

From the Desk of the Superintendent

Volume IV No.10 APRIL-MAY NEWSLETTER MAY 28, 2021

For timely updates and information... Twitter: @MaldenPublic Website: maldenps.org

Malden Public Schools will continue to battle food insecurity in our community using its new Food Truck in summer months

By Steve Freker
For the Malden Public Schools



A new addition to the Malden Public Schools is expected to be ready for use by mid-June to help lessen food insecurity in the community. Through its Food Services Department, Superintendent John Oteri said the district hopes to have the capacity, using a newly-purchased food truck, to deliver meals directly to students in neighborhoods this summer. "We plan to deliver meals to high areas of concentration where students live, starting with the See Page 2

A new, grant-funded food truck will be used to deliver free meals to the members of the Malden community who live in selected, high concentration populations around the city, including the public housing in Newland/Bowdoin & Linden areas.

Making friends is easy in Malden!



They stop by every day with their mom..

Longtime Malden Public Schools Food Services staff member John Lightbody greets these young friends at the Malden High meal pickup site.



May 2-8, 2021: The Malden Public Schools gave thanks for our teachers... during this week and EVERY week!

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all in the Malden Public Schools Community,
The past several weeks have been eventful, exciting and productive in our district. A primary reason has been that we were able to welcome many of our students in Grades PreK-8 back to conventional, full-day and in-person classes. For our older students, particularly our graduating Class of 2021 Seniors, there has also been plenty of good news. After much discussion and planning, we are going to be allowed to hold most of the traditional events that allow us to see them off to their next step in life in a special way. See P.3



Superintendent John Oteri

Malden Public Schools continue to fight food insecurity

Continued from Page One

the Newland Street area, Linden Housing and the Bowdoin/ Bryant Street neighborhood,” Supt. Oteri said, in explaining plans to the Malden School Committee at its last meeting. “The district is optimistic that this truck will be able to get more food out to families and continue to work to eliminate food insecurity in Malden.” Earlier this school year, Malden Public Schools (MPS) announced that the district has been awarded a Food Security Infrastructure grant in the amount of \$110,309 for the purchase of the food truck. This will help provide Malden students with access to free and nutritious meals on a regular basis.

Recognizing the struggles families are facing during the pandemic, MPS wanted to ensure that access to food was not a burden to families and set out to find an innovative way to address food insecurity. Prior to applying for the grant, school department officials examined the data related to the number of families accessing free meals each day. Recognizing that traveling to schools while also balancing the demands of work and remote learning posed a challenge for many families, the school department applied for the grant and proposed the purchase of a food truck to travel throughout the city and bring food to neighborhoods. The rationale behind the proposal was that eliminating the barrier of traveling to pick up food each day would increase the number of students able to access the free and healthy meals they need, particularly during a time when buildings are closed. During this pandemic, food insecurity has been a major issue in many cities across the state and nation, and MPS wanted to make sure that Malden students would have access to free meals both during the school year and in the summer.

MPS considering proposal for partnership to help boost eligible Malden families’

participation in federal USDA’s SNAP Program

MassInc Polling reached out to the district recently to discuss a potential collaboration with the Shah Family Foundation and The MassINC Polling Group, according to Superintendent John Oteri. Over 355,000 students received P-EBT federal assistance benefit payments, due to the COVID-10 pandemic in Mass. this year and of that group it is estimated that about half of these students could be eligible for federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through USDA, but are not receiving this benefit. This program was formerly referred to as food stamps, which families receive to pay for “food-related only” items. Supt. Oteri told the Malden School Committee that recent data shows that in Malden, there are 1,980 children ages 6-18 that could be eligible for SNAP but are not on it. Given that 5,780 of Malden students received P-EBT benefit payments, due to the COVID-10 pandemic, that is a large number that could be getting SNAP. Given that families can get the maximum SNAP benefit now, the district wants to make sure all eligible children are getting SNAP. The Shah Foundation has engaged The MassINC Polling Group to survey families in districts where most or all families received P-EBT to understand their perceptions of SNAP and why they are not enrolling. Shah will use this data to help inform *See Page 5*

“These unprecedented times have posed a number of significant challenges to our students and their families,” said Malden Mayor Gary Christenson, when the purchase was first officially announced. “We are grateful to point person Toni Mertz (Malden Public Schools Business Manager) and the innovative thinking that has resulted in this award which will allow us to serve a greater number of families and hopefully make life a bit easier for them during such difficult times.”



