

Bring a memento of a loved one for New Bedford's "Overdose Awareness Day"

"Hello New Bedford Guide. My entire family is from New Bedford and I was born here. Though I spent a fair amount of time as a professional violinist, I committed to a year of service through the AmeriCorps VISTA program to try to make an impact where I am from on an issue that I think is important, and is personal to me: addiction.

I have been working this past year with the Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative and the NBPD to help develop non-arrest pathways and improve health outcomes for people who suffer from addiction in New Bedford. This has really opened my eyes to some gaps in community knowledge around this issue, and one that disproportionately impacts New Bedford. 2021 had 43 reported overdoses, while the national average for 100,000 persons is around 28.6.

For Overdose Awareness Day on August 31, beyond having 517 LED candles at City Hall to visually represent the number of non-fatal overdoses that took place last year, I will be playing the violin as the procession enters Custom House Square and will also be having a table called "They Are Loved and Remembered," where friends, family, and loved ones who have lost someone to an overdose in New Bedford can bring a memento that belonged to their loved one or reminds them of them to keep their loved one's memory alive – and create a place of solidarity to meet one another who have been affected by the same tragedy.

The idea is to humanize the victims, create community dialogue, and create a space for individuals to connect with one another that have suffered through a similar tragedy and

may feel alone.

If possible, I want to open this up to more people in New Bedford so they could bring things to the event and find some community, but I simply do not have the reach you do. If you have a family member, friend, or loved one from New Bedford that passed away from an overdose, please come by.

If you have an item that belonged to them (and/or reminds you of them) and would like to have it displayed at the “They Are Loved and Remembered” table, please contact travis.recoverycorps@paariususa.org by Tuesday, August 30. The display will take place on August 31 at 5:00pm for Overdose Awareness Day at Custom House Square.”-Travis Rapoza.

Senator Warren Statement on President Biden Cancelling Student Debt

United States Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) released the following statement after President Biden cancelled student loan debt:

“Today is a day of joy and relief because President Biden has canceled a big chunk of student debt for as many as 43 million Americans. The President has taken a powerful step to help rebuild the middle class. Americans making less than \$125,000 a year will receive up to \$20,000 in student loan forgiveness, transforming the lives of working people all across this country.”

“Student loan debt has held millions of Americans back from

starting a family, buying a home, saving for retirement, or creating their own businesses. With the President's action, millions of workers—educators; municipal employees; auto workers; food and retail workers; flight attendants; medical workers; care workers; and many more—will breathe a little easier knowing this burden will be lifted. Cancelling student debt will provide financial relief to the many Americans who have been paying back student debt for over 20 years and to seniors who have seen their Social Security checks garnished because they fell behind on their loan payments. Because Black Americans borrow more money to go to school, borrow more money in school and have a harder time paying their debt off after school, the President's action will also help narrow the racial wealth gap in the United States among borrowers.”

“The bottom line is this: Millions of working people will have a chance to build a more secure economic future because of President Biden's decision to cancel student debt.”

“This victory happened because thousands of Americans organized and voted for real action to improve people's lives. I am grateful to these organizers for their years of hard, persistent work. They show us that we can make democracy work and that elections matter. The first bill I introduced in the Senate was to make student loans cheaper so that fewer Americans would get crushed by debt. I'll continue working with the Biden administration to reform our higher education system and create a stronger economy for all Americans.”

New Bedford one of several

cities to receive funds from state for early college programs

University of Massachusetts receives grant to launch new statewide Early College program with online classes.

The Baker-Polito Administration today awarded more than \$2 million to high schools and colleges, including the University of Massachusetts, that are developing new early college pilot programs aimed at significantly increasing the number of underrepresented students taking college courses while still in high school.

“Early College programs provide students with an invaluable learning experience that supports their successful future in and out of the classroom,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “We are pleased that UMass will now be among the higher education institution partners, and we are grateful for their commitment to expanding access to college courses for high school students across the Commonwealth.”

