

LYNN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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*Patrick A. Tutwiler, PhD
Superintendent of Schools*

Superintendent's Report July 27, 2020

Planning for reopening continues in earnest. Inasmuch as collaboration has been a hallmark of district planning in the recent past (as well as a district core value), embracing the input/feedback of parents/guardians, students, and staff remains an integral factor in our planning. In addition to survey data, there have been two virtual town halls for staff and there are two virtual town halls planned for families. E-mail addresses have been created to provide a platform for the expression of concerns and sharing of ideas for both families and staff. I am closely monitoring those addresses. Further, the meeting held on July 23, 2020 marks the fourth for the Communications and Governance advisory committee, a diverse group of students, Lynn Public Schools (LPS) staff, elected officials, and community partners. In total, the LPS reopening plan will be one rich with input from a diverse group of stakeholders.

Although the planning discussions began as early as April, we began planning according to specific and strict guidelines on June 25th. Since then, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has released guidance in piecemeal fashion between July 10th and July 24th on six critical areas:

- Special Education
- Facilities
- Transportation
- Response Protocols for Scenarios in Schools
- Remote Learning
- Courses Requiring Additional Safety Consideration

Each one of these guidance documents provides a high level of detail relative to expectations and requirements all schools must follow this fall. One can only assume that weeks went into research leveraging the latest and best information on how to safely, but substantively educate our students. Equally so, the amount of time to interpret the guidance and determine how best to proceed in LPS, given resources and capacity, can best be described in terms of weeks, not days. Here, I seek only to underscore the scope of the challenge, one that they believe we will successfully meet. Yet, it takes time.

Among the many elements members of our community have had plenty of practice in recent months, patience ranks near the top. Whether waiting to gain entry to the grocery store or the

slower arrival of ordered parcels, waiting is a reality we encounter now far more frequently than in the past. Given the importance of education in this community, I completely understand the anticipation of a plan release and the frustration among some who are eager for details. We have taken significant steps forward. This includes, but it not limited to:

- Completion of space analysis in all schools to build a framework and plan for physical distancing according to the guidelines.
- First round of purchase of personal protective equipment, including but not limited to masks, hand sanitizer, and face shields.
- Completion of the first round of air quality and ventilation analysis in all schools.
- Movement toward a stronger ability to provide robust learning and connection leveraging technology through the purchase of devices and Schoology, our new Learning Management System.
- Frameworks for in-person and hybrid learning at all levels.

There is still much to do. We are well on our way in collaborative fashion. While there continues to be factors outside of our control that alter timelines and force shifts to the order of operations, we will still submit a non-binding framework for a plan July 31st and a more substantive plan in early August. Kicking off with virtual town halls for our families on August 6th and 10th which will be followed by regular communication (at least once weekly) and collaboration with our families up the first day of school and beyond as the situation necessitates.

Respectfully,

Patrick Tutwiler, PhD