Return of Students

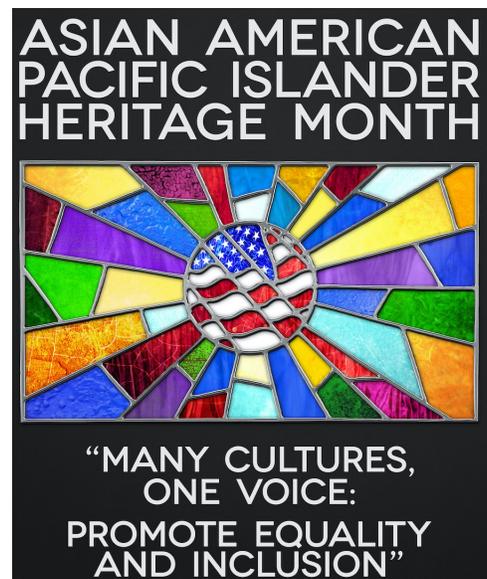
Students in Grades K-5 returned to classes full-time, 5 days at the Linden School, above & right, and the other K-8 schools on April 5. Those in Grades 6-8 followed on April 26 at the Beebe School, at left and above right. *Malden Public Schools Photos*



SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE: The #1 priority of our response to the crisis caused by the pandemic has been the safety & well-being of our students, families & our staff, and that has never changed

Continued from Page One

Due to timetables we established in conjunction with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) directives, we joined districts statewide in successfully welcoming back our K-5 students to full-time, five-day in-person learning on April 5. Students in grades 6-8 returned to full-time, in-person learning on April 26. Our Grades 9-12 high school students returned to five days, in-person learning on May 17. DESE has allowed families to retain the option of completing the remainder of the school year in remote learning mode if they choose. What has been a common theme in this major change from the previous hybrid and remote-only learning modes is the joy evident from the students returning to in-person learning mode, the one they know and cherish the most, as well as the excitement of educators and staff to have their students back in the classrooms. Everyone is settling in nicely for the final six weeks of the school year and we are anticipating they will be able to finish with a lessening of the anxiety, stress and tension we have all been dealing with throughout this COVID-19 pandemic. Our central office administration would like to commend everyone who has played a role in planning and then executing the most important process of our one year-plus response to the pandemic: returning our students to the classrooms. Our building principals and their administrative staff, the educators and support staff, our custodians, school nurses and the many city of Malden officials have worked hand-in-hand, supported by Mayor Gary Christenson and the Malden School Committee, to ensure the return of students and staff to our classrooms in full, in-person learning. We have done it effectively and above all, safely, and in a manner conducive to addressing the well-being of everyone. We have been diligent in providing and informing our staff of opportunities for COVID vaccination and most of our staff have been vaccinated at this time, which goes a long way toward relieving anxiety in our buildings. The district is pleased to report that the COVID-19



transmission rate has been zero in our schools. There have been positive tests reported among students and staff, but this information has been consistently and completely shared with everyone in our district and throughout the community. April was also a key month for planning ahead for summer programs that will be both instructional and enriching for the many students we expect to see participating. Looking ahead to May, we are grateful that with guidelines in place, we will see Malden High traditions such as Junior Varieties, Senior Prom and of course Graduation Day, be held. Stay safe and stay hopeful!

—Superintendent John Oteri



How's THAT for a Beebe School 'Bark'!

Malden students may take part in COVID-19 pooled testing

Dear MPS Families,

We will begin weekly SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Pooled testing for K- 8 students beginning Monday May 3, 2021. Pooled testing is an additional mitigation strategy beyond staying home when sick, wearing masks, hand hygiene and physical distancing.

The Pooled test is quick, easy and does not hurt. It is a gentle nasal swab to the lower inner nostril. Students if able, will self administer.

