a critical factor in navigating a successful course of action, whether for a ship or an organization. The extreme intensity of that storm was not confirmed by computer models until just a few hours before impact. Emergency notifications were required to be issued in only minutes once I made the decision to close New Bedford Public Schools in the best interest of safety for all. These situations are challenging, but this was the right call as some of our schools were without power for multiple days and, many homes were out for much longer. We're all back in full-force with teaching and learning at the forefront on our minds motivated by a renewed sense.

In this season of thanks, I am thankful for the compassion and support of our community for those who need it the most. We have much to be grateful for on many levels and I appreciate all of you -- our talented and hardworking staff for your dedication to our students. As we take time to honor our Veterans, past and present, let's express this gratitude not just on Veterans Day, but at every opportunity we have to say thank you.

With the fall semester half over and Thanksgiving recess fast-approaching, we have much to accomplish before then. The challenge of the pandemic continues to loom large. We all know that this past year and a half has been a struggle for everyone - AND transitioning back to in-person learning has been challenging. I am confident that you are committed to doing exceptional work for and with our students and supporting one another through this emotional time. Our schools are places where students come to grow, to learn and to enjoy being around their friends. I know we are committed to delivering on those expectations by making every day one filled with high quality instruction.

The Test and Stay Program is proving a helpful tool in being able to keep students and staff in school. The electronic consent form is linked to the district homepage. Progress in the battle against the pandemic continues to make strides. Just this week, the CDC announced its recommendation that all children ages 5 and up get vaccinated against COVID-19.

Remember, properly wearing the mask, covering your nose and mouth, is an effective way to help keep the virus from spreading. With no remote learning option this year, it is even more important that we keep everyone healthy to minimize days out of school. As we enter the FLU season please remain focused on not just our own health but on those around us and take the necessary proactive steps to stay healthy. Remember – this is a collective effort and we are all in this together.

As we thank our veterans and gather with family and friends for Thanksgiving, know that your hard work and dedication is noticed and is greatly appreciated. As always, thank you for your continued support.

Thomas Anderson,
Superintendent



Education
is not the
learning
of facts,
but the
training of
the mind
to think.

— Albert Einstein

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Employee Spotlight



Meghan Bessette

Paraprofessional
Normandin Middle School



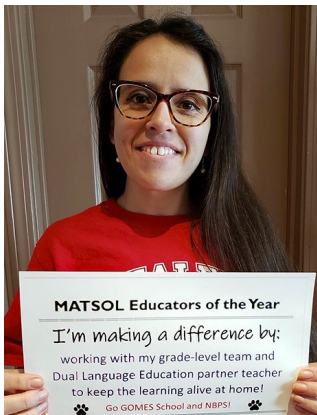
Normandin Principal Sean McNiff appreciates the work his paraprofessionals do every day to support learning and teaching. As an exemplar of the impact paras make in their students' lives, Mr. McNiff nominated **Meghan Bessette**. "In 2017, Ms. Bessette came to Normandin Middle School with over 10 years' experience as a lead preschool teacher and she has used that experience throughout her time as a paraprofessional. Each day, Ms. Bessette shows patience and kindness to all students, but she also holds them accountable to their work and behavior. She enriches the students' experience in class by providing academic support throughout the lesson. Ms. Bessette also is in constant communication with families about their child's day in school. Ms. Bessette extends her work beyond the school day by working in our 21st Century Program and being part of our championship sports program. Even before coming to work at Normandin, Meghan Bessette has been part of the landscape at Normandin as for over 20 years she has been assisting her mother, Mrs. Jesse with dances, fieldtrips, projects, and visiting student homes to have them make up work. She is an invaluable member of our community."

— Sean T. Woodard-McNiff, Principal
Normandin Middle School



Monica M. DaSilva

Dual Language Teacher, Kindergarten
Alfred J. Gomes Elementary School



Gomes Principal Ellyn Gallant has nominated **Monica M. DaSilva**, a Kindergarten Dual Language Teacher, for her dedication to her students and to all of the students enrolled in the Dual Language Program at Gomes. "Ms. DaSilva prides herself as a life long learner and is currently a member of the Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (MATSOL). She exemplifies the MATSOL mission in the promotion of excellence and equity in the education of English language and Dual language learners. As an amazing team member, Ms. DaSilva was a co-lead in implementing an extremely successful summer program which promoted our schools' culture of equity and inclusivity through teaching students from diverse backgrounds that we all "fit together". The program impressed visiting officials from Central Administration as well as from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE). Ms. DaSilva has a wonderfully reassuring way of fostering positive, trusting relationships with her students and their families; ensuring them that together they will G.R.O.W. each day in attaining bilingualism and bi-literacy. Thank you Ms. DaSilva for being part of the Gomes Team."

