

Superintendent's Update

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

Please accept my apologies for missing tonight's meeting. As you may know, I tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday evening. I hope to be back in person in the district (with a mask) on Monday, Nov. 21.

Today was the 48th day of school for the 2022-23 school year. There are only 132 days left this year. Remember that there will be a half-day, early-release schedule at all schools next Wednesday, November 23 as we depart for the annual Thanksgiving break.

On Tuesday, November 8 (election day) all schools were closed due to election polling, but all faculty and staff participated in substantial professional development offerings. Dr. Kelly's office had a [very detailed set of experiences and trainings for all faculty and staff](#). Please take a moment to review the district's work. This was the third and final full Professional Development day for staff. There are additional half-days scheduled on December 8, January 31, March 2, and May 3.

As Committee members are well aware, this past Monday night was the annual Fall Town Meeting at Dedham High School. You may view the [Fall 2022 Town Meeting Warrant Book HERE](#). Town Meeting members voted in favor of Article 10 (page 17) on the Town warrant which recommended \$2,000,000 toward the replacement of the DHS football turf field surface and track. This had been supported by the Finance Committee by an 8-1 vote. The Town Meeting vote was 193 in favor, and 40 opposed. We now await the certification of this vote and then an approval of formal funding so that we may schedule this work to begin as soon as possible. We hope to be able to have the work completed prior to the start of the fall athletics season, but as these plans and schedules evolve we will keep the Committee informed about what to expect moving forward. We are very grateful to Town Meeting for their support of this critical project.

For those who may be interested, with the advent of electronic vote tallying at Town Meeting, overall and individual voting results for each article that utilized the electronic vote casting mechanism are available on the Town website [HERE](#).

I also learned that during the past two weeks over 970 parent-teacher conferences were scheduled and completed by our faculty at Dedham Middle School. There is an enormous amount of planning and scheduling that goes into this effort, and I know how valuable this is to our students and families. Kudos to all for this effort!

SBRC Chair John Tocci, Dedham Town Manager Leon Goodwin, SC Chair Melissa Pearrow and I participated in the [MSBA Designer Selection Panel](#) on Tuesday, 11/15/22. We were 3 of the 13 (originally 16, but 3 members were absent) voting members on the [designer selection panel process](#). I am sure there will be more about this session discussed in the SubCommittee portion of the meeting.

On Tuesday night this week I participated in PTO Meetings with Greenlodge (6:00 PM) and Riverdale (7:00 PM) parents regarding the Oakdale MSBA Project [OPM Compass/Vertex](#). There were more than 25 parents at each meeting and we discussed the scope and sequence of the pending MSBA Oakdale project and answered many questions from the group. [HERE](#) is a draft of the project “community update” flier that was distributed at the Mini Town Meeting. [HERE](#) is a copy of the presentation given at each PTO meeting.

Some Committee members are aware that just after our last School Committee meeting, school districts in MA received a [memo from the MSBA](#) indicating that they were “pausing” the school building Accelerated Repair Program. The Accelerating Repair Program provides annual funding for the repair or replacement of roofs, windows, and boilers in MA schools that are otherwise structurally, functionally, and educationally sound. This “pause” does not apply to the MSBA’s Core Program (of which the Oakdale Project is a part) on new school buildings. This pause is a result of recent huge escalations in construction and building costs. At this time, it does not appear that this ominous development will impact the Oakdale Project, but it certainly puts a damper on our thoughts of financially partnering with the state on a future high school window replacement project. I will keep the Committee posted as this plays out.

I recently learned from Performing Arts Department Chair Heather Kirby that Dedham elementary students are being invited to sing the National Anthem at an upcoming [Providence Bruins game](#) on Sunday, December 4.

This week the Dedham High School Performing Arts Company will be presenting Shakespeare's [A Midsummer Night's Dream](#) on Friday and Saturday night at 7:00 PM. Tickets are \$10 per person and available at the door.

10th Grade students at DHS will soon begin their [typical sophomore year nurse screenings](#) for hearing and vision as well as state mandated **SBIRT** screenings. These [SBIRT](#) (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral for Treatment) screenings were mandated by law in Massachusetts in 2016 to evaluate all students once during middle school and once during high school for substance use. These short interviews by our trained school nurses are a vital early intervention to help support students who may be struggling with substance use/abuse.

As discussed at our last School Committee meeting, the Dedham High School Boys and Girls Soccer Teams have continued a fantastic winning run into the MIAA Tournament. CONGRATULATIONS to both teams who are now in the semi-finals and are competing tonight at Medway High School for a chance to play in the MIAA Division 3 Finals! This is an amazing accomplishment to have both boys and girls teams in the top 4 teams in the state!

Their tournament records so far are shown below. Click on the link below for a fully detailed tournament bracket.