The testing is free! You do not need to pay for the test or have insurance to get the test.

Why should I be part of the COVID-19 testing?
Being tested weekly can give staff, students, and parents some reassurance that active COVID-19 isn't running rampant in the school. This is an act of selflessness to help our school community feel safe about coming to school. The weekly COVID-19 testing program is just another way we are striving to keep our school environment safe for everyone.

How do I sign my student up for testing?

To participate in the testing program and to keep the process as smooth as possible – you will need to complete the following THREE STEPS:

1. Create an account for your student on Project Beacon using this link by school:

Beebe: <https://app.beacontesting.com/register/with-code?code=JJAQGZ>

Ferryway: <https://app.beacontesting.com/register/with-code?code=ICWMJE>

Forestdale: <https://app.beacontesting.com/register/with-code?code=JUOTUH>

Linden: <https://app.beacontesting.com/register/with-code?code=ZVANLZ>

Salemwood: <https://app.beacontesting.com/register/with-code?code=GHFBFZ>

2. Create an account for your student on Concentric by Ginkgo using this link:

<https://testcenter.concentricbyginkgo.com/minor-consent>
ALL schools Access code (you will need on the second screen): mutating-malden

3. Complete this google form: using this link

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfPKg2NTOhjAwDQLnpRLtTwddYwRG36erpH6M4FpZmDwd8EEA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Continued on Next Page

Free meals (breakfast & lunch) are still available for pickup for students still in Remote ONLY AT Malden HS, 10:30-1:00

BEGINNING on MONDAY, MAY 10 FREE MEAL PICKUP at MALDEN HIGH SCHOOL ONLY: Malden Public Schools will continue to provide free meals (Breakfast & Lunch) every weekday, Monday through Friday, from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. **ONLY AT Malden High School** for students who have opted to remain in Remote Learning. At this time, two meals may be picked up at one stop for each student in a household. Also, on Fridays, free meals for the weekend days (Saturday and Sunday) are available for pickup. **More information is available at: www.maldenps.org.**



Seeking to increase SNAP participation

Continued from Page 2 outreach and policy efforts. This was sent via Blackboard Connect through phone calls and emails which is translated into many languages, social media, placed on the website and fliers were sent home with weekend meals.

- All results will be provided to the district
- The survey takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete
- Four \$50 VISA gift cards will be raffled off as an incentive for families to complete the entire survey.

Families receiving SNAP benefits may use the funds to purchase any food for the household, such as:

- Fruits and vegetables;
- Meat, poultry, and fish;
- Dairy products;
- Breads and cereals;
- Other foods such as snack foods and non-alcoholic beverages
- Seeds and plants, which produce food for the household to eat.

Households CANNOT use SNAP benefits to buy:

- Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes, or tobacco
 - Vitamins, medicines, and supplements. If an item has a Supplement Facts label, it is considered a supplement and is not eligible for SNAP purchase.
 - Live animals (except shellfish, fish removed from water, and animals slaughtered prior to pick-up from the store).
 - Foods that are hot at the point of sale
- Any nonfood items such as:
- Pet foods
 - Cleaning supplies, paper products, and other household supplies.
 - Hygiene items, cosmetics

Students may participate in Pooled Testing

Cont. from Previous Page In order to participate in Pooled testing – Students MUST be signed up by Fridays at 12 noon to take part in the following Monday testing. Please be sure your child is aware you have signed them up. **Registration is only required once. **How the Pooled testing works** Participating individuals are tested individually once a week (Monday) with a nasal swab test. Each person does a shallow swab of their own nose by rotating four (4) times inside each nostril. A maximum of 10 swabs are mixed together into a group called a “pool” and sent out to a lab for a molecular PCR test and tested for COVID-19 at one time. Results of testing takes 48 hours – should receive results on Wednesday. If the pool test comes back negative, all students in the pool are COVID-negative. In this case, you will not hear from us.

If the pool test comes back positive, it means that at least one person in the pool is COVID-positive. In this case, all students of that pool will be notified as soon as possible for an individual follow-up test.

