



Office of the Superintendent

Dr. Brenda Cassellius, Superintendent
Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
Roxbury, Massachusetts 02119

October 7, 2020

Dear Boston Public Schools Community:

Throughout our planning for the fall, Mayor Walsh and I have remained firmly committed to making decisions that are based in science and data and that keep the health, safety, and well-being of our students, families, teachers, staff, and the entire community at the center.

The safe, responsible phase-in schedule for the hybrid model was developed to allow BPS and public health officials the ability to track data, follow trends, and proceed with or pause the plan accordingly. In an update released this morning, we received new public health data that has prompted us to pause our current planning.

The Mayor announced that the citywide seven-day COVID-19 positivity rate has increased to 4.1%. That number is slightly higher than the 4% threshold that was recommended by public health officials in our agreement with the Boston Teachers Union as a marker for a return to all-remote learning. With that in mind, we have decided to delay the next phase of our safe return to schools, originally scheduled to start no sooner than October 15. The delay means that students who were scheduled to start school no sooner than October 15 will be shifted to start no sooner than October 22. We will review all data over the next week and make further decisions based on what we learn.

BPS remains committed to respecting family choice and prioritizing our students with the highest needs for in-person learning. After consultation with DESE, city and state public health officials, and in light of the limited number of students currently in schools, all students who have returned to BPS school buildings over the past week, or have been previously identified as high needs and are eligible to return to school buildings, will continue to have the option to learn in-person and access instruction and support from their educators. As always, families have the option to keep their children home to participate in remote learning with their class.

This has been a difficult time for all of us. We knew going into this school year that we needed to be flexible with our planning. Our goal has been to create opportunities for the in-person learning and services that students and families have requested and that we know many students need in order to thrive socially and academically - in a manner that is safe for them and our staff. BPS continues to review public health metrics, trends, and guidance, and will provide you with any update to our plans as soon as they develop.



Thank you for your grace, patience and flexibility. We remain committed to providing our students with an excellent and equitable education, with their health and safety our top priority.

Stay safe and healthy.



Dr. Brenda Cassellius
Superintendent

The City of Boston has increased testing efforts and outreach to impacted neighborhoods. More information about COVID-19, including testing sites and community resources, is available boston.gov/coronavirus. For more information about fall reopening, technology resources and free meal sites, visit bostonpublicschools.org/reopening.