



## LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

James F. Sullivan Middle School  
150 Draper St.  
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

*Edward J. Foster, Ed. D.*  
*Principal*

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*Assistant Principal*

August 19, 2019

Dear Sullivan M.S. Families,

I hope you are well and enjoying your summer vacation. Be it beach, lake, travel, or the “staycation,” I hope it was a restful and worthwhile time with friends and family. It was a busy summer at the Sullivan. We began with the *21st Century Summer Programming* for many of our kids. That was a big hit and many of our staff participated as well. The school was alive with activity through a good portion of the summer. Many of the staff and I finished up our *Turn Around Plan* (a plan developed by the school and district to focus our efforts on best ensuring student achievement). We worked through all of the components related to our grade 5 returning (Welcome back grade 5!); We also developed our class lists, schedules, and hired some wonderful candidates for our open positions. Finally, our crack custodial team has been busy at work with a thorough building cleaning which was much needed. Kudos to them! Yes, it was a busy summer at the Sullivan. We should be in great shape for the opening.

For me, it was not all work however. I was also able to take some important family time with the wife and kids as we went to Orlando for some amusement park time and then took a Caribbean cruise with the inlaws. It was hot, but a lot of fun. Since our return, *Dad’s Home Summer Uber Service* is very much on duty with my three clients: (15 year old Olivia, 13 year old Molly and 11 year old Sean). Add to that some camps, practices, hockey clinics (actually I don’t mind doing on these hot summer days), beach/lake treks, various appointments, sleep over drop offs/pick ups, etc., etc., etc. in the midsts of household chores of cleaning, weeding, etc. It has been very busy.....When are we returning to school again?;

**Last year, as you know we were able to accomplish many things through the hard work and dedication of many in the Sullivan community including staff, parents and students.** Those involved last year should be commended. Accomplishments include:

- **Increasing common planning time** for teachers.
- **Increasing differentiated instruction** for all ability levels.
- **Increasing STEM instruction** via STEM AA (included projects with drones and spheros).
- **Establishing a school climate committee** aimed at increasing and enhancing the school climate in the areas of staff morale, family involvement, positive relationship building, physical environment).
- **Reinstating the Grade 8 Washington D.C. School Trip.**
- Starting a **Peer Mediation Program.**
- **Engaging better Sullivan parents/guardians** utilizing weekly principal messages, regularly updating parent contact information, initiating a Sullivan Facebook page, increasing/enhancing school community events including Holiday & Spring Concerts (with newly formed dance crew and chorus!) and “Suitcase Stories (a community event), .
- **Creating a well-represented ILT (Instructional Leadership Team)** who spent a significant amount of time during the latter part of the year (and into the summer) **creating a “Turn-around Plan”** to focus our efforts for the 19-20 school year to increase student learning/achievement.
- **Improving our overall building cleanliness and grounds.**

- **Continuing our PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention Support) activities** as well as Respect and Responsibility Assemblies.
- And finally, and this is what I am most happy about, **initiating a “robust” after school/summer program** at the school through the *21st Century Grant*. In my estimation, it has reinvigorated students and staff. This after school/summer programming has allowed for students to connect better with staff and the school in various ways (bake clubs, homework help, dance, student government, Coding, etc.,etc.) and provided students a “place to be” during the critical out of school hours. Now, at all times of the day and year, the halls are alive with kids and staff and it is a great thing. A happy, “connected” student is more likely to be successful academically, socially and emotionally. I hope you give it a try this year if you already haven’t done so.

We learn from our endeavours. **The following are some of the initiatives afoot for this upcoming school year:**

- **Implementing a newly developed “Turn Around Plan”** that will focus our efforts daily to ensure our students achieve success.
- **Returning to a grade 5-8 school model** from a grade 6-8 school model.
- **Changing to an 8-teacher team (2 ELA, 2 Math, 2 SS, 2 Science) in grades 7 & 8** from a 6-teacher (2 ELA, 2 Math, 1 SS, 1 Science).
- **Reconfiguring our ELL/Newcomer service model** to provide services to all ELL students.
- **Moving to a FOUR (4) day rotating master schedule.** (To be posted on Sullivan Website)
- **Changing our AA offerings to PE (2), Art, Music, Drama, and Health as well as moving to a 15-day AA rotation for students.** (To be posted on Sullivan Website)

