

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

April 17, 2020

Dear Lowell Public Schools families,

We hope that you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy during this difficult time. We are about to enter our 6th week of school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Under normal circumstances, we would be preparing for April vacation - anticipating a family trip, watching the Boston Marathon, or just enjoying some rest and relaxation. Unfortunately, these are far from normal circumstances. Given the many disruptions our families have already faced during this situation, we made the decision to continue remote learning instruction next week to ensure much needed continuity of routines and patterns that many of you have established to support learning from home. The recommendation to continue remote learning through April vacation was made after consulting with many stakeholders, and the decision was approved at the April 15th School Committee meeting.

Monday, April 20 is Patriots' Day, which is a state holiday, and will still be observed as a "day off" from school. So all schools and district offices will be closed on Monday, and then remote learning will continue for the remainder of next week, Tuesday through Friday (April 21-24). Please note that meal service will continue at the regularly scheduled times and locations next week, even on Monday. A full list of locations and times for our meal service can be found on the district website.

On Monday, April 6, we shifted our educational program from **optional** at-home learning activities to a remote learning plan which includes **required** assignments that will be graded and recorded on school report cards. Our grading system will follow the recommendation of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to convert to a "credit/no credit" system, in place of the traditional 0-100 scale. We recognize, notably at the high school level, that by moving to a credit/no credit grading system, we will need to address issues of grade point average (GPA) calculation, which determines honor roll, eligibility for honors programs and certain scholarships, and eligibility to participate in student activities such as athletics, in addition to other school programs. We will continue to keep you updated as accommodations are made to address these GPA-related matters.

During this period of remote learning, we are asking students to engage in purposeful and productive learning for approximately half the length of a regular school day (3 to 3.5 hours). This will be achieved through a combination of teacher-led and independent student activities. Grade-level specific learning plans and recommendations are posted on the district website. Our schools have been reaching out to families during the remote learning implementation. If you have not been in contact with your school, please call your school directly and make sure your contact information is current.

We recognize that remote learning cannot replicate the traditional school day, but we remain committed to providing meaningful learning experiences to all LPS students in ways that should instill a great deal of pride throughout the Lowell community. The teachers, school leaders, and staff at each of our schools have my continued gratitude, as do the parents and family members who are supporting our students under these very trying circumstances.

Our school staff are continuing to reach out to families to determine each child's access to the internet and technological devices that are needed for participating in the remote learning program. Please

contact your school if you have questions relating to your remote learning needs such as access to a device or internet.

A few more items of note are listed below, and we will continue to provide you with updates as new information becomes available:

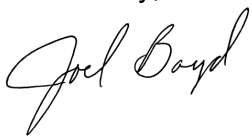
- DESE has announced that the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) testing requirement has been waived for the 2019-2020 school year. This means that our students in grades 3-10 will not take the state standardized tests which were scheduled to be administered this spring. Furthermore, the competency requirements for high school based on MCAS results may be modified or waived for this year.
- High school graduation is currently scheduled on the 2019-2020 school calendar for June 3. With the current ongoing situation, June 24 has been identified as a possible contingency date. Lowell High School leadership is also meeting with class officers to determine contingency dates and plans for school prom.
- Both registration periods for preschool and kindergarten have been postponed and the Family Resource Office is currently exploring ways to resume registration in as safe and efficient a manner as possible. We will provide you with more details once new registration dates have been finalized.

We will continue to be here for you during this difficult time and will continue to keep you updated throughout this situation. In the meantime, if you are in need of further assistance, you can call your school's main phone line or the Family Resource Center at 978-674-4321. You can also submit your question or request via the online form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe3Md1leOCZiQ2bi2enmSvUXvROSnPVDPTIs9nmldFPq3wl5Q/viewform>

Stay healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joel Boyd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Joel D. Boyd
Superintendent of Schools