

Massachusetts State Police meet kindergartners of New Bedford's Alma Del Mar School

"On Friday, October 7, Trooper Nathan Monteiro, of the MSP Recruitment and Diversity Office; and Trooper Jesse Walker, Troop D Community Liaison, gave a presentation to Kindergartners at Alma Del Mar Elementary School in New Bedford.

Together, the Troopers talked about the job that Massachusetts State Troopers do. The Troopers showed off some of their gear and what and the resources that they have to help them in their daily duties.

The most important topics of the day were the effects of bullying, and tips for riding a bike safely. At the end of their day together, the students took stickers, hats, and new friendships from their time with the Troopers."-Massachusetts State Police.

All photos by the Massachusetts State Police:



Massachusetts State Police photo.

New Bedford Public Schools MCAS results show similar trends to districts across the state

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released the 2021–2022 MCAS results for tests taken in spring 2022. New Bedford Public Schools MCAS results show similar trends to districts across the state.

Like numerous other school systems across the state, New Bedford Public Schools saw a decline in the percent of students meeting or exceeding grade level expectations for most grades in English Language Arts (ELA), except for 8th

grade which increased by 4%. NBPS, unlike some other districts, demonstrated increases in Math at multiple grade levels. The 2022 Math scores reflect a positive growth in grades 3 – 8 with an increase by 5% of students meeting/exceeding grade level expectations and a level performance in grade 10. Notable increases in Math were in grade 6 with a jump of 7% of students meeting/exceeding and a Grade 3 increase of 12% from last year.

English Language Arts MCAS:

- NBPS decline in the % of students meeting or exceeding grade level expectations from 2019 to 2021 – like most other districts state-wide.
- The percentage of students meeting/exceeding grade level expectations in ELA declined in grades 3 – 8 by 5% from 2021 to 2022. STATE: decline by 5%.
- Grade 10 decline by 6% from 2021 to 2022. STATE decline by 6%

Highlights:

- Grade 8 increase by 4% from 2021 to 2022.
- STATE increase by 1%

Math MCAS:

- NBPS Math MCAS in 2022: increased from 17% to 22% for grades 3 – 8 meeting or exceeding expectations
- An increase from last year's 17%, but not back to the 2019 level of 32%.
- NBPS 2022 math results: Grades 3–8 had an increase by 5% of students meeting/exceeding grade level expectations.
- STATE: increase by 6%
- Grade 10 – remained at the same level from 2021 to 2022.
- STATE decline by 2%

Highlights:

- Grade 3 Math increase by 12%. STATE increase by 8%.
- Grade 4 Math increase by 6%. STATE increase by 9%.

- Grade 6 Math increase by 7%. STATE increase by 9%.

Superintendent Thomas Anderson stated, “The results confirm what we already knew about the profound impact of two years of districtwide disruptions to attendance and in-person learning. It verifies the rigorous work we are doing to address it. Our continued implementation of effective systems and strategies to internally monitor our progress and provide supports to schools is making a difference. For example, our Student Services Department oversees home visits and works to strengthen communications with families to improve attendance. Students must be in school every day – attendance is a key component of student success. We are optimistic that because of the effective work and dedication of our entire faculty, staff and students, that our teaching and learning process will continue to grow.”

Over the last year, students have demonstrated recovery in some academic areas given the amount of challenges experienced. New Bedford Public Schools has every expectation that this positive trend will continue. MCAS results for all of Massachusetts school districts are published on the DESE website.

New Bedford High School Academy of Information Technology earns distinguished status

“New Bedford High School’s Information Technology Program receives NAF recognition.”

The New Bedford High School Academy of Information Technology, affiliated with the National Academy Foundation (NAF), has been recognized as a distinguished national high school program, it was announced at the NAF national summer conference in Dallas, Texas.