“Students from every community in the Commonwealth will now have even more opportunities to build a bridge to college through these innovative new models,” Lt. Governor Karyn Polito said. “Congratulations to each of the grant recipients for proposing ways in which we can make Early College opportunities more widely available.”

“We’re proud to make these grants available to programs who are thinking critically about how to expand access to college courses for more high school students,” said Education Secretary James Peyser. “All students, and particularly those who have been historically underrepresented in higher education, deserve the opportunity to prepare for postsecondary education. These early college models will help

more students have this opportunity.”

“These grants will accelerate innovation, build capacity, and strengthen quality in early college programs across Massachusetts,” said UMass President Marty Meehan. “UMass is grateful for the confidence that the Baker-Polito Administration is showing in our initiatives on the South Coast and in the Merrimack Valley. With our colleagues at UMass Dartmouth and UMass Lowell, we look forward to working with our partner high schools to open new higher education pathways for their students.”

The University of Massachusetts (UMass) received \$940,000 to launch its first early college program and support seven partnerships with high schools surrounding its Dartmouth and Lowell campuses. Known as Commonwealth Collegiate Academy, UMass will offer live course instruction delivered remotely by its faculty to students in multiple high schools during the school day. High school instructors will partner with their UMass colleagues to provide face-to-face support for labs, discussion sections and team-based projects. UMass anticipates receiving official designation status from the state in the future, and these startup early college programs will be able to request additional state funding next year to work toward their designations.

Since its launch in 2017, the Baker-Polito Administration has undertaken a statewide effort to expand Early College to substantially increase the number of high school students who take college courses and earn credits at no cost before they graduate high school. The Fiscal Year 2023 budget signed by the Governor included a significant increase to Early College funding to bring the total annual investment to more than \$19 million.

Currently, there are approximately 5,400 students enrolled in Early College courses at 50 high schools across the Commonwealth. The Executive Office of Education anticipates

that approximately 8,700 students will be enrolled in Early College programs by the 2024-2025 school year. About half of the Commonwealth's Gateway Cities have Early College programs at their high schools, and nearly 60 percent of students enrolled in Early College come from low-income backgrounds.

Students who participate in Early College programs enroll in college at significantly higher rates than their high school peers, and it boosts college completion rates for low-income, minority and first-generation college students. In 2019, approximately 76 percent of Early College students enrolled in college after graduation compared to 55 percent of their peers who did not participate in Early College.

The following applicants received grants:

- Boston Public Schools partnered with Roxbury Community College – \$120,000
- Brockton Public Schools partnered with Massasoit Community College and UMass Dartmouth – \$200,000 – Brockton High School is partnering with Massasoit Community College and UMass Dartmouth to launch a district-wide Early College program that enrolls several hundred students. The program will begin recruiting middle school students and provide college coursework and support to high school students in the district.
- Digital Ready partnering with Revere Public Schools and Boston Public Schools – \$120,000
- Franklin County Public Schools partnered with Greenfield Community College – \$200,000- Franklin County Public Schools and Greenfield Community College are partnering to develop a rural delivery model pilot of Early College. The college will launch a pilot this fall with Mohawk Trail Regional High School.
- South Shore Consortium partnered with King Philip Public School District – \$100,000
- Lynn Public Schools partnered with North Shore Community College – \$200,000 – Lynn Public Schools is working with North

Shore Community College to open an on-campus Early College high school this fall starting with a 9th grade class.

- Merrimack College – \$120,000
 - University of Massachusetts President's Office with Billerica, Brockton, Dracut, Fall River, Methuen, New Bedford, and Taunton public schools- \$940,000
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New Bedford Public Schools installs \$3.8 million in new technology

With most New Bedford Public Schools opening for their first day of classes on September 1, technicians and specialists of NBPS Technology Services Department have been busy throughout the summer carrying out their department's annual IT Refresh Program for the coming 2022-2023 School Year. The comprehensive districtwide upgrade represents an investment of more than \$3.8 million in technology to support students at an optimal level, states Robert P. Tetreault, Chief Technology Officer in charge of Technology Services.

