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FYI SALEM

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From the Mayor's Desk



Dear Salem resident,

As you may be aware, last week saw record number of COVID cases in Salem and across Massachusetts and the nation. As a community we want to remain vigilant and do all that we can as individuals and a city to curtail new case counts for the remainder of this month. Nobody wants to spend the holidays sick or in the hospital.

The next few weeks are critical in our fight against this virus. For the month of December, we are increasing testing options, undertaking new wastewater surveillance, and implementing new school and City workforce monitoring to help detect and curb virus spread in our community.

I want to thank the many Salem residents who have taken to heart the "Knowvember" effort to get tested twice per month. As a result of that campaign, the number of tests among Salem residents increased by 56% in November over the previous month. Testing is helpful in our efforts to curb the spread - you'll know if your contagious and we'll know

more about the prevalence of COVID in our community. To help broaden the reach testing in the community, the City is taking the following additional measures:

Read in this issue of the newsletter about the return of the Salem Coronavirus Awareness Network, or SCAN. This free testing service is available to Salem residents only and starting this week will be offered at the Community Life Center by appointment only. Details are at www.salem.com/scan.

Salem still hosts two state-run "Stop the Spread" testing sites at Old Town Hall and Salem High. At this time, those sites cannot accommodate appointments, but you can pre-register to help cut down on wait times. They are open to any Massachusetts resident, whether they live in Salem or not. These sites continue to be busy, testing thousands of residents each week. Visit www.salem.com/stopthespread for more details.

In collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the City began conducting surveillance testing for COVID-19 in wastewater in late November. Testing is taking place in catchment areas corresponding to high-risk populations. Results are monitored weekly and the City will notify residents in these areas if COVID-19 levels in any of them increase, so they can get tested to know their COVID-19 status and take measures to contain the spread in their own household if necessary. Salem is one of a small number of cities conducting wastewater testing.

Salem schools, police, fire, and municipal employees are participating in a

weekly pooled testing program. Salem is the second school district in Massachusetts to offer this testing option. In addition, Salem Public Schools has been selected by the state to be one of 134 districts in the Commonwealth to receive Abbott BinaxNOW rapid antigen tests for symptomatic individuals in schools in order to increase the speed of response and quarantine before an individual receives diagnostic test results.

This menu of COVID-19 testing and surveillance options is being deployed to assist with the safe re-opening of schools, city offices and maintaining important local government functions. Keeping kids in schools and our public staffing teams intact and healthy is a key goal of this effort.

Salem takes COVID-19 seriously and city staff are working hard on COVID prevention, response, and recovery. As more testing options become available to us - from broad-based surveillance tools to more individualized tests - we are working to deploy them to ensure our schools and City workplaces are safe, to protect the health of our residents and high-risk populations especially, and to help curtail the further spread of this deadly virus across our community.

I encourage all Salem residents to explore the testing options available to them. Together, we can help slow the transmission of COVID-19 in Salem so our schools and small businesses can reopen again safely for everyone.

Kim Driscoll

Kim Driscoll
Mayor
City of Salem

Menorah Lighting



Join us virtually on the 3rd night of Chanukah for the 9th Annual Salem Community Menorah Lighting. This year we will be live streaming the Lappin Park Menorah Lighting and Musical Program so that all can enjoy in the safest possible way.

This holiday program will take place on Saturday, December 12th at 7:00pm. Enjoy music, entertainment, and greetings from Rabbi Yossi Lipsker, Mayor Kim Driscoll, Senator Joan Lovely, and Representative Paul Tucker in the comfort of your home. There will be no in-person attendance. Enjoy this inspirational evening of light from home. Register below or follow @NSJewish on Facebook Live.

Register in advance https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_bnYzgiGvQyyuLKX-Lc3AWw. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the event. Free and open to the entire North Shore community.



Seven sculptures have been installed along the newly created Salem Harbor Connector Path in celebration of the path's completion this past summer.

"This exciting project is a continuation of our work to advance the vision of Salem's Public Art Master Plan," said Mayor Driscoll. "I want to thank the Public Art Commission and City staff for their efforts to make this new sculpture garden a reality. The Harbor Connector Path Sculpture Garden will be an uplifting and engaging focal point in our community's growing trail network."