Individual follow-up tests using BinaxNOW antigen tests produce results in 15 mins. If the individual follow-up test comes back negative, the person may return to school as normal. If the individual follow-up test comes back positive, we will work with the person to isolate and get connected to care. The local Board of Health will be contacted and we will reach out to start the contact tracing process.

Malden Public Schools Mission Statement

Malden Public Schools is a place where students are encouraged to follow their dreams and become well rounded members of our community. The Malden Public Schools prepare students to be independent thinkers and enthusiastic learners who: Work hard; Respect others; Cherish our diversity; Seek challenges; Discover and Develop their individual talents; Strive for academic excellence; and look to Demonstrate personal and social responsibility. Malden Public Schools graduates are prepared to be active participants in our economy and democracy.

The Malden Public Schools: 'Our Diversity is Our Strength'

The Malden school district is ranked #1 as the most culturally diverse by niche.com in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with Malden High School rated the #1 most culturally diverse secondary education school overall. Throughout the district, all educators, administrators and students are unified in our stated mission to cherish and embrace our diversity, striving for excellence in the classroom and beyond.



Congratulations Malden High Coed Field Hockey:!! GBL Champions!

A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

*IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMON
LANGUAGE USED, EXEMPLIFYING
THE BELIEFS, VALUES, STRENGTHS IN RELATIONSHIPS
AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNITY*



Malden Public Schools statement made on the one-year anniversary of the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020

Dear Malden Families,

Today marks the one-year anniversary of the murder of George Floyd.

It is an opportunity for great reflection for our community and our nation. Mr. Floyd's death sparked a national conversation about race in America. Our fellow citizens—including many of our students, staff, and families—have been persistent in their calls for racial justice. We are inspired by their efforts.

While we have long focused on equity here in Malden Public Schools, the events of the last year have led us to reexamine how we can continue to get better when it comes to meeting the needs of all our students. We are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusivity, while providing a safe, welcoming and belonging learning environment for each and every student under our care.

These conversations and this work will continue as we move forward. For now, we will take this day to reflect on Mr. Floyd's death, the state of race issues in our country, and how we can do our part to make our community and our world a better place.

Thank you for your support as we take on these important efforts.

Sincerely,

John Oteri, Superintendent
Malden Public Schools

Superintendent Oteri provides updates on Malden Public Schools mask policy for students and last day of school for 2020-21 school year

Dear Malden Public Schools Families and Staff,

I am writing to provide an update on some important items as we look to the end of the 2020-21 school year.

Masks

This week, the state announced a change to its guidelines regarding the wearing of masks.

Based on this guidance, the district will no longer require students to wear masks during outside activities, including recess. This updated policy was in effect as of Friday, May 21. **Please note that masks will continue to be required inside all of our buildings.**

We will maintain a respectful environment for those who choose to continue wearing their masks outdoors. If you would like your child

to keep wearing their mask in these settings, we ask that you let their classroom teacher know. Please also discuss this with your child so that they are clear about your expectations.



Vaccination Clinics

We were pleased to partner with Pelmeds Pharmacy to offer the two-dose Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination series to our students ages 12 and older. The pharmacy's team of vaccination administrators were onsite at our schools the week of May 24. All students were vaccinated free of charge, regardless of their insurance coverage. Students were not required to bring an insurance card to the vaccination appointment.

Last Day of School

The last day of school is Thursday, June 17. All students will be dismissed at 11:00 a.m. that day. Let's finish out the school year strong! We will follow up soon with more information about our summer programs, how students can return their Chromebooks, and more. As always, thank you for your flexibility and support.