"We are committed to investing in the tools students need to thrive in modern educational settings," Mayor Jon Mitchell said. "These mobile devices were essential during the pandemic, and they have become a permanent fixture of the student experience."

Superintendent Thomas Anderson stated, "Technology's critical role in teaching and learning is indisputable as the pandemic has shown. Students need the most effective tools available to increase achievement in all areas. These latest upgrades continue our ongoing work to provide access in education for

every student – all students get what they need to grow academically and to thrive socially and emotionally.”

Tetreault notes, “Over 3,000 new Chromebooks are being issued to all Keith, Normandin and Roosevelt Middle School students. We leveraged the funding through the Emergency Connectivity Fund, a federal program. These Chromebooks represent an investment of \$1,183,000.”

In their bunker-like tech lab in the basement of the Paul Rodrigues Administration Building, technicians have been readying thousands of new student devices for delivery throughout the district. In addition to the Chromebooks, the upgrade includes:

- 900 new student laptops; 100 units going to Whaling City Junior/Senior High School with the balance allocated to New Bedford High School to cover the incoming freshman class. Any surplus units will replace ageing devices. For the laptop purchase, the federal government contributed \$360,000, or \$400 per unit (the program cap per device). The district paid the balance of \$234,000 for a total investment cost \$594,000. All incoming Grade 9 students receive new laptops.
- 2,000 new Chromebooks are going to various elementary schools to replace devices that are aging out, as Tetreault notes, “It is critical that we keep our technology up to date.” This allocation follows the 1,200 new Chromebooks issued to elementary schools last year.
- \$2 million upgrade of the district’s Wi-Fi infrastructure. Over 1,400 new wireless access points are being installed in every school building to replace existing older Wi-Fi equipment. Tetreault notes, “This upgrade will provide every classroom with its own wireless access point to ensure that we have strong wireless connectivity for every instructional space in the district. This includes new switching systems to connect to central administrative platforms and mainframes.”

- Additional Educational Interactive Touch Screens for instructional spaces based on school need. This is in addition to more than seven hundred 65-inch touch screens in operation installed last year.
 - Additional security and surveillance systems at selected schools.
 - Upgrades to the overall system's redundancy processes to strengthen contingency response to unanticipated down time.
 - Additional hot spots: Technology Services continues to provide at no charge for NBPS families in need "hot spots" for home internet access for educational purposes. If a student is in need, they should reach out to their school and IT will provide access. Qualifying families should reach out to their respective schools to begin the process of receiving a hot spot.
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Dartmouth Police, Fire Department, EMS locate and rescue missing hikers

"On Wednesday, August 17, 2022 at approximately 8:45 p.m., Dartmouth Police received a call from two (2) hikers who were lost in the woods off of Collins Corner Road.

As their cell phone was extremely low on battery, Dartmouth Police dispatchers were eventually only able to communicate with the hikers via text, during which time they advised them to remain calm, and stay put at their current location.

With nighttime conditions present, members of both the

Dartmouth Police Department and Dartmouth Fire District #3 entered the woods, and successfully located the hikers at approximately 9:15 p.m.

According to Dartmouth Chief of Police, Brian P. LEVESQUE, “I am very pleased with the outcome of this incident. Thanks to the calm demeanor and quick-thinking of our dispatcher(s), the hikers were provided with helpful information that made it much easier for first responders to locate them. I applaud the effort put forward by all those involved in this successful mission.”

In an effort to better educate hikers, Chief LEVESQUE and the members of DPD would like to share the following link from the United States Forest Service, which contains helpful information, should you ever get lost in the woods: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/visit/know-before-you-go/if-you-get-lost>” -Dartmouth Police Department.