[BOYS SOCCER](#)

11/6/22	Round of 32	- Defeated St. Mary's 2-0
11/9/22	Round of 16	- Defeated North Reading 1-0 (OT)
11/13/22	Quarterfinals	- Defeated Dover-Sherborn 1-0
11/16/22	Semi-Finals	- vs. Belchertown @Medway HS

[GIRLS SOCCER](#)

11/6/22	Round of 32	- Defeated Foxborough 2-1 (OT)
11/9/22	Round of 16	- Defeated Watertown 2-0
11/13/22	Quarterfinals	- Defeated Medway 1-0 (PK)
11/16/22	Semi-Finals	- vs. Stoneham @Medway HS

[COVID-19 Update](#)

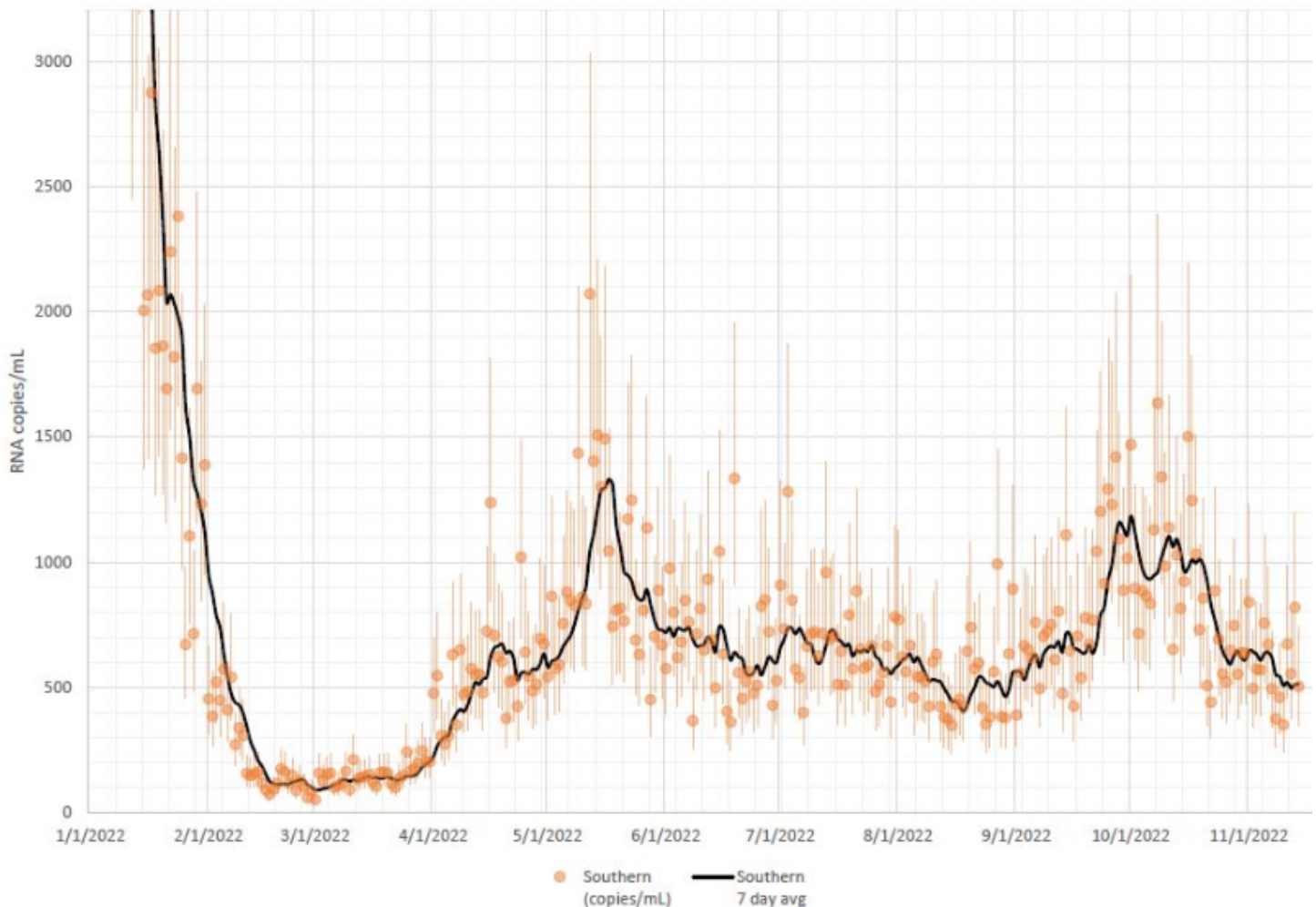
Information gathered over the summer as [COVID-19 data for Dedham](#) shows a very consistent decrease in cases registered in the town over the past 4 weeks. This trend

evidently does not have a direct impact on Superintendents in Dedham, as I tested positive this past Sunday evening...

The [CDC has downgraded Norfolk County to the “LOW” community level category by their designation criteria.](#)

The MWRA COVID-19 concentrations in wastewater over the past two weeks have continued a slightly more erratic decline over the past two weeks. Please take a look at the MWRA graph below to be aware of the most current trends in Dedham and surrounding areas. This information is updated every Thursday with the previous week’s data. More comprehensive information may be obtained from the [MWRA COVID-19 wastewater surveillance website.](#)

Recent South System Viral RNA Signal by Date



The Dedham Public Schools has taken advantage of a [DESE COVID-19 Rapid Test Kit distribution offer](#) and will be receiving 5400 2-test kit boxes on Friday, November 18. We will be determining how to best distribute these kits next week. These test kits

are intended to be used for individual staff for optional testing upon return from the November and December breaks and will be distributed prior to Thanksgiving.