

August 2018

Dear Families of Bedford High School Students:

Welcome to the start of another school year!

As always, we begin with renewed energy and excitement, looking forward to another successful year. This year, that excitement includes the introduction of a classroom observation hive of honey bees. The hive highlights our school's commitment to preparing students to understand and address global sustainability issues.

Our hive will be located in Room #215. Its use in education was inspired by the hive inside Boston's Museum of Science and its design was modified for a classroom environment through a collaboration with the nonprofit organization Classroom Hives, which has worked with several Boston area schools. Oversight of this hive is coordinated by a local professional beekeeper, Alden Marshall. The Bedford Education Foundation funded the hive and the "Save the Bees" Club will help answer student questions, host learning activities, and observe hive health to inform our beekeeper.

The hive design has proven to be structurally safe; design modifications developed by Classroom Hives resulted in 0 structural failures over a combined 19 years of its hives in classrooms. The hive is securely anchored to the building and bees cannot enter the classroom from the hive; they only have access to the outdoors via a tube through the window. Due to a high number of food allergies and the presence of native insects, the school nurse's office already conducts annual EpiPen/Auvi-Q training for staff, and maintains a shared updated list of students and staff with severe allergies. There are also specific protocols in place to address "concerning" (but actually harmless) bee behaviors such as bearding, in which the bees hang in a clump at the hive entrance to cool off, and swarming, in which half of a successful colony leaves to start a new hive.

Given the massive population decline of these major crop pollinators in recent decades, due in part to Colony Collapse Disorder, a greater scientific understanding of the role of pollinators and their health is urgently needed. The hive is a resource for the whole community to experientially, but safely, learn about pollinators' important contributions to our local ecosystem, agriculture, and economy. We invite you to learn more about the observation hive design at www.classroomhives.org and contact Martha Pond (pondm@sau25.net) with any questions, comments, or appointment requests to visit the hive.

Yours truly,
Bill Hagen
Principal
Bedford High School