New principals appointed to New Bedford's elementary schools

Hayden McFadden, Renaissance and Rodman Schools welcome new leaders for SY2022-2023.

New Bedford Public Schools welcomes three new principals for the 2022-2023 school year at Hayden McFadden, Renaissance and Rodman Schools, Superintendent Thomas Anderson announced recently, stating, “It is a pleasure to welcome these accomplished leaders; they bring a wealth of educational and administrative experience to their schools.” The three were

introduced at the New Bedford School Committee August 15 meeting.



Kim Marshall. New Bedford Public Schools photo.

Hayden McFadden Elementary School

Ms. Kim Marshall, Hayden McFadden Elementary School Principal, started on July 1, 2022. Ms. Marshall joins the Hayden-McFadden Elementary School Community after serving as Rodman Elementary School's leader for the past 8 years. Prior to that Ms. Marshall served 14 years as an elementary school educator within New Bedford Public Schools. Ms. Marshall states, "I am very excited to return to the school where I began my teaching career 23 years ago. I look forward to meeting and working with the Hay Mac Heroes and their families this upcoming

school year. It's going to be a great year!"



Amy Huston. New Bedford Public Schools photo.

Thomas R. Rodman Elementary School

Ms. Amy Huston, Thomas R. Rodman Elementary School Principal, started on July 11, 2022. Ms. Huston joins the Rodman Elementary School Community after serving as an Assistant Principal at Hayden McFadden Elementary School for the past 5 years. Prior to that Ms. Huston served 11 years as an Assistant Principal at both the elementary and middle school levels. She was a teacher and guidance counselor for 10 years within New Bedford Public Schools. Ms. Huston states, "I am excited to support an amazing staff and work with the students and families of the Rodman community."



Katelyn O'Donoghue. New Bedford Public Schools photo.

Renaissance Community Innovation School

Ms. Katelyn O'Donoghue, Renaissance Community Innovation School (RCIS) Principal, started in her new role August 1, 2022. Ms. O'Donoghue joins the RCIS School Community from Holbrook Public Schools, where she served as Assistant Principal at the JFK Elementary School for 5 years. Throughout her 22 years in public education, Ms. O'Donoghue has been an elementary educator, a 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program Supervisor and a District Math Coordinator. Ms. O'Donoghue states, "I am extremely proud and excited to be joining the Renaissance School community. Getting an education is the most important thing our students will ever do for themselves. My goal as principal is to support my teachers and families as we work together to provide our students with the skills and mindset to achieve, to thrive, and to take on the

world.”

The new principals will announce opportunities to join them at their respective schools to meet and greet their students, staff and families.

New Bedford Public Schools expands middle school athletics

Six new teams added at Keith, Normandin and Roosevelt Middle Schools.

New Bedford Public Schools along with Play Ball Foundation continues to expand athletic offerings at its three middle schools with plans for additional team sports in the coming school year. Keith, Normandin and Roosevelt Middle Schools saw increased capacity in their athletic programs this past school year.

Thomas Tarpey, NBPS Director of Athletics, stated, “We have expanded our middle school athletic program adding more teams from each school, which resulted in more students having the opportunity to play Flag Football and Volleyball. Each of our three middle schools added a team to both sports, which has resulted in two Flag Football teams and two Volleyball Teams from each middle school.”

The expansion of Flag Football and Volleyball complements the existing team sports offered at the middle school level, including Boys and Girls Soccer, Boys and Girls Basketball and Wrestling.

The addition of Cross Country at all three Middle Schools is planned for the new school year. New Bedford Public Schools will also be offering Team Basketball at the Elementary School level.

The Play Ball Foundation creates opportunities for middle school students to have sports experiences in middle school that are key to increasing school engagement for kids in a vital period of development. Play Ball supports its partner districts and provides funds to ensure the leagues run well.

