



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Henry J. Mroz Central Administration Offices
155 Merrimack Street
Lowell, MA 01852

April 6, 2020

Dear Lowell Public Schools Families,

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and well during this difficult time. As you are aware, schools in Massachusetts are scheduled to be closed until May 4, 2020. While necessary for the safety of our communities, this extended closure and stay-at-home advisory has disrupted our daily routines and very way of life. Many of you are juggling new responsibilities. We feel for you and are keenly aware of the hardship this unprecedented situation has created for our community.

As school closures in Massachusetts have transitioned from short-term to long-term, the Lowell Public Schools has likewise transitioned our remote learning plan from one of optional enrichment activities to required school work, following the state's latest guidelines. While nothing can take the place of the daily in-person interactions that our teachers have with our students, we are prepared to offer our students an engaging and meaningful learning experience during this time away from school.

Following guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, we will begin implementing the following remote learning program starting this week. Your child's teacher(s) will be reaching out to you to guide you through this process and will provide you with more specific details based on your child's individual learning needs.

- We are asking students to engage in meaningful and productive learning for approximately half the length of a regular school day (3 to 3.5 hours).
- Learning at all grade levels will take place via a combination of educator-directed learning and student self-directed learning.
 - Given the nature of their coursework, high school students will continue learning the content outlined in each course syllabus.
 - Students in preschool through grade 8 will reinforce the skills and concepts they have learned, as well as engage in new project-based experiences and online learning based on their learning needs.
 - For students in middle school and high school, teachers will direct student learning based on the district-provided online curriculum, supplemented with videos and/or other materials, as needed.
 - Our elementary school students will focus on participating in project-based learning assignments that reinforce the knowledge and skills they have already acquired throughout the school year.
- For students receiving special education services, teachers and Evaluation Team Chairs will make contact with students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) as they continue to work to develop a temporary distance learning plan that will support each child's individual needs during this temporary closure.
 - This plan will NOT change your child's current services or education setting, and your child's current IEP will remain in place when school is back in regular session.
 - This plan will only address the current temporary distance learning accommodations, modifications, related services and academic services to support your student during this temporary closure.
 - Additional information will be provided on the special education website to address IEP team meetings, evaluations, and student resources.
 - Please feel free to contact the Special Education Department administrative team if you have any additional questions by calling 978-674-2080 or visit the special education website at: <https://www.lowell.k12.ma.us/domain/92>

- For students identified for English learner services, teachers will contact their students to determine differentiated supports based on a student's English level. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Phala Chea, Coordinator of the English Language Education Program, at pchea@lowell.k12.ma.us or at 978-674-2109.
- School staff are surveying families to determine each family's access to the internet and devices needed to participate in online learning.
 - Chromebook distribution has almost reached completion at the high school.
 - Middle schools and K-8 schools have started engaging in the Chromebook distribution process which is anticipated to be completed at the end of this upcoming week. Soon thereafter, the district will transition to developing an assessment and distribution process for elementary school students.
 - These Chromebooks are on loan from the district and students will be responsible for returning them in the same condition in which they were received.
 - Schools are reaching out directly to students and families to determine each family's need and to schedule a time to pick up a Chromebook.

Report cards for elementary school students will be mailed at the end of this week, closely aligned with the regular schedule for elementary school report card distribution. Middle and High School report cards schedules are under review, and more information will be provided to students and families as we approach the regular timeline for secondary school report card distribution.

We expect that there will be many questions as we transition to this remote learning plan over the next week. Your child's school will be guiding you through this process and supporting your child's learning throughout the closure. Staff email addresses will be available on each school's website. You can also call your school's main phone line or the Family Resource Center at 978-674-4321 for further assistance. Or you can submit your question or request via the online form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe3Md1leOCZiQ2bi2enmSvUXvROSnPVDPTIs9nmldFPq3wI5Q/vie wform>

For the time being, there are extensive optional enrichment opportunities for our students located on the "at home learning" section of our website. And new enrichment packets will continue to be available on Wednesday and Thursday of each week.

We would also like to remind you to take advantage of our grab and go meal service. Starting on Monday, April 6, meal service will be extended to three additional locations, for a total of 11 sites during the weekdays when school is closed. In addition to picking up that day's lunch, you will also be able to take home breakfast for the next morning. On Fridays, we will have meals available to take home for the weekend as well. Please visit the district website for full details: <https://www.lowell.k12.ma.us/Page/3776>. Thanks to our partnership with Catie's Closet, we will also be able to provide some toiletries at different lunch sites. We will let you know when these supplies will be available at a site near you.

In closing, we ask that you continue to be well and stay safe. Our community will continue to rally together in the weeks ahead. During this tough time, as we always do, we will move forward together and support one another as one district, one community, one Lowell.

Sincerely,



Dr. Joel D. Boyd
Superintendent of Schools