

REVERE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

To our community,

Revere educators want nothing more than to be back in the classroom with our students. We also recognize that our community has been one of the hardest hit in the state with COVID-19 and that too many in our community are still suffering. After examining the practical implications of what our schools would look like if we were to return to in-person or use a hybrid model, members of the Revere Teachers Association recommend a fully remote model of learning to start the school year and adopt a phased-in reopening of our public schools.

We recognize how difficult this decision is for everyone. Children are feeling isolated and miss the social aspect of attending school. Educators, students, and families are frustrated by the limitations of remote learning; learning is built on personal relationships and online options do not replicate the classroom environment. We also acknowledge access to technology and childcare is inequitable across our district. Parents and caretakers are extremely stressed by all of this uncertainty and change, including the many working families and essential workers who reside in Revere and remain vulnerable to the virus.

Once we look at the realities of schools employing all of the necessary guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19, it becomes clear that much of what we all want and love about school will be missing. Classrooms will be bare and sparse. Students will be physically separated. The communal aspect of learning will be severely limited. Student safety and educational equity will be even harder to achieve in poorly ventilated buildings without the testing and tracing capabilities to guarantee the safety of every child.

The costs of in-person learning will be tremendous while still presenting an unacceptable degree of risk for the entire community. It is almost certain that even if schools reopen, instances will arise triggering a full return to remote learning, especially with cases already on the rise again in Revere.

Are the costs and risks to our students and staff worth it? The RTA says no.

Instead, the RTA wants to begin planning now for the best possible remote learning model, at least to begin the school year.

This plan must take into account the social and emotional needs of students as well as their academic needs. The district should begin identifying the technology needs of students and educators. It should continue to provide food security and social services to our most vulnerable students and families.

The RTA sees a robust and vital role for our paraprofessionals to ensure that students are engaged and on track.



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By focusing on health and safety, a commitment to a fully remote school reopening will provide stability for our students allowing for families and caregivers to plan accordingly.

This is by no means ideal or desirable. The RTA embraces the reopening plan put forth by the Massachusetts Teachers Association, American Federation of Teachers-Massachusetts and the Boston Teachers Union, that advocates a phased-in reopening that takes into account mitigating health risks and requiring the state to pay for the necessary health and safety costs.

The RTA remains hopeful that a vaccine for COVID-19 or effective treatments will become available soon. Until that time, our most prudent path is to establish health and safety benchmarks and stick to remote learning until those benchmarks are met. We need to focus on making sure that the remote learning experience is as enriching and supportive as possible. The difference between now and the spring semester when schools chaotically moved to a remote setting is that we now have time to plan and prepare. Hearing from educators, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has already agreed to a 10-day preparation period for educators.

Rather than waste time on creating multiple plans, let's come together with a firm vision and work together to make it as successful as possible. It is important for us to remember that the only acceptable death count for our school community is ZERO. The stakes have never been higher.

On behalf of the Revere Teachers Association:

Gina Garro, President

Charlene Logue, 1st Vice President

Chris Kingston, 2nd Vice President

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