Below are a few **IMPORTANT UPCOMING SCHOOL DATES:**

DAY/DATE	EVENT	TIME/LOCATION
Thursday, August 22nd	Lowell Public Schools “Back to School” Block Party	3:30-6:30 PM / JFK Plaza @ City Hall, 50 Arcand Drive
Friday, August 23rd	Sullivan M.S. 2019-2020 HOMEROOMS POSTED	7PM / Sullivan School (back door windows). The lists will remain for viewing over the weekend and into the following week.
Tuesday, August 27th	FIRST DAY BACK FOR STUDENTS. YAHOO!!!!	7:20AM / Sullivan
Friday, August 30th	NO SCHOOL-Start of Labor Day Recess	
Monday, September 2nd	NO SCHOOL-Labor Day	

Finally, please be advised of the following **IMPORTANT ITEMS OF NOTE** to start off the school year:

- **Morning Arrival** at school is at 7:20 AM. There is NO STAFF SUPERVISION before 7:20 AM which is a safety issue for any student dropped off before that time. If you will be dropping off your child for school, PLEASE DO NOT DROP HIM/HER OFF BEFORE 7:20 AM. The tardy bell rings at 7:35 AM. All students should be in their homerooms by 7:35 AM.
- **Arrival and Dismissal.** Similar to last year,
  - student walkers/car drop offs should enter/leave the building using the FRONT DOORS. Cars drop off/pick up using the FRONT Loop. **Please be reminded to “PULL UP” your car as far as you can when dropping off or picking up.** The first few days it always takes longer as we try to get into our school routine. Patience is a virtue.
  - student bus takers should enter/leave the building using the BACK DOORS. No cars should be in the back parking lot during arrival and dismissal.

- **Busses.** Any questions regarding bus transportation you should contact the Family Resource Center at 978-674-4321. In my experience, busses run late the first day (and the first week) as we begin to settle into a new traffic pattern. Your patience is appreciated.
- **Student Supply Lists.** Please refer to the “Parents and Students” tab of the Sullivan M.S. Website for details: <https://www.lowell.k12.ma.us/Domain/15>
- **New Master Schedule and AA Arts Schedule.** This year we will have a new FOUR (4) day rotating schedule (Day 1, Day 2, Day 3, Day 4) and a new AA schedule/rotation. Please see Sullivan M.S. Website for details: <https://www.lowell.k12.ma.us/Domain/15>
- **Communication.** I’ll be regularly updating my Principal’s Blog on the website to let the Sullivan Community know the important “goings on” at the Sullivan. Please visit the website regularly for this important information: <https://www.lowell.k12.ma.us/Domain/15>
- **Parent and Student Handbook.** Please refer to “Parents and Students” tab of the school’s website to view the *LPS Elementary and Middle School Parent and Student Handbook* for important information related to school in particular behavioral expectations for all: <https://www.lowell.k12.ma.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=147>
- **Cell phones.** A reminder that to maintain an efficient and effective school learning environment and consistent with the *Lowell Public Schools Elementary and Middle School Parent and Student Handbook*, unauthorized use of student cell phones, i-phones, and other electronic devices is prohibited on school grounds (including bus trips to and from school). Students who bring cell phones/i-phones/etc. onto school grounds need to have them “shut off” and “put away” in a locker or class lock box. Students displaying and/or using these items in an unauthorized way will have them confiscated (to be picked up in the office by parents) and receive administrative consequences. Student and parent attention to and support of this rule is greatly appreciated.
- **Hoods.** Pursuant to LPS policy, wearing hoods is not allowed in school. Students wearing hoods in school will receive classroom and administrative consequences. Student and parent attention to and support of this rule is greatly appreciated.
- **Classroom placements.** Student classroom placements will be posted on Friday 8/23 after 7:00 PM on the Sullivan back doors (up the ramp in the rear of the building). Placement lists will remain posted over the weekend and up to the opening. **When entering the building on the first day of school, grade 5 students should report to the auditorium and grade 6 students should report to the gym. Your teachers will meet you in those locations and walk you to your homerooms.** Grade 7 and 8 students should report to their homerooms. Not sure where to go? ALL Sullivan staff will be “out and about” with copies of class lists to ensure students get to their proper locations. No worries, we will make sure your son/daughter gets to the right spots. They are in good hands!
- To raise a child to be successful academically, socially and emotionally, it truly does “Take a Village.” There are lots of ways to get involved in the Sullivan Community. One way is **joining the Sullivan PTO**. The Sullivan PTO is a wonderful organization who do great things for kids and the school and a great way to support your child and the school. Stay tuned for our first PTO Meeting! Hope to see you there.

I hope that you have an enjoyable remainder of the summer and look forward to seeing you soon. Keep up that summer reading!!!

Sincerely,

Ed Foster