



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

November 16, 2020

Dear Lowell Public Schools Families,

As we approach Thanksgiving, I wanted to thank you once again for your patience, flexibility and partnership - and also give you another update on where things stand in regard to when students will be able to return to our buildings.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 data here in Lowell - and across Massachusetts - continues to trend in the wrong direction. Back in the middle of October, when we made the announcement that we were shifting away from our initial learning plan to the plan currently in place, Lowell's average daily case rate per 100,000 residents was 16.4 and our "percent positivity rate" (the percentage of tests that are positive here in Lowell) was 3.29%. A month later, Lowell is still considered a high risk community, even by the Commonwealth's revised guidelines. Based on the latest numbers, our average daily case rate has surged to 42.1 and our percent positivity rate is now also significantly higher at 6.45%.

Based on the trends in the health data, and maintaining our commitment to prioritizing the safety of our students, staff and broader community, **we will be continuing with the current remote learning plan until at least January 4. Only students in our substantially separate special education classes will continue in-person learning.**

Please know that this decision was not made lightly. We understand how stressful every aspect of this year has been. While there is still enough time remaining in the calendar ahead of the winter break for the health data to shift back in a better direction, following consultation with the Lowell Board of Health, it appears this type of shift is highly unlikely. At this point, it is unrealistic that we would be able to return more students to in-person learning prior to January 4, and we wanted to provide you with as much advance notice as possible regarding these decisions.

We will continue to work with the Lowell Board of Health to monitor trends in the COVID-19 data and will provide you with any updates as we look at our learning plan going forward.

In the meantime, please remember to continue to follow the safety protocols that mitigate the spread of COVID-19 - social distancing, wearing a mask, and not gathering in large groups. The faster we can improve our COVID-19 numbers here in Lowell, the faster we can have more students in our school buildings.

Thank you again for your patience, flexibility and partnership throughout this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joel D. Boyd
Superintendent of Schools