

# QCC's Early Childhood Education Lab School to reopen this fall

WORCESTER — The Children's School: Quinsigamond Community College's Early Childhood Education Lab School will reopen its doors in Fall 2021. The school is currently enrolling children for the 2021-2022 academic year, under the leadership of new Director Kristen Fuller.

"After careful review by our Administration and the QCC Board of Trustees, we made the decision to renew our

commitment to the Children's School: Early Childhood Education Lab School and the opportunities it affords our students and the young children in our community," said QCC President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D.

The Children's School: Early Childhood Education Lab School serves as a lab/training site for students majoring in Early Childhood Education and is an integral part of the program. It provides super-

vised student participation and field placement experience for Early Childhood Education Associate Degree students.

"I am very excited to have joined a team of dedicated professionals and to have children return to the QCC campus," Ms. Fuller said.

"The School was established as a resource for QCC students, but has become a true model of collaboration and commitment to top-notch,

high-quality education and care of children between the ages of two years, nine months to five years," Ms. Fuller said, adding that the School will have a daily capacity of 28 children.

The Children's School: Early Childhood Education Lab School was the first center granted the highest level on the Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). The QRIS is a method used to assess,

improve, and communicate the level of quality in early child care, early child care education, and after-school settings.

For more information visit [www.QCC.edu/chil-drenschool](http://www.QCC.edu/chil-drenschool).

For more information on QCC, contact Josh Martin, Director of Institutional Communications at 508-854-7513 or [jmartin@qcc.mass.edu](mailto:jmartin@qcc.mass.edu).

## DISPATCH

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Today, the screens keep tabs of almost everything: prisoners in the cells, the various radio frequencies used in town and by other towns, where incoming calls originate, where to get translation for non-English callers, and numerous other things.

She said it's not unusual to get out-of-town 911 calls.

"We'll get calls from Connecticut or Sturbridge. We've been getting a lot of calls from Route 84 and the Pike for some reason," she added.

When it's Sturbridge, their screens have a button to simply transfer it to Sturbridge's 911. That's true of other neighboring towns within Massachusetts, too, but sending to Connecticut isn't as simple; that requires contacting the Connecticut State Police (specifically in Danielson) because the two 911 systems aren't directly compatible.

In general, Palmer said, her crew handles more police-related calls than fire/EMS calls, but it "varies each day." The grand total has been ris-

ing over the years, but there's "a lot of turnover" among dispatchers and they're currently short-handed.

At the same time, the technology is constantly changing. She noted they occasionally see text 911 calls, and Christina Blodgett recently got one via a website they'd never heard of called SendPolice.com from out of state.

"Texting is hard," Palmer said. "You have to keep going back and forth and it slows down communication."

Blodgett, who was then staffing the other desk, said she's only been here a few months, but liked it. She signed on because she wanted to help people and found dispatching "a real 360" from her previous field, accounting.

Woodson said the whole conversion project cost around \$400,000, with \$100,000 in seed money coming from a legislative grant in 2018. He thanked the council for consistently supporting the funding. Town Manager Michael McCall specifically cited former chairs Jack Jovan and Denise Clemence for their advocacy, noting his experience in Chelmsford taught him "state of the art dispatch" is important for community and police/fire/EMS staff safety.



Lead Dispatcher Melissa Palmer is surrounded by screens.

To Rep. Peter Durant, the new center will "make this town much more effective."

Gus Steeves can be reached at [gus.steeves2@gmail.com](mailto:gus.steeves2@gmail.com).

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