



WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Excellence, Shaping the Future

EMILY J. PARKS
Superintendent of Schools

UPDATE FOR FAMILIES

July 28, 2020

Dear WPS Families:

I am writing to provide you with some information and updates about our planning for the 2020-2021 school year. We are working as quickly as we can to provide clarity for families about how school will function in the fall so that you can make necessary plans.

The Westwood School Committee met last week to discuss fall reopening plans, frame some of the complexities that we are working through, and share potential models. If you did not have the opportunity to watch the meeting, you can view a video of the meeting on the [Westwood Media Center](#) website.

We have compiled the questions that were posed at last week's parent forums and that we have received via email (wpsreopening@westwood.k12.ma.us) into an [FAQ document](#). Though some questions do not yet have definitive answers, we have tried to capture our current thinking in this document. Please know that we are reading and digesting all of the emails that we are receiving even if we cannot respond to each one individually.

Next steps:

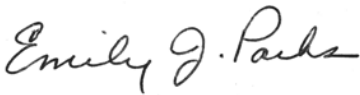
- Our working groups (Teaching and Learning, Health and Safety, Operations, and Human Resources) are finishing their committee work this week in preparation for submitting a preliminary plan to the state by July 31st. Districts are required to provide a plan for each of three potential models: fully in-person, hybrid, and fully remote.
- Later this week, we will be sending another questionnaire to families to gather information we need to plan for transportation, food service, and other issues. I will be asking you to respond to the questionnaire by Monday, August 3rd. Similar to the prior survey, your responses are not binding; we just need to get a sense of numbers and your thinking for planning purposes.
- By next Tuesday, principals will be hosting virtual parent chats for each building during which they will talk about the models and answer questions. In addition, we will hold a virtual parent forum with SEPAC to focus specifically on questions related to special education next week. Principals will communicate directly with families with the dates and times for these forums.
- On Thursday, August 6th, the Westwood School Committee will be meeting. At that time, they will discuss the models for reopening and take a vote to determine which model the district will implement in the fall. They may also revise the school calendar. By that time, we should have a draft plan to share with the community.

- Our final plan is due to the state by August 10th.
- Following the school committee vote and production of the final plan, I will send a final survey to families that will include questions about your plans for the fall, including if you intend to opt for a fully remote plan for your student even if the district model includes in-person instruction. By that time, we will be able to describe what the "remote option" model will be. Families will have until August 14th to make this decision.

You may have seen reports in the media that the Commissioner of Education has reduced the required number of school days from 180 to 170 so that districts can spend several days prior to students' arrival training teachers on new protocols, providing professional development, and preparing for teaching in new models. At this point, the Commissioner has said that instruction for students must start no later than September 16th. While I do not have a definitive start date for Westwood students at this moment, it is safe to assume that the first day of school for students will be pushed until after Labor Day and perhaps into the following week. For fall athletes, the MIAA has already announced that if fall sports do happen, the season (including practices) will not start prior to September 14th. I realize that all of this is still uncertain, but I wanted to at least give you the parameters that I am able to provide right now.

Please be on the lookout for a parent questionnaire later this week. Thank you for your continued input and engagement in this process. As always, we appreciate the support and trust of the community as we navigate a complicated situation and make very important decisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily J. Parks".

Emily J. Parks
Superintendent