

**MISSION:** To provide opportunities and pathways in a safe, supportive and technology-rich environment that engage, challenge and inspire students to achieve college and career readiness and to contribute to our 21<sup>st</sup> century community.

JOHN J. ROBIDOUX  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

## SWANSEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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ELIZABETH A. WHITE  
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March 12, 2021

Dear Swansea Public Schools Community,

This school year has been a difficult one, to say the least. I am proud of our educators that have stepped up to provide ongoing teaching and learning that looks and feels vastly different than a 'typical' school year. Our administrators have worked tirelessly to address ongoing guidance and mandates in order for our students to access education in the best way possible. Parents and students have worked diligently to ensure that the educational process has gone as smoothly as possible. I am humbled that our community has worked collaboratively to overcome the challenges that we have faced over the past year.

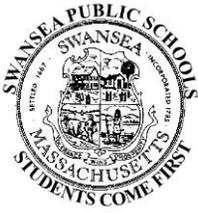
The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has sent guidance and mandates in an ongoing way that we have had to address. Most recently, Commissioner Riley has mandated the return of **K-5 students** to fully in-person beginning on **Monday, April 5**. On March 9, the commissioner released further mandates for **grades 6-8** which indicate a return to fully in-person learning by April 28. However, we feel it is prudent to begin the in-person learning for the junior high students on **Monday, April 26**, as that is a more natural start date. Commissioner Riley has yet to outline the return dates for high school students, so we have determined that **grades 9-12** will return on **Monday, April 12**, which is the beginning of term 4.

It is important to share that having the students return to school in a fully in-person capacity at this juncture will have significant logistical impacts within the school buildings, especially within the junior high school. Many non-traditional spaces, such as the gymnasium and cafeteria will need to be utilized for classrooms. Lunchtime, as well as, arrival and dismissal will look vastly different. During unmasked times, (i.e. lunch, snack, mask breaks) students still need to adhere to the six foot guidance, which will cause challenges throughout the day. Together we will, however, ensure the students will be educated as safely as possible, with the current health and safety guidelines in place, and will finish the school year on a positive note.

A planning questionnaire went out to parents of K-5 and a similar questionnaire will be sent out for the secondary level. It is important that every parent fills out the form for each child so that we can plan accordingly. If having your child return to a fully in-person model at this point is not what you prefer, you may choose to have your child attend in a fully remote capacity for the balance of this school year. Homeschooling is also an option, but that will require a written request to me for approval, followed by dis-enrolling your child from Swansea Public Schools.

The content of all Swansea school publications is available upon request in languages other than English.

The Swansea Public Schools are committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public. Swansea Public Schools prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, age, national origin, religion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, or veteran status.



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Please plan to have your child return their borrowed chrome book within the first week they return to fully in-person learning. For students who are being educated in a fully remote capacity, the borrowed chrome books will be collected by the end of the school year, with dates and times to be determined.

As a reminder, the updated transportation guidance states that students can resume riding the buses at regular capacity but are still required to wear masks, have windows open, and utilize hand sanitizer in order to reduce risk of transmission.

The updated guidelines require **all** students, with the exception of those with clear medical documentation, to wear masks throughout the day. Gators are still prohibited and, as outlined in recent health guidelines, masks that have vents built-in are now also prohibited. Any student who refuses to wear a mask (unless excused medically or by a disability) will not be allowed to attend school in-person.

I appreciate the collaboration and patience throughout this school year as it certainly has been anything but traditional. I am hopeful that the remaining weeks of school will lend some semblance of 'normalcy' in preparation for the return to school in the fall.

Stay safe and be well. As always, please contact me directly with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

John J. Robidoux  
Superintendent of Schools