# DRACUT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
## Office of Student Services

2063 Lakeview Avenue
Dracut, MA. 01826
Phone; (978) 957-4633 Fax; (978) 957-9706

**Steven Stone**
Superintendent of Schools

**Kimberly Lawrence**
Director of Student Services


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Dear Families:

On behalf of the Office of Student Service, I am delighted to welcome you back to the new school year. I hope this summer was restful and brought new and exciting experiences. As a department, The Office of Special Services coordinates Special Education, 504 Accommodation Plans, Nursing, McKinney Vento Services, Tutoring, Counseling and the Foster Care Point of Contact for the students of the Dracut Public Schools. The goal of the Office of Student Services is to provide each student with the necessary strategies, skills, and support to function as independent and contributing members of their school and the Dracut community. To assist us in our goal we welcome your help and collaboration as strong home school partnerships will continue to pave the way for success for all of Dracut's students.

As we prepare to embark on the 2024-2025 school year journey together, I would like to take a moment to introduce a number of new professionals to the Department of Student Services and I hope you will welcome them and extend to them our Middie Pride.

| Secondary Education DHS and RMS | Elementary Education |
|---|---|
| RMS School Nurse- Rebecca Schmidt<br>RMS Special Education Teacher/STRIVE Katie Mullen<br>RMS Adjustment Counselor Gabriela DeGrazia<br>RMS Choices Adjustment Counselor Ryan Guild<br>DHS Special Education Teacher Trish Fitzpatrick<br>DHS Special Education Teacher David Gagnon<br>DHS Post Graduate Teacher Jaye Rogers | BES School Nurse Chelsea Weiss<br>BES Special Education Teacher Hayley Flint<br>CES Special Education Teacher/Strive Nicole Fitzgibbons<br>CES Special Education Teacher/Strive Sheila Nobrega<br>EES Special Education Teacher McKenzie Snowden<br>EES Special Education Teacher/Choices Alison Pike<br>EES SLP-A- Jamie Quintiliani |

In addition to our new staff, we have a few staff within the district that are embarking on new roles within the department and others that have returned to Dracut Public Schools to re-join the team. They are as follows:

| Secondary Education DHS and RMS | Elementary Education BES, CES, EES, GES |
|---|---|
| RMS Special Education/RISE Martine Manus<br>RMS Special Education Teacher Ashley Catalano | EES Special Education Teacher Agnes Blatus<br>EES Special Education Teacher Valerie Mahoney<br>GES Special Education Teacher Kerri Picanso<br>BES Special Education Preschool Cailin Dell'arciprete |

Our dedicated Team of educators is eager to inspire, challenge and support each of your children in reaching their full potential. Here's to a new journey of growth, learning, and unforgettable moments. As a department, we will all be embarking on a journey of utilizing the DESE launched NEW IEP form. Please look for information on the website as well as workshops throughout the year regarding the NEW IEP form and its implementation. Below you will find some additional information relative to the Office of Student Services, for your review.

The Parents Notice of Procedural Safeguards can be found on the Dracut Public School Website, under the Student Services tab, or on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website at the following link: https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/. In accordance with federal special education law, school districts are required to provide these "Safeguard" brochures once per year to the parents and guardians of students enrolled in special education services. I would encourage you to read and maintain this brochure to be able to reference throughout the school year.

Please review the Massachusetts Parental Notice and One Time Consent to allow the School District to access MassHealth (Medicaid) benefits for reimbursement for services delivered in school, also found on the Dracut Public Schools Website, under the Student Services tab. If your child is eligible to participate in the reimbursement program by

public health insurance coverage (MassHealth/Medicaid), please sign the One Time form granting permission to seek this federal claim. The School-Based Medicaid Program (SBMP) offers local education agencies (LEAs), such as Dracut Public Schools, the opportunity to be reimbursed for providing MassHealth-covered services to MassHealth members. All information concerning your child is strictly confidential and will not affect your child's benefits or services. This program is supported by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Also, please consider attending a meeting of the Dracut Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC). The SEPAC will be holding "in person" meetings for the 2024-2025 school year with a virtual option for families that are not able to attend in person(see link below). Meetings will take place at Richardson Middle School in the Community Room on the first floor. In addition to the regular meetings of the SEPAC, the SEPAC board in collaboration with the Director and Assistant Director of Student Services will be holding a monthly "Coffee Chat" virtually. This time is provided for families to be able to hear about the ongoing events of the Office of the Student Services as well as ask questions relative to programming and services. "Coffee Chats" will be the fourth Friday of the month through Google Meet ( meet.google.com/hzr-qvyy-awi). The SEPAC is an important and free resource for the families of Dracut as well as to the Student Service Department in the role of school and family liaison. Your membership and participation is integral in assisting the district in providing an appropriate educational experience for all Dracut students. The first SEPAC meeting of the school year will be held on September 25, 2024 at 6:30 pm. If you are unable to attend in person, please feel free to log in through the following Google Meet link: meet.google.com/brc-ihsu-mxh, (US)+1 304-988-5096 PIN: 182 154 269#. Meetings will occur on the fourth Wednesday of the month with the exception of November, December, April and June. A list of SEPAC meetings will be posted on the Dracut Public School Website, under the Student Services tab.

Dracut Public Schools will continue to partner with Care Solace to support our community's mental health. If you or a family member is looking for help with mental health or substance use, Care Solace can assist with finding treatment options matched to your needs, regardless of the circumstance.

Care Solace's care navigation services are confidential and complimentary to Dracut Public Schools's students, staff, and their families. Care Solace's team is available 24/7/365 and can support you in any language.

If you would like to use Care Solace to help you find a provider:

- Call 888-515-0595 available 24/7/365
- Visit www.caresolace.com/dracut and either search on your own OR click "Book Appointment" for assistance by video chat, email, or phone.

As we embark on this new school year, let us remember the power of unity and the importance of making every member of our school community feel valued and included. In the words of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, "We will all profit from a more diverse, inclusive society, understanding, accommodating, even celebrating our differences, while pulling together for the common good."

Welcome Back and here's to an exciting school year full of rich and memorable experiences.

Kindly,

Kimberly A. Lawrence

Kimberly Lawrence, M.Ed.,CAGS
Director of Student Services