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MEMORANDUM

TO: New Bedford Public Schools Staff
FR: Thomas Anderson, Superintendent
DT: Thursday, November 19, 2020
RE: NBPS Update

I hope this note finds you doing well despite the constant unknowns presented by this pandemic. Our being able to serve almost 10,000 students in person, with our 700 students in Cohort A attending school five days a week, is an impressive feat. Overall, our NBPS team continues to do an excellent job during this unique time in our lives and your work is a model for many educators locally and nationally.

Safety remains our top priority as we continue to adjust and navigate through the unforeseen challenges that COVID-19 presents us. Although cases of students, who have attended school in-person, have increased, to date we have no evidence of individuals contracting the virus while in school. It is imperative that we continue to follow the guidelines regarding mask wearing, handwashing, and proximity control and to eliminate the possibility of transmission in our communities. Currently, we have an increase in both adult and student cases and I hope that we all exercise appropriate judgement to protect our families, all those we interact with and ourselves. Below is information from my **October 29, 2020**, letter to parents and staff:

If a New Bedford Public Schools staff member or student tests positive for COVID-19, the contract tracing protocol is immediately implemented. Any adult or student who is considered a Close Contact when: *Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period* starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.* [CDC Close Contact](#) and the [COVID Symptom Graphic](#)

A close contact of this individual is identified and notified by the Public Health Department and/or the New Bedford Public Schools.

- Families and staff considered close contacts are advised to call their healthcare provider for evaluation and get a COVID-19 PCR test.
- Children and/or staff in certain classes or in certain schools must be kept home during contact tracing
- *If individuals are not notified, they are not close contacts and do not need to quarantine.*
- Specific school cases are communicated directly with that school community.

It is incumbent upon us as individuals to take personal responsibility and adhere to the expectations when someone you know is deemed a close contact or is exhibiting COVID-19 like symptoms. We are obligated to protect our over 2,300 staff, more than 13,000 students and all their families. In staff cases, where contact tracing reveals prior knowledge of a possible exposure, appropriate disciplinary action may ensue.

Our collective effort is essential as we continue to work on behalf of one another to be proactive in this ongoing new reality. I appreciate your understanding, dedication, and flexibility during this unique time in our lives.

