



MALDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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To the Malden Public School Community:

At the outset, I want to start this letter the way that I ended my last community update - thanking you for your partnership, continued patience, and understanding as we do our best to work through this unprecedented challenge. As we continue to develop our remote learning plan and negotiate and finalize the details with the Malden Education Association, we again maintain that our first priority is and always will be the safety of our community. To that end, the Malden School Committee recently voted to begin the school year with remote learning. As we begin our school year remotely, we will continue to monitor local, state, and national data and research as we plan what our stages of returning to learning will look like during the upcoming school year. At this time, we know that there are still many questions, and we wanted to take this opportunity to share some of our thinking around meeting the needs of our student population.

COMMITMENTS GUIDING OUR WORK

Health and Safety (Physical, Social, and Emotional)

The district continues to actively prepare for a safe return to learning. We are guided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and our Board of Health on the steps needed to ensure the health and safety of all students, staff, and families. We have ordered all appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff - from gowns and gloves to masks and face shields, we have a full complement of PPE supplies at the ready. In addition, the district has secured cleaning and sanitizing supplies from hand sanitizers to cleaning solvents for the building. Our custodians have been working since the initial shutdown on March 13th, sanitizing every building including every classroom, every work space, every bathroom, and every common area. Their work continues today and will not stop.

Commitment to ALL Learners

For our students that will be beginning the year remotely, we are working hard as a district to ensure that the structure and feeling of the remote school day is as rigorous and interactive as an in-person school day. Through this district-designed and district-run program, students engage in synchronous and asynchronous learning daily under the supervision of a highly qualified Malden Public Schools teacher(s). The curriculum and lessons are aligned to grade-level state learning frameworks. Students will be provided with a Chromebook and Internet access, as needed.

Learning in this format, as in the other models, will be aligned to grade-level instruction in all content areas included in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. In this fully remote

model, Google Classroom will continue to be utilized as the main platform for learning and grading and the remote learning format will mirror the existing grading policies and procedures of the district. Educators will use the time reserved for asynchronous activities to check in with families, individual students, and/or small groups. In addition, at the beginning of the school year, building principals will inform families of the communication structures within their schools that will serve to ensure regular, two-way communication. District communication will be included on the website (with the ability to translate into languages other than English), social media, and automated calls home.

Also, as Malden returns to school in a remote learning mode it is critical to remember our commitment to our most high-needs students. *As outlined in the School Committee meeting on August 6, we will prioritize the option of an in-person return of our substantially separate students to receive the services that are needed for their education. However, the option to remain remote will still exist for any of these families who choose to participate remotely.*

Our high needs students can truly benefit from in-person skilled educators who are aware of the unique needs of their students. Allowing them the opportunity to take part in onsite learning can allow additional growth and success for those students who thrive in a learning environment with repetitive instruction in multiple modalities.

Our parents have been patient, supportive and innovative with their students throughout the spring. However, parents, although great educators, can't be expected to keep up that rigor with the multiple responsibilities of a parent (work, home, and family.) It's not reasonable to expect them to not at least have the option for in-person services and learning. Given the decision of the Malden School Committee to have most of our students remote, makes this the right time to bring our high needs students back. They will be in their own classrooms of less than eight to nine students and have ample room to be six feet apart. They will have the use of the entire school to stay physically distanced, be provided access to good air flow and have movement throughout their day. Less students will mean they will have less exposure to other air borne illnesses than if the school were filled. Staff will have an easier time getting them from their buses and family transportation. And, they will have access to facilities without concern that other students happen to be in the bathrooms.

Our staff will have access to a full complement of personal protection equipment (PPE). We have smocks, gowns, gloves, masks, and shields already on site. We can order desktop barriers that can be on site before school. With a nurse on site and only a small group of children on site, we can have expedient response time should a child or staff member become ill.

There are many more details that need to be worked out, but in the meantime, at least offering these services we believe is the right thing to do for our more high-need learners.

As always, we are proud to consider our families partners in this process and look forward to working with you to make sure the experience for our students is the best that it can be.

Stay safe,

John Oteri