The IT Academy, one of several programs part of New Bedford High's Career Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) offerings, joins Finance as the school's second NAF Academy to be recognized as a distinguished program. The designation was determined based on an evaluation and visit to NBHS by NAF officials in which they reviewed the facilities, interviewed school stakeholders, reviewed documentation and observed classes.

"I am thrilled that our Academy of IT has been recognized as distinguished, a milestone that was made possible through the work of our outstanding teachers, students and IT industry partners," said Bernadette Coelho, Principal of New Bedford High School. "Having two distinguished academies demonstrates the vibrancy of our CVTE programs, and we appreciate NAF's continued recognition of our innovative practices."

The distinguished designation represents the highest level of achievement for a NAF academy. New Bedford High School's Academy of IT was one of 181 programs recognized in the nation, according to NAF'S recent press release announcing the designees. The process to determine distinguished level includes evaluations and a site visit to assess program quality. NAF officials engaged with a cross section of teachers, students, finance industry advisory committee members and administrators during the NBHS visit.

"Our recent NAF site visit provided the opportunity for the IT Academy to showcase its innovation, creativity and advanced technical skills," said Chris Cummings, manager of CVTE programs, noting that teachers from all areas met with NAF officials to discuss how they collaborate with IT Academy

staff to develop and implement projects across multiple disciplines. “The evaluators were impressed with the rich cross-curricular integration,” he added.

One of the criteria in determining a distinguished NAF program is an active advisory committee of industry representatives and post-secondary faculty. During their discussions with NAF officials, the committee – comprised of 16 members representing industries from New Bedford, Providence, Boston, and other regional communities – shared how they engage with NBHS staff and students in providing curriculum guidance and internship opportunities.

“We are fortunate to have highly engaged advisory committee partners to support our IT Academy, said Cummings. “Their active participation and support were key in our receiving this most prestigious recognition,” he added.

The IT Academy is part of New Bedford High School offerings of Career Vocational Technical Education programming. In addition to IT, the school offers career pathway programs in Finance, Health Sciences, Engineering, Early Childhood Education and Hospitality, as well as two Chapter 74 vocational programs in Business Technology and Radio and Television Broadcasting. For more information about Career and Technical Education at New Bedford High School, please contact Christopher Cummings, Manager of CVTE at (508) 997-4511, ext. 20799.”

**More Than 800,000 In
Massachusetts Eligible For**

Student Loan Relief

Chris Lisinski

State House News Service

About one in nine Massachusetts residents are eligible for student loan debt relief under the plan President Joe Biden outlined last month, the White House said Tuesday.

Biden's press team published state-by-state data projecting the number of borrowers who could get thousands of dollars of student loan debt erased. In Massachusetts, the White House estimated roughly 813,000 people meet the income requirements to receive relief, about 401,200 of whom are Pell Grant recipients. That pool of potential recipients is the 14th-highest of all states and U.S. territories, and it represents a bit more than 11 percent of the Bay State's population. California, the most populous state in the country, also has more residents eligible for student debt relief than any other state with about 3.55 million, according to the Biden administration. The Biden administration said it does not know the home state or territory for about 3.77 million borrowers eligible for relief.

Biden's announcement called on the U.S. Department of Education to cancel up to \$20,000 in loan debt held by DOE for Pell Grant recipients and up to \$10,000 for non-Pell Grant recipients. Individual borrowers must have an income less than \$125,000 to qualify, while married couples must earn less than \$250,000.

Altogether, the White House estimates more than 40 million borrowers nationwide are in line for relief, nearly 90 percent of which the administration says will go to those earning \$75,000 or less per year. Required student loan payments have been paused during the pandemic and are set to resume in January. The Biden administration said more details about the

debt relief plan will be released in the coming weeks.

New Bedford Public Schools Resolves Matter Concerning K'iché Services

New Bedford Public Schools has commenced a 3-year plan to improve its translation and interpretation services for K'iché speaking students and their families. The plan is based on an agreement that resolves a review by the U.S. Department of Justice into the District's current services for K'iché speakers.

