



HINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

220 Central Street • Hingham, Massachusetts 02043

781-741-1500 VOICE • 781-749-7457 FAX

www.hinghamschools.com

August 14, 2020

Dear HPS Community,

Under normal circumstances, many of us would be taking advantage of these last few weeks of August by enjoying a late summer vacation with family, preparing for fall sports, or perhaps spending our time shopping for the perfect opening day outfit. But, we know that current circumstances are far from normal and we are doing our best to manage our fears, concerns, and expectations about what the future holds for us.

Over the course of the summer, the reopening of schools became one of the most heavily debated and divisive issues that many of us have seen in recent memory. If we listen to each other, we can rise above the turmoil. Students, staff, and schools are an essential part of this community and there is no question that the loss of time directly with students has been costly. Together, we have fought the COVID-19 crisis and we have achieved great success in flattening the curve of transmission. As a community, I believe that our hard work and low transmission rate has earned us the right to reopen schools in a safe and responsible manner. However, this can only be possible if we share a common goal that prioritizes the safety of all students, staff, and families.

Our team of administrators and educators have been working hard to address the details that must be determined before schools can reopen. We are listening to your feedback and we are considering every possible option. This is a daunting task, but we are dedicated to doing everything we can to safely reopen Hingham Public Schools. We sincerely appreciate your input, patience, and support as we work through the myriad of issues that need to be addressed before the first day of school.

Following is an update of progress with regard to school reopening.

- Thank you to all who completed the School Reopening Survey, sent by building principals last Friday, August 7th. Principals will be reaching out to families who have not yet responded to the survey as this data is essential to our planning. Your participation is essential and will allow principals to finalize cohorts, bus schedules, and class assignments. If you have questions, comments, or concerns about the survey, please contact your school administrator as soon as possible.

- Earlier this week, Governor Baker provided a new color coding system for assessing COVID risk as determined by the average daily case rate in a city or town over a two week span. While this system provides a helpful benchmark, the hyperlocal data is fluid and nuanced, so I continue to be in contact with the Hingham Board of Health multiple times per week to stay apprised of local conditions. The data gives us reason to be optimistic, but we must remain vigilant and ready to respond rapidly should conditions change.
- The HPS Food Services department has prepared a survey to determine how they can best serve families once school is underway. If you plan to take advantage of the school lunch program, please complete the [attached survey](#).

Until next time,

Paul Austin, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools