

June 26, 2020

Dear Methuen Families:

I hope this email finds you well and enjoying the summer weather. Governor Baker's office and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released their initial guidance about reopening schools this fall. We applaud the level of thought and care that went into the development of this guidance, and share its goal of the safe return of as many students as possible to in-person school settings in order to best meet students' academic, social, and emotional needs.

As you are aware, we will conduct our district planning for the various models in the guidance as it applies to Methuen Public Schools in the coming weeks. We acknowledge that these initial guidelines do not address every topic and we have been told that there will be additional guidance coming from DESE throughout the summer as noted on page 16 of the Initial Guidance document. The full document can be found at [DESE Initial Fall Reopening Guidelines](#), but here are some key components:

- Current medical research supports a safe in-person return to school - with preventive measures in place - as infection and transmission rates are lower for children than adults.
- Preventive measures include masks/face coverings, physical distancing, handwashing, and cleaning frequently touched surfaces.
- Masks/face coverings will be required for all students in Grade 2 and above and for all adults; they are recommended for students in Grade 1 and below.
- Based upon current medical research, and in conjunction with other preventive measures, a minimum physical distance of three feet has been established.

Districts will need to develop three separate plans - one for return to full in-person instruction with safety requirements, one for full remote learning, and one for hybrid learning that combines in-person and remote learning. Based upon the current medical situation, the expectation today is that students will return to full in-person instruction in September; however, that is subject to change based upon how the medical situation develops.

We acknowledge that there are likely to be more questions than answers at this time, and we will continue to communicate with you in the coming weeks. We also encourage you to read the full document, and if you have questions or comments to please send them to our dedicated email address by Friday, July 3rd so our reopening team can read them as we begin planning: reopeningschools@methuen.k12.ma.us. We have over 2200 responses to the parent survey and have begun analyzing the responses to use for our planning work as well so thank you to everyone who filled out that survey!

As always, thank you for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,

Brandi Kwong

Superintendent

Methuen Public Schools