

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

May 29, 2020

Dear Lowell Public Schools Community,

I hope you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy. With Memorial Day Weekend in the rearview mirror and June 1 approaching, we are now in the homestretch of the school year. Without a doubt, this has been a school year like no other. It's been almost three months since schools closed across Massachusetts and we are still feeling the effects of COVID-19. And while the governor recently announced a phased reopening plan for the state, a return to "normalcy" seemingly remains months away.

From a school standpoint, although we have been unable to be in our buildings since the middle of March, our teachers, principals, coaches, social workers, support staff, cafeteria workers and community partners have rallied together to provide key services and create new methods to educate our students. I couldn't be more proud of our entire school community which has worked nonstop to make the most out of an unprecedented set of circumstances.

As a reminder, the last day of the 2019-2020 school year is Monday, June 15. It is important that between now and then we continue the momentum that has been established with our remote learning instruction and that we have a strong finish to this school year. Your child's school will be reaching out to you about when you can return any Lowell Public Schools-issued devices that were borrowed and regarding when your child can retrieve any belongings they may have been left behind.

During the summer, we are ready to offer a full range of summer programs. This includes our popular IDEA Camp - a hands-on, interactive opportunity for middle and high school students to explore topics in the field of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics). Right now we are planning on holding all summer programs remotely. However, there is the possibility for a transition to a limited in-person school environment later in the summer pending guidance from the state. Registration for IDEA Camp starts June 1, and more information can be found here: <https://www.lowell.k12.ma.us/ideacamp>. Our other summer offerings can be found on the district website: <https://www.lowell.k12.ma.us/summerprograms>

And as is the practice each year, meal service will continue through the summer and we will let you know once the locations and service times have been set.

I know everyone is wondering about what next school year will look like and if we will be able to return to our school buildings. Nothing can take the place of the daily, in-person interaction that occurs between teachers and students in a traditional school environment, and we would

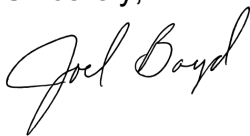
like nothing more than to have students back in the classroom with their teachers on the first day of school in September. However, as we have all become acutely aware, we can only do so if the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 continue to improve and the health risks for our community dissipate.

As we await further guidance from the Governor's Office and state health officials regarding the fall, we are engaging in a planning process which considers multiple options for September's school opening so we are fully prepared to provide our students with the best learning environment possible in any public health scenario. First, depending on what happens over the summer – there is a possibility of a full on-campus school opening with additional safety provisions put into place. A second, less desirable scenario we could find ourselves in - depending on the health data that emerges between now and September - is the need to implement a full remote learning option, improving and expanding upon what has taken place over the past several months. And a third possible scenario is a hybrid approach with a blend of on-campus and remote learning, which would allow us to maintain social distancing by way of smaller class sizes and staggered schedules. With so many unknowns remaining, planning for each and every one of these possibilities is the best path forward for all of our schools to be fully prepared at the start of the school year no matter the status of COVID-19.

As a district, we've learned so much since the start of this unfathomable closure, and none of us could ever have anticipated where we are now. This has certainly been a challenging end to the school year, but I want to thank all of our families, teachers, principals and staff who have all played an important role in making sure that we could still be there to deliver important services for our students and ensure all of our children have had valuable and rewarding learning opportunities from home. I've truly appreciated all of you who have reached out to share ideas, offer feedback and ask questions. Your partnership has been invaluable as we collectively navigated these uncharted waters.

I understand that the remaining uncertainty regarding the upcoming school year could add to the already high amounts of anxiety and stress that families are experiencing due to this pandemic. Please know that we will continue to update everyone with as many details as possible as they become available. In the meantime, you should have full confidence knowing the Lowell Public Schools is planning for any possible scenario and will be ready to provide our children with the high quality learning experiences that you expect and they deserve while also ensuring that our entire community remains safe and healthy now and into the future. We will continue to move forward together and support one another as one district, one community, one Lowell.

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