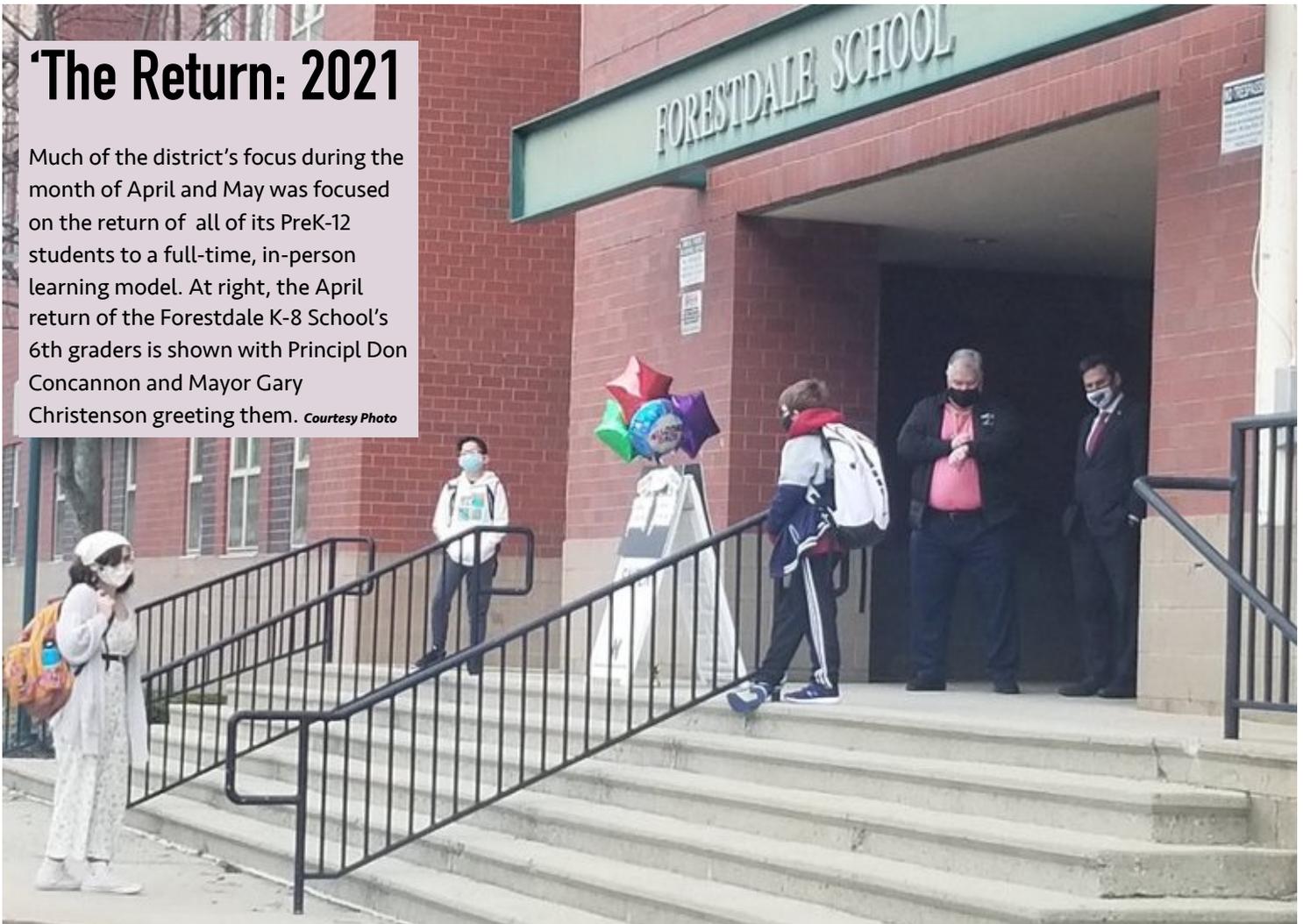
Sincerely,

**John Oteri, Superintendent
Malden Public Schools**



'The Return: 2021

Much of the district's focus during the month of April and May was focused on the return of all of its PreK-12 students to a full-time, in-person learning model. At right, the April return of the Forestdale K-8 School's 6th graders is shown with Principi Don Concannon and Mayor Gary Christenson greeting them. *Courtesy Photo*



The Show DID go on!

Through the efforts of many, the 81st edition of the Malden HS Junior Varieties show went off with nary a hitch! Congratulations to Micaela Henry, left, and the many other talented performers who took part, as well as Advisor Dan Jurkowski and other MPS staff who guided these students to their successful "live" productions in the Jenkins Auditorium!

