



# Amesbury Public Schools

## *Office of the Superintendent of Schools*

July 30, 2020

Dear Families,

I am writing with an update on our planning process for the start of the new school year. Our planning process continues to be guided by a vigilant monitoring of public health data in Massachusetts, and we are encouraged that indicators about the virus continue to move in the right direction. The Commonwealth's careful and disciplined approach has enabled our state gradually to begin reopening, in-part because of strong compliance with health and safety precautions. The question now on all of our minds is; how do we apply those lessons learned to begin to safely reopen our public schools.

As you may have heard, the Massachusetts Department of Education has directed districts to submit by July 31, 2020, a preliminary plan that addresses the feasibility of three options for serving students at the start of the school year. Those options include: a full return to daily, in-person attendance, a hybrid plan combining in-school learning with some remote learning, and a 100% remote learning program. Each district's final plan, approved by the School Committee, is due to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) by August 10.

While our educators and families worked incredibly hard last spring to implement remote learning, we know that approach presented challenges. When out of school, our students may have lacked access to all of the academic, mental, and physical supports that help ensure their social-emotional well-being, particularly in navigating the effects of trauma during these tremendously challenging times. Of course, we know that under normal circumstances, students would be best served in schools every day, interacting with their peers and engaged in live classroom learning.

We recognize that the circumstances of every family and staff member are different, and that no plan ultimately will satisfy everyone in our community. But rest assured that we are working diligently to explore every option available to us, that we remain guided by the science to keep our students and staff safe and healthy, and that we will be prepared to make adjustments along the way if the public health conditions or other variables change over time. As we move closer to a final plan, we welcome input and feedback from all of our stakeholders. Our principals have school based re-opening teams and we invite you to share your questions, comments, and ideas to help inform and strengthen our plans.

We will also continue to post updates on our website.

I am confident that we can prioritize both safety and learning as we prepare for the start of a successful school year. Thank you for your patience and cooperation in these difficult times.

Be Well,

Jared Fulgoni