



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

October 9, 2020

Dear Lowell Public Schools Community,

On Wednesday, we shared with you the latest numbers from the state's weekly COVID-19 dashboard report and how the number of COVID-19 cases here in Lowell continues to rise. According to this Wednesday's update, Lowell's average daily case rate per 100,000 residents is 16.3, up from 10.9 last week. This puts Lowell in the "red" or "high risk" category for the second consecutive week. Our "percent positivity rate" (the percentage of tests that are positive here in Lowell) also increased to 3.57%, up from 2.71% last week.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has advised school districts to continually review three consecutive weeks of data from the Commonwealth's Weekly COVID-19 Public Health Report. On October 8, 2020, the Lowell Board of Health provided us guidance that "three weeks in the red is a considerable threshold to support remote learning." Thus, we wanted to provide families with as much notice as possible that **if Lowell is again coded "red" next week, the district will shift to a full remote learning model beginning at the start of school on Monday, October 19, 2020.** We continue to study possible exceptions for smaller special programs and will communicate any potential exceptions next week after we review updated COVID-19 data.

Since the start of in-person learning, we have had only a few incidences of COVID-19 within our schools; however, this is a preventative health measure given the current levels of community spread of COVID-19 within Lowell. We appreciate the impact these difficult decisions have on students and families, so this letter is intended to provide as much notice as possible ahead of next week's data release. At this point, there is only two weeks of data coding Lowell as "red", so **in-person learning will continue next week as scheduled.** We will reach out to you next Thursday morning with further information after we review the latest data provided by the Health Department and the Commonwealth's Weekly COVID-19 Public Health Report.

Thank you for your continued partnership and flexibility as we work to keep our students, families, and staff safe during these difficult and uncertain times.

Sincerely,

John J. Leahy
Mayor

Dr. Joel D. Boyd
Superintendent of Schools