K'iché is a Mayan language of Guatemala, where it is spoken by approximately 7% of the population. New Bedford Public Schools has 161 enrolled students who speak primarily K'iché.

District students and families represent 45 countries and 40 different languages. Moreover, the District has 5,059 students learning English. Forty-two percent of the District's more than 13,000 students' primary language is not English. Families whose primary language is not English receive translated documents and have access to interpreters for a variety of meetings and events. The District continues to meet requirements for students and families set by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Superintendent Thomas Anderson stated, "Like all public school districts, it is our responsibility to support students to overcome language barriers and ensure equal participation by students in all instructional programs. This plan memorializes

strategies and monitoring systems that we previously had in place. We had already been working to increase staff to support students, including curriculum revisions to ensure students are academically prepared. The District also developed more efficient educational translation and interpretation services to more effectively communicate with our families who speak K'iché. This is an opportunity for us to continue to be even more effective and grow for the benefit of all our students."

After receiving a complaint related to K'iché speaking students and parents, the Justice Department conducted a thorough review of district programs for English Learner (EL) students, primarily relating to K'iché speakers, and "identified certain aspects of the District's EL programs and practices that were not fully compliant with Section 1703(f) the Equal Educational Opportunities Act."

The District's plan outlines several expectations including timelines and professional growth objectives. It also recognizes many areas that have already been strengthened as part of NBPS internal accountability systems. The plan focuses on K'iché speakers receiving the instruction and support they need to become proficient in English and to participate fully in school. These include:

- Targeted professional development and support for all staff
- Disaggregated data for K'iché speaking EL students and former EL students

Dr. Sonia Walmsley, NBPS Executive Director of Educational Access & Pathways, stated, "Although we have been engaged in this work over the past several years, we will expedite our implementation of the measures highlighted in this agreement to more quickly resolve the areas of improvement for our EL programs generally and especially our services for students and families who speak K'iché."

UMass Dartmouth opens new \$1.2M Biodegradability Laboratory

“The lab, formed through a Commonwealth and private partner collaboration, will explore plastics biodegradation in the environment.”

UMass Dartmouth recently opened its newest state-of-the-art research, learning and product development laboratory in the School for Marine Science & Technology. The Biodegradability Laboratory supports the development of biodegradable and ocean-safe plastics and other materials by accelerating their path to market with a focus on increasing sustainability. The lab was created through a unique private-public partnership, including a \$739,936 Massachusetts Technology Collaborative grant and a \$450,000 investment from PrimaLoft, an industry leader in advanced material science that specializes in developing sustainable high-performance insulations and fabrics.

“The opening of the new biodegradability lab at UMass Dartmouth is another incredible example of Massachusetts leading the way towards a more sustainable future,” said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito. “The research conducted and the products developed within the lab will offer industry and academia opportunities for growth.”

“UMass Dartmouth is committed to supporting the rapidly growing Blue Economy by conducting research in important areas such as increasing ocean sustainability, monitoring ecosystems, producing renewable energy, and developing new

marine technologies,” said Chancellor Mark Fuller. “I am grateful to the Baker-Polito Administration and alum Mike Joyce for allowing our students to learn alongside faculty doing groundbreaking research in the biodegradability lab.”

The laboratory is important for businesses interested in the field, providing additional research capacity for evaluating plastic biodegradability. The lab was designed to measure biodegradation of products in environmental systems where plastic waste persists including landfills, oceans, wastewater, soil and compost. The lab components and key features were designed in close collaboration and with critical feedback from PrimaLoft textiles engineers, chemical engineers, and environmental scientists.

In addition to PrimaLoft, partners on the project include Radical Plastics of Beverly, Paramount Planet Product, UMass Boston, UMass Lowell, the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Boston-based SeaAhead, and the U.S. Army Soldier Combat Capabilities Development Command Soldier Center.

