



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

December 22, 2020

Greetings Lowell Public Schools Community,

I hope this letter finds you and your family safe and well as we head into the holidays. With the winter break beginning at the conclusion of the school day on Wednesday, I wanted to share with you an update on the local COVID-19 data and how we are continuing to monitor that data as we consider potential dates for resuming in-person learning.

Every Thursday, the Commonwealth releases its community-based COVID-19 dashboard. The most recent report shows that the COVID-19 data here in Lowell - and across Massachusetts - continues to trend in the wrong direction. The average number of daily cases per 100,000 residents increased to 134.4 and the "percent positivity rate" (the percentage of tests that are positive here in Lowell) increased to 12.33%. Both of those numbers significantly exceed the Commonwealth's threshold to place Lowell in high risk status. By comparison, back in the middle of October, Lowell's average daily case rate was 16.4 and our percent positivity was 3.29%. In the middle of November, our average daily case rate was 42.1 and our percent positivity rate was 6.45%.

The health and safety of our students and staff have to be at the forefront of every decision we make, so **when school resumes after the winter vacation on Monday, January 4, 2021, all Lowell Public Schools students will continue in remote learning.**

Last night, after consultation with the Board of Health, the School Committee set the following target dates for returning students to in-person learning, provided the COVID-19 data can improve between now and then:

- February 1 - Students in substantially separate special education programs who were previously participating in our in-person learning model
- March 1 - Students, who are not in a substantially separate special education program, but were previously served in-person this school year as part of our original school reopening plan
- April 1 - Expansion of our in-person learning model to include additional students beyond those who were assigned to in-person learning at the beginning of this school year

These dates are not set in stone and we will continue to review the COVID-19 data and consult with the Board of Health. And we will be sure to provide you with any updates as we look at our learning plan going forward. Although we will not be physically returning to the classroom to start 2021, we will continue to offer our students a safe and meaningful educational experience virtually.

As always, please remember to continue to follow the safety protocols that mitigate the spread of COVID-19. This includes social distancing, wearing a mask, washing your hands, not gathering in large groups, and not sharing food, drinks or utensils. The faster we can improve our COVID-19 numbers here in Lowell, the faster we can have students return to our school buildings.

This has been a trying year for many different reasons, so I am forever grateful for your patience, flexibility and partnership throughout this unprecedented time.

Wishing you a happy and healthy new year,

Dr. Joel D. Boyd
Superintendent of Schools