



# Superintendent's Newsletter

January 2021

I am incredibly proud of the work that we as a community have done this year. Our staff has been amazingly creative, flexible, hard-working, collaborative, and willing to do whatever it takes to help students succeed. Our parents have been very supportive of staff and students and have been true partners in making this challenging year a positive one. I cannot say enough about our students. Their resilience, patience, and ability to do their very best with all of the changes and challenges thrown their way has been inspiring.

Below, you will find updates on staying home if showing symptoms, the 2021-2022 calendar, the FY22 budget, and the return of our youngest learners to full-time instruction at school. Please feel free to reach out to me at [cummingsj@grafton.k12.ma.us](mailto:cummingsj@grafton.k12.ma.us) with any questions.

## **Symptomatic Students**

To date, we have found that parents have been great in keeping students home from school if they are exhibiting any of the symptoms associated with COVID or awaiting test results if they were deemed a close contact. However, this week we have seen a few instances of students coming to school with symptoms, which has us concerned. We must continue to be as vigilant as possible throughout the remainder of the school year, despite the approaching warm weather and availability of vaccines. We have done exceptionally well as a school community, and it will take a continued collective effort to maintain a high level of safety.

As a reminder, if your child is exhibiting any of the following symptoms, please keep them home from school:

- Fever (100.4° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) *when in combination with other symptoms*

If your child has potentially been exposed to someone with COVID and is awaiting test results, please do not send your child to school. Please feel free to reach out to our fantastic nursing staff with questions.

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**North Grafton Elementary School**

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## **2021-2022 GPS Calendar**

The School Committee recently approved next year's calendar. It can be accessed here:

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1iy3wEKi7Vkm-67tWoMfphSyLpfUpFAPLewYYcg\\_hZRQ/edit?ts=60115aa1#slide=id.p](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1iy3wEKi7Vkm-67tWoMfphSyLpfUpFAPLewYYcg_hZRQ/edit?ts=60115aa1#slide=id.p)

This calendar assumes that we will have all students back for full in-person learning in the coming year.

## **School Department Budget - Fiscal Year 2022**

We are dealing with an unprecedented number of variables in building the school department budget for FY22. The state legislature is considering the FY22 budget now. Our preliminary budget can be accessed here:

<https://www.graftonps.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&ModuleInstanceID=10448&ViewID=6446EE88-D30C-497E-9316-3F8874B3E108&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=15193&PageID=1>

The School Committee will be holding its annual budget hearing on the FY22 budget at 6:30 PM on February 23. The budget hearing will be held virtually and can be accessed through the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84379516757?pwd=eWYrbVZYall1djA3dGIORIJBRtdVQTO9>

If you have any budget questions, please feel free to reach out to me at

[cummingsj@grafton.k12.ma.us](mailto:cummingsj@grafton.k12.ma.us).

## **Kindergarten and First Graders Return to Full In-Person Learning**

On February 8, we will have all hybrid kindergarten and first-grade students return to full, in-person learning. We have prioritized bringing our youngest students back to full in-person learning for two reasons. The first is that our youngest learners struggle with online learning the most. Understandably, they are dependent on caregivers to support all aspects of their online learning, and remote learning is exceptionally challenging for this age group. The second is that this age group has our lowest class sizes in the district (pre-COVID), and by repurposing hybrid remote staff, we can open additional classrooms with little impact on class sizes. Spacing requirements prohibit us from expanding full-return for all other grade levels at this time. The Remote Learning Academy will remain in place for our kindergarten and first-grade students through the remainder of the school year.

Sincerely,

-Jay