

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, January 30, 2020
Superintendent Report
Ben Lummis
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Coronavirus and China Exchange Travel

On Tuesday, January 28, I shared the attached correspondence with all of our families and staff outlining some of the steps we are taking to respond to the coronavirus. My letter included the town's Health Advisory (also attached). The immediate public health risk from the coronavirus in the United States remains low. Our school nurses continue to carefully monitor student symptoms, and we stand ready to make adjustments to any of our practices if advised to do so by the CDC or the Brookline Health Department.

The coronavirus outbreak had a direct effect on the eight Brookline High School students who were scheduled to depart for Xi'an, China on February 6 as part of the China Exchange program. In light of the recommendation from the US Centers for Disease Control - they issued a Level 3 Travel Health Notice: avoid all nonessential travel to China - we made the decision to indefinitely postpone the departure of our students. For the students and their families this is disappointing, though not unexpected, news. The health and safety of our students, and their chaperone, Ms. Shen, was foremost in our minds as we made this decision.

Next steps include a meeting with the students this week and a meeting with students and their families early next week to discuss contingency plans. This is a rapidly evolving situation, with new information available every day, so our next steps will require careful consideration.

I would like to thank Anthony Meyer and Steve Lantos at the high school for all of their work keeping CHEX students and families informed, as well as keeping in regular contact with our partners in Xi'an.

I also want to acknowledge all of the incredible work being done by our entire school nursing staff under the leadership of Tricia Laham, RN, Coordinator of School Health Services. We are grateful every day for the work of our school nurses and it is at times like these, in particular, when we become aware of their day-in and day-out contributions to the health and safety of all of our students.

DESE Film Production to Feature Brookline's ELPAC

Brookline was one of three districts selected in the Commonwealth to be featured in a training video being produced by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C. The production was organized by Brookline's Office of English Language Education and featured parents, staff, and a School Committee member. The videos will be used to support districts and families across the state with the establishment of their English Learner Parent Advisory Councils (ELPACs).

Yesterday, members of Brookline's ELPAC, staff from the Office of English Language Education, and the ELPAC School Committee Liaison, Helen Charlupski, participated in private interviews to share their experiences working with our ELPAC. Later in the evening, the production crew taped a full room of parents attending an actual ELPAC meeting. The final training videos will be available this spring.

It should come as no surprise to you that Brookline was chosen to be part of this production. Our ELE staff, including Mindy Paulo (Coordinator), Caitlin O'Neil (Enrollment and Assessment Specialist), Vicky Ching (Administrative Assistant), and all of our ELE educators, work tirelessly to serve Brookline English Learner student population. Their dedication reflects the district's commitment to our EL families. Our EL staff always remain acutely aware of the special challenges that our EL families face and they work every day to ensure that our EL students are properly supported so that they can thrive in our schools.

BHS Transition Events for 8th Grade Students and Families

Earlier this month, the High School announced their annual series of transition events for the Class of 2024. These informative and helpful events are designed to get 8th grade students and their families ready for life at Brookline High School. I have attached the letter - from Head of School Anthony Meyer and BHS @ OLS Dean Jenee Uttaro - with the details and full schedule of events. Our unique K-8 school configuration means that our 8th graders have spent many years in one school community, so the transition to BHS represents a major milestone for students and families alike. These events serve as a bridge to help everyone through this process.

METCO Field Trip: Historically Black Colleges and Universities Festival

On Saturday, January 25, the METCO program organized a field trip to Washington, D.C. for 20 students to attend the 18th Annual Historically Black Colleges and Universities Festival. This event is the largest HBCU recruitment event in the nation, hosting over 15,000 students and parents with representation from over 70 HBCUs. This whirlwind trip - down to DC on a flight at the crack of dawn and back the same evening - was organized as part of METCO's commitment to supporting our Scholars in their college selection process.

New Director for Brookline Adult and Community Education

I am pleased to announce that we have hired a new Director for the Brookline Adult and Community Education (BACE) program. Michelle McGlone started with us last week and is already hard at work getting up-to-speed. She most recently worked with the New England Patriots where she oversaw the popular education programs of the Patriots Hall of Fame that hosted more than 20,000 visitors annually. She received her M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from North Carolina State University, and in Organizational Management from Endicott College. As she worked her way through her Master's program, Michelle worked with MBA students in Career Services for the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University. She has ten years of experience as an educator and seven years of experience as an instructional leader. Her track record of positive and productive interactions with community leaders, educators, students and families will put her in good stead as she begins her important work with BACE.

