



**NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
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THOMAS ANDERSON  
SUPERINTENDENT

**DT:** November 12, 2020

**TO:** All Staff of New Bedford Public Schools

**FR:** Heather Emsley, Executive Director of Human Capital Services

**RE: Unemployment Fraud**

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As shared with all staff in a June 2020 memo, we have seen media reports on large increases in unemployment fraud occurring across the country by cyber criminals targeting the unemployment security system. These criminals are using individual's personal data including names and social security numbers to collect millions of dollars in unemployment. The Secret Service, federal law enforcement, and state authorities are all working together to investigate these crimes and to recoup lost funds. Thus far, Massachusetts has been targeted, along with Rhode Island, Washington, Florida, and Hawaii.

For your protection we are bringing this matter to your attention, as well as to encourage increased awareness and vigilance in dealing with your personal financial affairs. We want to assure you that we are consistently employing more detailed data checks for each unemployment claim we receive.

Specifically, for each unemployment claim received, the office of Human Capital Services verifies the employee's name and social security number for accuracy. If an employee is still actively employed with New Bedford Public Schools a "red flag" will go up. In those cases, we contact the employee, via NBPS email, to verify if a claim had indeed been submitted. If it was not, we would prevent the claim from moving forward and simultaneously notify the employee about the suspicious activity. We would then take the necessary steps to protect their personal identity and financial interests.

In some cases of fraud, the employee will directly receive a notice from a state unemployment office regarding a claim they did not file. In these cases, it is likely the claim filed was for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, a benefit directed to assist

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those who are self-employed. In those cases, NBPS would not have received a claim for unemployment as no employer was listed. Should this occur, you should immediately contact the unemployment office and follow their instructions for reporting the fraudulent claim. The link to report fraud or to learn more about unemployment fraud from the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance can be found here: [MA Unemployment Fraud](#). In addition, we ask you to inform the office of Human Capital Services by emailing Grace Rodriguez at [grodriguez@newbedfordschools.org](mailto:grodriguez@newbedfordschools.org).

Thank you.