“UMass Dartmouth is a perfect location for this new facility, to build on the university’s strong marine science and engineering focus, coupled with the South Coast’s strong heritage of textile innovation,” said Pat Larkin, Deputy Director, Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. “Our thanks to the many corporate and research partners on this project, including PrimaLoft, that will power this critically important research partnership.”

“This new laboratory is a true partnership that demonstrates the commitment of industry, government, and academia to protecting our region’s economy and natural resources,” said Jean VanderGheynst, Dean of Engineering and interim Dean of SMAST.

“Ultimately, this is a wonderful opportunity to bring together a business with a specific need, and a university with the

ability to bring it to life,” said Mike Joyce ’85, PrimaLoft CEO. “This lab is positioned to be one of the premier biodegradation labs in the United States and our hope that this lab will be the nucleus of an expanding center for sustainable innovation and research in the SouthCoast region.”

This latest project advances UMass Dartmouth’s faculty- and student-driven research in advanced materials, the Blue Economy, and sustainability.”

UMass Dartmouth awarded \$750,000 Massachusetts Life Science grant to diversify the field

“The grant will create opportunities for students to access cutting-edge equipment for in-demand careers in life sciences industries.

UMass Dartmouth recently received a \$750,000 grant from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center to connect students in one of the University’s most diverse science programs, Medical Laboratory Science (MLS), to resources that will further their careers in the life sciences. The grant was part of the Baker-Polito Administration and the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) announcement of 39 grants totaling more than \$14.6 million.

“Stepping Stones: Achieving Greater Diversity in Life Sciences through Laboratory Science” focuses on UMass Dartmouth and the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center’s shared commitment to

increase diversity in the life sciences. Funding will be used to add advanced technologies to the University's laboratory spaces, including microbiology testing stations, blood testing equipment, and cell manipulation hardware. Students in the program will utilize these new pieces of equipment and methodologies that are the same as employers use in Massachusetts's burgeoning life sciences sector.

"By making investments in STEM workforce and educational opportunities, we can sustain and strengthen Massachusetts' leadership in the life sciences and other STEM industries," said Governor Charlie Baker in a press release. "We are grateful to partners across the Commonwealth for working with our administration to create more career pathways for students in these growing fields."

"UMass Dartmouth is committed to growing our learning and research opportunities in the life sciences," said Chancellor Mark A. Fuller. "This generous grant from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center will help our diverse student body enter the workforce prepared to continue the Commonwealth's worldwide leadership in these crucial industries."

"Growing the life sciences is a critical focus of our university and region," said Ramprasad Balasubramanian, vice chancellor for research and innovation at UMass Dartmouth. "With a highly-skilled workforce and lab space a fraction of the cost of Boston area facilities, the SouthCoast is only expected to grow its impact in the life sciences industry."

With a 100% employment rate and a 100% pass rate on MLS professional certification, UMass Dartmouth's MLS program is ranked as one of the top programs in the country. While traditionally employed in health care facilities, students in the MLS program increasing focus on careers in life science.

"The College of Nursing & Health Sciences is very excited and appreciative of this grant from the Massachusetts Life

Sciences Center,” said Dean of the College of Nursing & Health Sciences Kimberly Christopher. “The funding provides the opportunity to update student learning laboratory facilities and expand our capacity to address current and future medical laboratory and life sciences workforce needs.”

Students in the MLS program analyze blood, body fluids, cells, tissues, and other specimens to determine diseases’ causes and their appropriate treatments. The skills acquired by students are highly translatable to life sciences labs. The UMassD program, one of the largest in the nation, is accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences, which makes students eligible for national certification from the American Society for Clinical Pathology.

“We are incredibly grateful to Mass Life Sciences Center for their support of Stepping Stones,” said Professor Frank Scarano, chair of the Medical Laboratory Science department. “The demand for skilled laboratory scientists in both the life sciences and health sciences continues to grow, and our highly-motivated, hard-working, diverse students need to learn on the same equipment used in modern labs.””

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