— Ellyn Gallant, Principal
Alfred J. Gomes Elementary School



NEW BEDFORD
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WELLNESS FAIR WEEK

November 15-18, 2021 | 3:30-6:30 PM
Keith Middle School Community Room

SESSION TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Build a Healthy Brown Bag Lunch
- Mindfulness Communication
- Mindfulness & Stress Management
- Eat This, Not That for Healthy Weight Management
- Supermarket Savvy
- Meditation Corner
- Healthy Hydration
- Know Your Numbers
- Wellness Jeopardy
- Dig Into Dark Chocolate



GAMES,
PRIZES &
RAFFLES!

For more information, please contact
Marcia Tome 508-997-4511 ext: 14355



Flexible Spending Benefits City of New Bedford

One of the Few Gifts the IRS Gives!

Discover the benefit that SAVES YOU MONEY. This perk allows you to set aside a portion of your pay—**BEFORE TAXES**—to cover out-of-pocket expenses in these categories:

Enroll by 11/30/2021
for the
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2022
Plan Year

- ◆ **HEALTH CARE.*** Eligible expenses and services include: non-cosmetic medical, dental, and vision care services; prescription medications; orthodontics, prescription eyeglasses, contact lenses, laser eye surgery, mental health services, alternative health therapies (e.g. chiropractic, acupuncture), and *MORE!*

Complete an "Authorization for Pre-Tax Payroll Reduction" form and send it to Cafeteria Plan Advisors by the deadline above.

Max. Annual Health Care Election: \$2,750.



Already in the plan? Log in to your employee account portal via our website (www.cpa125.com) by the deadline above to enroll for the new plan year.

Who's Covered? You, your legal spouse, and your dependents as defined by the Internal Revenue Service, including those claimed on your tax return and adult children under age 26.

Note: Re-enrollment is not automatic.

Benefit Cards. For employer plans that offer the benefit card, new Health Care FSA enrollees will receive 2 cards that can be used at most medical facilities, dental offices, optical shops, and pharmacies to pay for eligible expenses. **Keep your cards!** They will reload each plan year that you enroll.

Track Your Account and File Claims 24/7!

Grace Period. Health Care FSA participants get an **extra 75 days** at the end of the plan year to spend down the prior year's available balance, if any.

Log in to your **employee portal** via our website (www.CPA125.com), or use our app: **CPA Flex Mobile.**

HSA Ineligibility. If you or your spouse have a Health Savings Account ('HSA'), you are **NOT ELIGIBLE** to participate in the Health Care FSA plan.

OTC MEDICATION ELIGIBILITY

Over-the-counter 'medicines' are FSA-eligible without a prescription (**Note: Vitamins & supplements not included.**)



- ◆ **DEPENDENT CARE.**** For dependent children under age 13, elderly dependents, and dependents with special needs. Eligible expenses include day care, pre-school, before/after school care, day camp, elder day care.

Max. Annual Dep. Care Election: \$5,000. per family

Annual FSA administration fee is paid by your employer, so you save even more!

* Not all Health Care expenses are FSA-eligible, such as cosmetic procedures or products *even if performed or dispensed by a doctor* (e.g. Botox, teeth whitening, veneers, etc.), couples/family counseling, general health/wellness expenses (i.e., toothbrushes, non-prescription sunglasses, gym dues, etc.), and federally non-permissible products. Effective 1/1/20, non-prescription/over-the-counter medications were made eligible. Some expenses, such as medical equipment and some services, may be FSA-eligible with a physician's Letter of Medical Necessity. Visit <https://fsastore.com/FSA-Eligibility-List> and search the "Eligible Products and Services List" for more info.

** Overnight camp and school tuition are not FSA-eligible; day camp is eligible when utilized as childcare in order for the parent(s)/guardian(s) to be able to work; extra-curricular and enrichment programs/activities that aren't daycare/childcare-based are not eligible; monies paid to a provider who doesn't report childcare income on his/her taxes aren't eligible.

Flexible Spending Plans administered by...

HD-RO v.1.3 (8/12/20)

CAFETERIA PLAN ADVISORS | 420 WASHINGTON ST., SUITE 100, BRAINTREE, MA 02184 | www.CPA125.com
TEL.: 781.848.9848 | FAX: 781.848.8477 | E-MAIL: INFO@CPA125.COM



MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS'
RETIREMENT SYSTEM

MTRS NEWS

Post-retirement employment hours limit increased to 1,200

Legislative action increases the limit on hours for retired public employees from 960 to 1,200 annually

As part of the FY2022 state budget process, the **post-retirement hours limit was increased from 960 to 1,200 hours per calendar year, retroactive to July 1, 2021**. The earnings restrictions on post-retirement employment remain unchanged.

As a reminder, due to waivers enacted through the COVID-19 State of Emergency, the hours accrued and earnings received **between January 1, 2021 and June 14, 2021 are excluded** from the calculation of a retiree's earnings for calendar year 2021. These waivers ended June 15, 2021.



In determining a retiree's allowable hours and earnings for calendar year 2021, the retiree and employer should apply the updated hours restriction (1,200) from **July 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021** and existing earnings restrictions from **June 15, 2021 through December 31, 2021**.

Adherence to post-retirement restrictions is the statutory responsibility of the employer and employee. To learn more about post-retirement hours and earnings restrictions, visit our [Rehiring a Massachusetts public retiree](#) page.

FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES UPDATE



Food Supply Chain Disruptions

School meal programs nationwide are experiencing many of the same supply chain issues that have impacted restaurants and grocery stores throughout the pandemic. Just as families had to make substitutions on grocery lists last year, our schools have had to make some last-minute changes to our regular menus, based on product availability.

While we may not have the same types of menu choices that we typically offer our students, we'll be sure that all students are nourished and ready to learn. Our school nutrition team remains committed to ensuring students continue to have access to healthy meals each school day.

Check out this quick video from the School Nutrition Association that explains [Supply Chain Issues and School Meals](#).

Thank you for your patience as we sort through these supply chain disruptions.

Now Serving ... *Caldo de Pollo* Community Recipe at Jacobs Elementary School

Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) has been collaborating with the **Mujeres Victoriosas** community group to bring more culturally-relevant recipes to our schools.



The community group joined the FNS team at Jacobs to demonstrate how they make caldo de pollo. The two groups worked together to adapt the recipe using the ingredients we are currently able to source from our vendors and to use the commercial equipment in our kitchens.



On Tuesday, October 26th, the FNS team at Jacobs prepared the new recipe and served it as the hot meal of the day to all grades! The chicken soup included many vegetables: potatoes, carrots, onions, chayote, zucchini and cilantro in a flavorful chicken broth and was served with seasoned brown rice and a whole grain dinner roll for dipping.

Our Food Corps service members, Shalynn and Amelia spoke with the students during lunch to gather feedback (photo LEFT) and many enjoyed the new meal!

BENEFITS OPEN ENROLLMENT

**NOVEMBER 1ST
TO
NOVEMBER 30, 2021**

ATTENTION!

- HMO MEMBERS- YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO SUBMIT ANY PAPERWORK UNLESS MAKING CHANGES TO YOUR CURRENT PLAN
- PPO MEMBERS- A NEW HEALTH INSURANCE ANNUAL RESIDENCY AFFIDAVIT IS REQUIRED

**CHANGES & ENROLLMENT FORMS
WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER
TUESDAY, 11/30/21**



**Looking for more information?
Stop by & visit Marcia at the
Wellness Fair November 15-18**

**QUESTIONS?
CONTACT**

**Marcia Tome
508-997-4511 ext: 14355
455 County Street
New Bedford, MA**



OPTIONAL IN-SCHOOL COVID RAPID TESTING

Students and staff who are deemed close contacts due to exposure to a COVID positive individual while in school will have the opportunity to be tested using a rapid antigen test and remain in school with a negative result. The close contact will be tested for the next 5 to 7 days to ensure they remain negative. During this time, students will come to school via their normal mode of transportation (bus, walk, drop-off, drive, etc.). A parent will not need to remain at the school until the test result; they will be called to pick up their child in the event of a positive result.

“It is a quick, nasal swab collected under the supervision of a school nurse or trained health provider. Unlike COVID-19 tests of the past, it is not uncomfortable and easy for students to do themselves.”

— Wanda Nunes, NBPS Supervisor of School Nurses



Adult Volunteers Needed!

What would I do as a volunteer? Volunteers do everything from unloading donations from cars and trucks to assembling individual gift package requests for children in-need, sent by distribution partners.

Where are they located? Gifts to Give is located right in Acushnet, MA.

To learn more about this organization and how to volunteer please visit:

giftstogive.org/online-volunteer-request or

call 508-717-8715

Thank you!



Our confidential resource and referrals are available at no cost to you. Services with referral sources are optional and fees may exist.

GET HELP WITH:

-  Family Conflict
-  Couples/Relationships
-  Substance Abuse
-  Work/Life Balance
-  Stress
-  Depression/Anxiety
-  Grief
-  Parenting



YOU HAVE ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

Short-term counseling by licensed, Master's-level counselors via phone, mobile app, chat, and video. Available to you and your household members 24/7.



EVERYDAY ASSISTANCE:

Overwhelmed and scared about her teen's active substance misuse, Gina called in looking for assistance. She received an appointment with a counselor, and during their sessions, she learned parenting strategies and boundary-setting to help manage the situation. Gina also received information about local treatment programs for her son and family support groups.

ACCESS VIA:



allonehealthheap.com



508-990-0777

Love New Bedford History?



**NEW BEDFORD
WHALING
MUSEUM**

COME AND VOLUNTEER!

AS A VOLUNTEER YOU...

- Participate in a prescribed training program
- Establish a regular schedule for participating as a docent, or in the museum's library, archives, or by helping in other ways
- Volunteers are required to become New Bedford Whaling Museum members. This is important because members receive regular program information that is necessary to volunteers
- Serve as a "goodwill ambassador" for the Museum

THE MUSEUM WILL PROVIDE

An opportunity for public service
A professional orientation and training program
An opportunity to meet new and interesting people
A chance to promote the history of New Bedford



**Scan the QR Code
for more information**

CONTACT

Jeannine Louro
Volunteer and School Programs Manager,
(508) 997-0046 x185
jlouro@whalingmuseum.org