"We wanted to celebrate the formal unveiling of this new path by offering people of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to experience art by regional artists against a backdrop of beautiful parkland and scenic views of Collins Cove," explained Barry. "Although we have many public murals and quite a few memorials recognizing historical figures, the installation of the *Salem Harbor Walk Connector Path Sculpture Garden* will make the first long-term temporary display of contemporary sculpture in the city in many years."

The sculptors, whose works will be on display from December 1, 2020 through November 30, 2021, are David Boyajian, Jose Criollo, Shawn Farrell, Gints Grinbergs, James Meyer, and Robin Tost. Information about these artists and their work is available at www.salem.com/public-art-commission.



The latest COVID response information from the City of Salem can be found at www.salem.com/covid.

Case data, public health guidance and advisories, links to resources, and much more.



**Coronavirus
(COVID-19)
Information**

City of Salem
salem.com/covid



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Salem Coronavirus Awareness Network



Free Community COVID-19 Testing

APPOINTMENT & PROOF OF SALEM RESIDENCY REQUIRED.
TESTING IS FREE. OPEN TO SALEM RESIDENTS ONLY.



LOCATION

COMMUNITY LIFE CENTER
401 BRIDGE STREET

FOR AVAILABLE DATES AND TIMES VISIT:

WWW.SALEM.COM/SCAN

AND TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT

NO PROOF OF INSURANCE OR CITIZENSHIP NECESSARY.
WALK-IN SITE, HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE.

Kimberley Driscoll, Mayor





School Updates

Families with students in grades 3-5, Saltonstall 6th, all 7-8, and 10-12:

Salem Public Schools is planning to offer hybrid in-person instruction for all students who have not yet had the opportunity to return to in-person instruction. **Students will either attend school on Monday & Tuesday, or Thursday & Friday, with remote instruction on the opposite days. A remote option will continue to be available for those who need or want it.**

Grades 3-5, Saltonstall grade 6, Grades 7-8: For these students we will offer a hybrid in-person model, where students can attend two days per week in-person with three days per week remote. If you would like your child to attend in-person, they will be assigned to either attend on Monday & Tuesday or on Thursday & Friday. We are hoping to make those assignments soon. If your child is already in-person five days per week, they will remain at five days, and will get in-person instruction for two of those days while doing their remote learning at their school the other three days.

High School Students: For our High School students, we will also offer a half-day in-person hybrid model, where students can attend two days per week in-person. This will keep the high school overall schedule, but shift the daily times for blocks throughout the school. This in-person transition is likely to happen later than the earlier grades. Dr. Meier and the team will be communicating more details.

SPS will continue to follow all health and safety measures in school, including asking families to complete home health checks, maintaining physical distancing, regular hand washing, and requiring masks. The school day will be approximately one hour shorter than your traditional school day. This new, in-person option will begin in January, with the final date determined by School Committee on Monday, December 7th.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM FOR YOUR SCHOOL AT https://www.salemk12.org/our_district/what_s_new/planning_for_january_return_to_school (ONE FORM PER CHILD) TO INDICATE YOUR FINAL DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT YOUR STUDENT WILL BE COMING TO SCHOOL IN-PERSON IN THE HYBRID MODEL STARTING IN JANUARY. THIS WILL BE CONSIDERED A FINAL DECISION. This form must be completed by 3:00pm on Monday, December 14th.

Your next opportunity for your students to begin in-person instruction will be February 8th or March 15th, 2021, depending on the final start date. Switching from in-person to remote will be available but you must make arrangements through your school's principal **ahead of time** to be able to make this switch. Please reach out to your school front office if you have questions or want to further discuss this information.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation capacity this school year has been severely constrained due to the social distancing requirements imposed by the state. With the return of students in Grades 3-5, 7-8, and 10-12 to a hybrid learning model, we have limited seats available to accommodate those students who we typically transport in accordance with School Committee Policy. Priority will be given to students in Grades 3-5 who live 1.5 miles or more from the school. Transportation for students at the secondary level will be very limited and provided on a first come, first serve basis when available with a fee of \$125 for January – June, with a family cap of \$200. Any family with a student in Grades 3-5, 7-8, or 10-12 who will be returning to hybrid learning in January must apply for transportation no later than December 21, 2020. Fees must be paid in full by January 4, 2021. Applications for transportation are posted at <https://www.salemk12.org/families/transportation>. Applications can also be picked up at the Salem Public Schools Transportation Office at 29 Highland Avenue. For questions, please contact the Salem Transportation Office at (978) 740-1138.