

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

Rescheduled Boston Marathon: Potential Adjustment to 2020-2021 School Calendar

Governor Baker filed a bill ([H. 4571](#)) to designate Monday, September 14, 2020 as a holiday to facilitate the rescheduled running of the 2020 Boston Marathon. If this bill passes, and the marathon is run in September, we will not be able to operate school on Monday, 9/14/20. The [20-21 school calendar](#) was previously approved by the School Committee on 1/9/20.

- If 9/14 is declared a holiday (no school) then the last day of school would move to Tuesday, 6/22
- The last "snow day" would move to Tuesday, 6/29
- There is no impact on the high school graduation, which would remain 6/6

We are monitoring the status of this bill and will keep you informed as soon as we hear any news. We have also informed the BEU about this potential change to the school calendar. Once a final decision has been reached we will adjust the calendar, if necessary, and share it with all staff and families.

Pierce School Building Project

Following the successful vote on April 15 by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to move the Pierce School Building Project into their Feasibility Phase, we immediately moved ahead on the next steps for this important project. The [Pierce School Building Committee](#) met on Wednesday, April 22 to discuss the potential timelines of OPM (Owner's Project Manager) and designer selection, as well as the major deliverables and timelines for feasibility and schematic design. We also hosted a virtual community meeting on Tuesday evening, April 28 to bring school families, staff and neighbors up to speed on the project. We continue to update our website with the latest information about the project [here](#).

Driscoll School Principal Search

As you know, in late March we shared the news that Dr. Suzie Talukdar, Driscoll School principal, is leaving the district. She has accepted a principalship in Newton. The school community will sorely miss Dr. Talukdar's gifted leadership. We have begun the important work of selecting a new leader for the school, including a virtual meeting with parents on April 13 and with staff on April 14. We also created an online survey to ask parents and staff for their input on the creation of the [leadership profile](#). The leadership profile is being used by the [interview committee](#) as they review applications and select candidates for first round interviews. We are on schedule and interviews start on May 1. I will continue to keep you updated on the progress of this search process.

DESE Announces Pandemic EBT Program

In an effort to provide additional assistance to those families facing food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic, DESE announced the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer, or P-EBT, program. This provision of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 allows states to issue benefits to families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals at school. School districts such as ours - who carefully maintain the free and reduced meal data of our students - worked closely with DESE to provide

the required information. The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is coordinating the program - using the statewide data collected by DESE - and will add direct cash benefits to EBT cards for students who already have one or mail a new pre-loaded EBT card to eligible households that do not already have one. These benefits are *in addition to* the grab-and-go meals that our district is serving to students each week. The first benefit period is from March 16 to May 1 (with the possibility of a new round of funding, subject to approval). During this first benefit period, families will receive a benefit of \$28.50 per week for each eligible child. EBT cards are used like debit cards for the purchase of food items (excluding prepared meals). It is expected that this additional assistance will reach families in May. It is important to note that DESE received written assurance from DTA that none of the data supplied for the P-EBT program will be used for any other purpose and, further, the receipt of these benefits will not be considered a “public charge” as it relates to a student’s immigration status.