School Committee approves 3-year contract with New Bedford Educators Association

The New Bedford School Committee and the New Bedford Education Association (NBEA) have agreed to a new three-year contract that will run from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2025. The 8-page Memorandum of Agreement – Unit A (MOA) was unanimously ratified by the New Bedford School Committee on July 11, 2022.

Under the new contract, teachers' salaries will increase 1.75% for Steps 2-13 and 2% for Step 14 in the first year of the MOA, effective July 1, 2022. In the second year, beginning July 1, 2023, salaries will again increase 1.75% for Steps 2-13 and 2.25% for Step 14. In the third year, beginning July 1, 2024, salaries will increase 2% for Steps 2-13 and 2.25% for Step 14.

"The contract reflects a balance between the need to fairly compensate our teachers and to support the reforms needed to continue the school district's improvement," Mayor Jon

Mitchell said. "The winners in the end are the schoolchildren of New Bedford."

In expressing his thanks to the negotiation teams, Superintendent Anderson stated, "I am excited that we were able to get to this agreement. There was a tremendous amount of dedication by the NBEA and our staff. The timing positions us for a dynamic and exciting new school year ahead as we continue to work to benefit the staff and students in our schools."

Other highlights of the Agreement include extended learning days for Whaling City Jr./Sr. High School and Trinity Day Academy, equity among all birth and adoptive parents for paid leave, increased family conference time, up to two additional Professional Development days for new employees, and an online Parent Portal for grading and increased parent/teacher communication. Returning employees of the bargaining unit will receive a one-time retention payment of \$400 to help mitigate turnover.

The NBEA includes approximately 1,400 employees, consisting of educators, psychologists, nurses, speech therapists and school adjustment councilors.

**Massachusetts Gov. Baker
awards \$15 Million to the
Commonwealth's 15 Community**

Colleges

The Baker-Polito Administration today awarded \$15 million in workforce training grants to the Commonwealth's 15 community colleges in support of the creation and expansion of training programs in high-demand industries, such as healthcare, education, manufacturing, information technology and cybersecurity.

Approximately 1,500 individuals will receive specialized training at no cost. About one third of the grant funding will be allocated toward building capacity in training programs for the healthcare industry, which is in high demand across the Commonwealth. The funding was included in An Act Relative to Immediate COVID-19 Recovery Needs, which was signed by Governor Baker in December 2021.

"These grants complement our administration's ongoing work to address the skills gap by building additional training capacity at all the Commonwealth's community colleges so people have opportunities to gain hands-on skills and knowledge in growing industries," said Governor Charlie Baker. "It is crucial that we provide more residents with quality training options and eliminate the gaps between what skills the Massachusetts workforce has, and what skills employers need."

"We are so grateful to our community college partners who know that education is a lifelong journey and want to help provide individuals in our communities with the tools they need to achieve success in the Massachusetts' workforce," said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito. "These grants will enable more people to transition to new jobs in high-demand occupations where employers are hungry for talent."

Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) and the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges (MACC) will jointly

administer the grant program with the Executive Office of Education and in consultation with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the regional Workforce Investment Boards.

The training programs will strive to help populations who have traditionally experienced higher rates of unemployment and barriers to employment identified by the Black Advisory Commission and the Latino Advisory Commission, with priority given to those who are unemployed and underemployed.

“One of the goals of these grants is to help address shifting economic conditions that occurred for many residents brought on by the COVID-19 crisis, and persistent racial inequities and workforce challenges that existed in the Commonwealth before the pandemic,” said Education Secretary James Peyser. “We anticipate these new training opportunities will make it easier for more people to move into high-demand, higher paying careers.”

“Our partnerships with community colleges across the Commonwealth are so important to the work we are doing to train the unemployed and underemployed for meaningful, long-lasting careers,” said Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Rosalin Acosta. “These regional training programs in high-need sectors are a win-win for employers and jobseekers.”