Steps to Success Celebration to Honor Judy Katz

This morning I had the pleasure of attending a celebration in honor of Judy Katz as she steps down as Board Chair of Steps to Success after five years. As STS Executive Director Shoma Haque said, Judy is one of Steps' dearest friends and fiercest advocates and has given years of selfless dedication to this organization that's so close to her heart. Judy will continue to serve on the Board. We are grateful to have a partner like Steps to Success to support some of our most vulnerable students, and we join Steps in congratulating and thanking Judy for her service.



Ben Lummis
Interim Superintendent

The Public Schools of Brookline
Town Hall
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January 28, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff,

I am writing to share with you the health advisory issued yesterday by Brookline's Public Health Department (please see attached) concerning the coronavirus. I would also like to take this opportunity to let you know the steps we are taking in our schools to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

We are carefully monitoring information from the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as well as advisories from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). As is typical for this time of year, we are seeing influenza-like symptoms in our schools. Nurses are closely monitoring symptoms and reminding parents to keep students home when ill, and to practice good hand-washing and cough etiquette. We also would like to remind you that it is not too late to get the flu vaccine if you have not already done so.

The CDC is conducting screening for illness among passengers at 20 US airports and providing educational materials for any passengers arriving from China. The CDC is closely monitoring this rapidly evolving situation and providing regular updates to public health authorities across the nation. More information about the CDC's response to the coronavirus can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html#cdc-response>

Please rest assured that we are monitoring this situation very closely and staying informed of the latest information from public health authorities. We are following all recommended guidelines to ensure the safety of our students and staff. We will continue to share new information with you, as necessary, about this rapidly evolving situation.

Sincerely,

Ben Lummis
Interim Superintendent



**TOWN OF BROOKLINE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

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Dr. Swannie Jett, DrPH, MSc
Director of Public Health
& Human Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Dr. Swannie Jett

January 28, 2020

617-730-2300

HEALTH ADVISORY FOR CORONAVIRUS

BROOKLINE – “We understand that many people are worried about the coronavirus and how it may impact Brookline, MA”, said Dr. Swannie Jett, Health Commissioner for Brookline Public Health (BPH). Brookline is currently at low risk for cases but, we are closely monitoring the situation. When we have further information we will update the public. If you have traveled to China recently and are sick with fever, cough and difficulty breathing please call your primary care physician immediately. “I would avoid any unnecessary travel to China until the outbreak is over”, said Dr. Swannie Jett.

CDC is closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (termed “2019-nCoV”) that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and which continues to expand. Chinese health officials have reported hundreds of infections with 2019-nCoV in China, including outside of Hubei Province. A number of countries, including the United States, have been actively screening incoming travelers from Wuhan. Human infections with 2019-nCoV have been confirmed in other countries, including the United States. The United States announced their first infection with 2019-nCoV detected in a traveler returning from Wuhan on January 21, 2020.

Symptoms include fever and respiratory illness, such as cough and difficulty breathing. In severe cases, infection can cause bronchitis, pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death. Symptoms of 2019-nCoV may be similar to the flu. Preliminary information suggests that older adults and people with underlying health conditions may be at increased risk for severe complications from this virus.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid exposure to the virus. BPH always recommends standard precautions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Using alcohol-based hand rubs and gels.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick
- Staying home when you are sick.
- Covering your cough or sneeze.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.

- Wear a mask if you leave the house and you have a cough

What can travelers do to protect themselves and others?

- Avoid contact with sick people
- Avoid animals, animal markets, and products that come from animals
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Older adults and travelers with underlying health issues may be at risk for more severe disease and should discuss travel to China with their health care provider.

For further information, please contact Dr. Swannie Jett, sjett@brooklinema.gov or 617-730-2300. Also, please join our Twitter discussion: [@BrooklineHealth](https://twitter.com/BrooklineHealth), Facebook: Brookline Department of Public Health, or Instagram: Brooklinehealth.



BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL
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Anthony Meyer
Head of School

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January 8, 2020

Dear Eighth Grade Families:

Greetings from Brookline High School. As the new year begins, we set our sights on the eighth to ninth grade transition, recognizing that the Class of 2024 enters BHS in September 2020 and that this process happens quickly. While we are nearly nine months away from the 2020-21 school year, we already are thrilled to have you and your students join our vibrant, diverse school community.

As part of this process, we invite you to a series of informational events about our high school academic and student support program, as well as the many opportunities available to your students next year and beyond. We design these transition events to orient you to BHS and to answer many of your questions. Just as your students are preparing for one of life's larger transitional periods, we recognize that families also will experience something new, exciting, and, at times, daunting. These events thus serve as a bridge to help everyone transition to BHS.

As you likely know, construction for our high school expansion project began during the summer of 2019. This project required the demolition of the Tappan wing of the main campus, necessitating the use of Old Lincoln School for the duration of construction. We have used Old Lincoln this year for 9th grade and created an atmosphere where students experience a unified high school, including access to BHS's rich course offerings. We realize that ninth graders must receive strong social/emotional supports as they transition to high school. We have assembled a faculty and staff for OLS that is well equipped to provide this support. To be clear, Old Lincoln School is part of our larger campus; in practice, this means the majority of our ninth graders will take classes at both OLS and the main campus with 9th grade students continuing to travel between Old Lincoln School and the main campus.



In preparation for next year we believe the transition events detailed below are particularly important.

While we encourage you to attend as many events as possible and know you will benefit from them, we also realize how busy life becomes. If you cannot attend every session, do not worry. We will work with PTO leaders at our K-8 schools so that information from these events, and the transition process in general, is shared. We have also created this [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) document](#) specific to the high school's use of Old Lincoln School. That along with a wealth of information about the construction and expansion project can be found on [BHS Expansion Project](#) page of the BHS Website.

Please review the transition event program and schedule that we have included below. Our faculty, staff, and administration are working incredibly hard on planning for this change and look forward to sharing what we believe will be a powerful balance of a ninth-grade cohort experience and connections with the larger BHS community.

For now, we look forward to seeing you soon at the eighth-grade transition events and sharing all that Brookline High School has to offer. Welcome!

Sincerely,



Anthony Meyer
Head of School



Jenee Uttaro
Dean of BHS@OLS



Class of 2024 Transition Events

<p>Monday, Feb. 3 @ 7pm in the BHS Auditorium for parents and guardians</p>	<p>Curriculum Night for English, Social Studies, Science, Math, World Language, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Career and Technology Education, and Health/Fitness. It is a chance to hear from our leadership team, especially Curriculum Coordinators from each subject area.</p>
<p>Monday Feb. 3 @6pm in the Library for parents and guardians</p>	<p>Overview of Special Education services and programs. This separate and earlier portion of Curriculum Night is for parents and guardians to meet our special education leadership and available staff members. You will learn about the high school's robust continuum of special education programming.</p>
<p>Feb. 6 – Feb. 11 @ each K-8 school for students only</p>	<p>BHS World Language “Road Show” is during the school day. Teachers from languages not offered in K-8s will visit the PSB K-8 schools.</p>
<p>Thursday, Feb.13 @ BHS for students only</p>	<p>Arts at BHS is during the school day. Eighth graders visit BHS and enjoy a presentation of our Performing Arts, Visual Arts, and Career and Technical Education offerings.</p>
<p>Thursday, Feb. 13 @ OLS at 6pm for parents and guardians</p>	<p>OLS informational Night. This is a special night for parents to come learn more about how the OLS experience worked this year and what we have learned about this model for 9th grade. It also is a night within which parents, guardians, and caretakers can hear more about our planning, ask questions, and offer feedback.</p>
<p>Tuesday, Mar. 3 @ 7pm in the BHS Auditorium for parents, guardians and <i>especially</i> students</p>	<p>Life at Brookline High School. On this night, the head of school, deans for the class of 2023, and a panel of students will talk and answer questions about life at Brookline High, including the 8th to 9th grade transition.</p>
<p>Monday, Mar. 9 @ 7pm in the BHS Auditorium for parents, guardians and students</p>	<p>Introduction to Athletics: Parents and students are invited to a presentation and Q&A session about our interscholastic athletic program.</p>