



November 18, 2020

Dear Lawrence Public Schools families,

I am writing today with an important update on high needs learners, as well as an upcoming change to the daily school schedule for all Pre-K through grade 8 students.

As you know, last month we were forced to postpone the in-person return of high needs students due to escalating COVID-19 rates in the City of Lawrence. I stated at that time that any in-person learning would wait until at least November 30, with the possibility of additional delays if trends did not improve.

Just as we have seen an increase throughout our state and country, Lawrence's already high numbers have continued to rise, and remain a cause for great concern. In the most recent public health data, the city's average daily number of cases is over eight times higher than what is needed for a community to be classified as high risk, or "red." Another important indicator -- the percent of positive test results -- is nearly triple the standard for a red community.

As a result, all LPS high needs students will continue in the remote learning model until at least January. We will communicate with you again prior to the start of winter break (December 23) regarding a possible return.

I recognize how challenging these repeated delays are for families, and share your frustration and disappointment. Please know our goal remains to bring students back in person during the 2020-21 school year, beginning with our highest needs students as soon as possible.

However, this will only be possible if, as a community, we faithfully use the measures which we know reduce the spread of the virus. While the demands of work and other everyday realities can make it impossible to eliminate all risk, it is my hope as we enter the holiday season that we can collectively recommit to doing our very best. The fastest path to a return to our classrooms is still through social distancing, mask-wearing, and hand-washing.

Finally, I would also like to share some updates to remote learning time for all students in Pre-K through Grade 8, as we work to ensure the needs of every student are met in our current learning model. Starting November 30:

- All students in Pre-K and K will have the opportunity for live remote learning for the entirety of their morning (8:00am-10:30am) or afternoon (12:00pm-2:30pm) session.
- Student schedules in Grades 1-8 will extend by 30 minutes; the new student hours will be 8:00am-1:30pm and schools will be in touch with if/how this impacts your student's schedule.

As always, I thank you for your commitment to our schools and your child's education in this difficult year.

Cynthia Paris
Superintendent of Schools