“As House Chair of the Higher Education Committee, I know well the outstanding work our community colleges do to educate and prepare our residents for well-paying, high-quality careers,” said Rep. David Rogers, (D-Cambridge) co-chair of the Joint Committee on Higher Education. “These grants will enhance that work, giving our residents access to training programs in high-demand industries such as healthcare, education, and cybersecurity. These programs are simply essential to succeed in our dynamic knowledge-based workforce; it is great to see them get a boost.”

The following Community Colleges received funding for Workforce Training:

- Berkshire Community College – \$735,000
- Bristol Community College – \$735,000
- Bunker Hill Community College – \$735,000
- Cape Cod Community College – \$735,000
- Greenfield Community College – \$735,000
- Holyoke Community College – \$735,000
- MassBay Community College – \$735,000
- Massasoit Community College – \$735,000
- Middlesex Community College – \$735,000
- Mt. Wachusett Community College – \$735,000
- North Shore Community College – \$735,000
- Northern Essex Community College – \$735,000
- Quinsigamond Community College – \$735,000
- Roxbury Community College – \$735,000
- Springfield Technical Community College – \$735,000

MACC will collaborate with the Executive Office of Education to allocate the remaining \$3.45 million to community colleges based on local student enrollment demand for the training programs.

Massachusetts Senate approves bill to expand access to early education and care

Today, Senator Mark Montigny (D-New Bedford) voted in favor of legislation that will expand access to early education and care across Massachusetts. S2973 will improve access and affordability for families, stabilize providers while

expanding capacity, and increase support for the workforce to recruit and retain highly qualified staff. Measures contained within the bill were formulated following the final recommendations from the Special Legislative Early Education and Care Economic Review Commission in March 2022.

“Improving access to high quality, affordable childcare and education is paramount to the healthy development of our kids and the ability of working families to make ends meet. This bill will finally help put quality childcare within reach,” said Senator Montigny. “For far too long, families have been penalized by the exorbitant and inexcusable inequities in our economy that hurts households everyday while imposing significant barriers upon the next generation. We all witnessed how the wealthy got even wealthier during the pandemic while most Americans struggled. It is not right, but this bill is a small and meaningful step toward restoring economic security and dignity for our hardworking families.”

High-quality, accessible early education and childcare promotes the appropriate development, school readiness, and long-term success of children. It also improves economic well-being and mobility for working families. Quality programs also help employers retain employees and boost economic productivity.

However, many children in Massachusetts are not enrolled in formal programs and relatively few receive subsidized care. The Bay State is currently one of the most expensive states in the country for early education and care where the average annual cost for infant care is more than \$20,000 and the average annual cost for a four-year old is nearly \$15,000. Approximately 16,000 children are currently on the waitlist for subsidized care and many more families do not even attempt to access the limited subsidies. Additional burdens for families include non-financial factors such as the location of facilities, hours of operation, and transportation options. Programs also struggle to recruit and retain quality staff

because early educators with a bachelor's degree are paid 35% less than comparable teachers in public schools and the average annual salary prior to the pandemic was just \$30,000 without benefits.

S2973 will address many of these challenges by improving access and affordability for families, provisions to help stabilize providers, and implement measures to support a high-quality workforce. The bill will increase the subsidy eligibility threshold from 50% of the state median income to 125%. This equates to a \$164,065 annual household income for a family of four from just \$65,626. The bill also makes it easier for subsidized providers to offer scholarships or discounted tuition and directs the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to annually evaluate and eliminate barriers to subsidy access for families.

Furthermore, the legislation makes operational grants to providers permanent and directs EEC to update its methodology and calculations for determining subsidy rates and grants. EEC will also be required to develop a career ladder that links educational attainment and work experience to compensation and benefits while seeking to set compensation levels commensurate with public school teachers. The bill also establishes an educator scholarship and loan forgiveness program to provide greater access to higher education and professional development. Subsidized providers will also be able to offer free or discounted seats for children of their own staff.

S2973 will proceed to the House of Representatives for further consideration.