



Lawrence Public Schools • Post Office Box 1498 • Lawrence, MA 01842

**Cynthia Paris**

*Superintendent of Schools*

October 9, 2020

Dear Lawrence Public Schools families,

I am writing today with an important update on our reopening process.

As you know, we have started the 2020-21 school year in full remote learning, with plans to bring our highest needs students back in person through a gradual, phased-in process beginning later this month. As you are also aware, our commitment to health and safety during the ongoing pandemic requires us to regularly reassess and adapt our planning.

Based on the increasing Lawrence COVID-19 rate seen in recent state public health data, it is with great disappointment that we are postponing the scheduled in-person return of high needs students.

All LPS high needs students will remain in the current remote learning model until at least November 30. Please note this date is the earliest any high needs students would begin in-person learning -- it is not a set return date, and additional delay is possible. We will closely monitor public health data, share frequent updates with you, and provide at least two weeks' advance notice for an in-person return.

This postponement most immediately impacts the roughly 400 students scheduled to return October 19 at our Phase 1 schools: Community Day Arlington and Arlington Middle School; Guilmette Elementary and Middle; South Lawrence East Elementary and Spark Academy; Parthum Elementary and Middle; the Wetherbee; the School for Exceptional Studies and SES Annex; the Lawrence High School campus (Lower and Upper schools, Abbott, ENLACE); and RISE.

We want more than anything to welcome students back to buildings and recognize the importance, especially for our high needs learners, of being together again with classmates and teachers. This difficult decision was made in collaboration with public health officials and our partners at the City of Lawrence, and we are confident it is in the best interest of all our families, students and staff at this time.

I also want to take this opportunity to recognize the incredible strides taken in remote learning since last spring, and the commitment to learning shown by our families with the start of this school year. Over 98 percent of our students logged on in the first week of school, and I witnessed countless examples of great teaching and learning in my travels around the district. I am prouder than ever of our community's dedication to making remote learning successful.

Please remember remote learning supports – including tutorials for learning apps and technology – are always available at [LawrencePublicSchools.org](http://LawrencePublicSchools.org) or by contacting your school, which has a dedicated family technology liaison eager to help.

Thank you once again for your support of our schools, and for your patience and understanding as we continue to navigate the many challenges presented by the pandemic. We will continue to provide updates as we have them.

Thank you.

Cynthia Paris

Superintendent of Schools