



Dear Lawrence Public Schools Families,

First and foremost, I hope that you are all safe and well. This has obviously been a trying time for learning communities across our country, with everyone – students, families and educators – taking on new roles and challenges to ensure teaching and learning continue.

Today I want to briefly summarize the key steps LPS has taken during this closure, as well as share what you can expect now and in the weeks ahead.

### **Early Steps**

Since the first day of closure on March 16 there have been numerous developments – including Gov. Baker’s decision to extend closing of all state schools through at least May 4 – and we moved quickly to prepare for a prolonged absence.

- Our immediate priority was ensuring students had access to meals. Starting immediately after closure and continuing until further notice, all Lawrence children ages 1-18 can get grab 'n go breakfast and lunch from 11-1 at the Arlington, Guilmette, Frost, Parthum, LHS campus and Salvation Army (250 Haverhill Street).
- The first week of closure we launched extensive new resources at [LawrencePublicSchools.org](http://LawrencePublicSchools.org). This includes a comprehensive [LPS Learning at Home](#) site organized by grade and subject, with access to the same learning apps students use in school. There are also regularly updated answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about this closure and its educational impacts.
- The week of March 23 we distributed LPS technology to all families who wanted a device, for free and to keep. We have now issued virtually every device in our possession, to more than 10,000 LPS families. Thank you again to Mayor Rivera for making this possible by committing to replacing this technology in our schools.

### **LPS Remote Learning**

With the above work done, we were prepared to develop our more structured remote learning plan when the state Department of Education recently issued its guidelines. That plan, based on those guidelines, is in place this week. I would like to highlight some important elements:

- It cannot and does not replicate the regular school day, but aims to encourage engagement with each other and the learning material. Students will have daily, regularly scheduled opportunities to connect with teachers and classmates.
- Principals, teachers and support staff have regular office hours and remain available to you for questions or concerns, and will communicate these details to families and students directly. As always, do not hesitate to reach out to them.

- Practices will vary by grade, school and classroom, with every attempt made to accommodate students' respective needs. Schools and programs will contact students and families directly to share their unique or specific details.
- The goal during this period of remote learning is to engage students in meaningful, productive learning for roughly half the length of a regular school day. The emphasis will primarily be on reinforcing and deepening skills already taught this year.
- Remote learning does not mean screen time only! While technology is an important aspect and video or audio calls will play a key role, learning should also continue to include hands-on and "real world" assignments or projects, physical activity and enrichment.
- Work will not be graded and emphasis will be on feedback and student growth. Some grades and students will be expected to participate, to the greatest extent possible, for class credit. We recognize concerns about equitable access to technology and the internet and encourage any family with concerns to contact their school.

We know there are still many questions about this evolving situation and what it means for students, and will continue sharing answers as they become available. Please visit the websites above frequently and follow us on Facebook ([Lawrence Public Schools](#)), Twitter ([@LPS\\_Education](#)) and Instagram ([@lps4families](#)).

Lastly, as both an educator and public school parent, I appreciate what this effort is requiring from all involved, and would like to acknowledge everyone's commitment to education.

This includes our LPS staff: teachers, custodians, nurses, cafeteria workers, safety officers, clerks, paraprofessionals, school leaders and many more. They did extraordinary work under difficult, ever-changing circumstances – and remain hard at work now – to re-invent what school must be during this unprecedented time.

It also of course means you – our students and families – maintaining school as a priority despite unimaginable disruption to personal and professional lives. All of us at Lawrence Public Schools are proud to be facing this challenge with you.

Cynthia Paris



Superintendent of Schools