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Superintendent Thomas Anderson

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Playworks donates recess equipment to New Bedford Public Schools

Gift of equipment from Playworks New England helps to ensure students engage in safe and healthy play during school recess

Playworks New England has generously donated recess equipment for use by elementary school students of New Bedford Public Schools. The nineteen sets of interactive items and play gear are designed to ensure that safe and healthy play can happen during school recess, despite the impact of COVID-19, school officials said.

In thanking Playworks, Thomas Anderson, Superintendent of New Bedford Public Schools, stated, “Our students have really taken advantage of and thoroughly enjoyed the Playworks program in past years. Its many structured games and exercise activities designed for recess periods have not only sparked but have inspired teamwork and cultivated leadership skills. Despite the many challenges of COVID-19, the district hybrid plan demonstrates that ‘school is still school’ and recess remains a very important part of school days. Especially now, play is a vital aspect of our elementary students’ school day; it helps provide a sense of normalcy.”

Noting how “New Bedford Public Schools has been a long-time Playworks partner, strongly advocating for safe healthy play for their students,” Jonathan Gay, Executive Director of Playworks New England, remarked, “Now more than ever, due to the stress, anxiety, and isolation of COVID-19 and the impact on students, kids need to play. This donation of equipment will support New Bedford students in their goal to be active and experience fun in the midst of this highly challenging situation. By playing, kids can experience joy and some sense of regularity in the coming months.”

Emily Westgate is NBPS Manager of Curriculum, Data and Assessment for Health and Wellness. In accepting the donation, Ms. Westgate noted, “We are grateful for our continued partnership with Playworks New England and their recent donation to our elementary

schools. We continue to utilize the many resources and best practices developed by Playworks to ensure students across the district have access to play.”

Leading organizations across the nation have urged schools to continue recess to help reduce the level of stress, anxiety, and isolation students may feel as they return to school. Play continues to be a natural opportunity for students to develop social-emotional skills and build positive relationships with both their peers and adults. New Bedford Public Schools has approached recess with COVID-19 considerations and has relied on best practices from leading organizations including the Center for Disease Control and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

About Playworks

Playworks is the leading national nonprofit leveraging the power of play to transform children’s social and emotional health. Playworks currently serves more than 1,300 schools in 23 U.S. cities, and reaches more than 700,000 students directly and through professional training services.

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PHOTO:

Carney Academy students pose with some of the equipment donated by Playworks New England. The national nonprofit gifted 19 sets of the interactive play gear to New Bedford Public Schools. (NBPS photo)

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