

## AUBURN PUBLIC SCHOOLS COVID UPDATE

July 14, 2020

Good Afternoon, All,

The purpose of this communication is to provide an update regarding where we are with a recommendation to the School Committee for a return to school in September. I am providing this information with the intention of alleviating some anxiety, as well as answer questions, that you have regarding where we are in the return to school process. As mentioned in my message to you a couple weeks ago, what school may look like in the fall continues to be a very fluid situation.

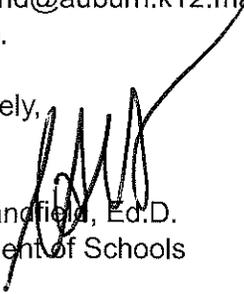
I want to reiterate that the overarching principle guiding the district's work on how to return to school is how it can be done in the safest manner possible for all. Unequivocally, we desire to return to normalcy within the Auburn Public Schools, but it has to be done in a thoughtful and cautious manner to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone within our school community. In addition, any return to school plan must be mindful of the potential impacts on parents' and caregivers' work needs and possible childcare issues. We have been tasked with doing the impossible, which is to create a perfect solution to a very complex problem in which there is no good or right answer.

We are closing in on bringing a recommendation forward to the School Committee on July 22nd or July 29th. It depends on how quickly we move forward in determining what academic model we feel is most appropriate given the investigation and review of information gathered over the last several months, as well as discussions with the Return to School team, Auburn Education Association, related school staff, school administrators, state and local DPH, police and fire officials, and DESE. Once an academic model is brought forward to the School Committee and approved, a full return to school report will be brought forward to the School Committee for approval by mid-August.

Currently, there are still a number of "unknowns" as of the date of this letter. This list includes, but is not limited to, the following: (a) final budget numbers for this fiscal year, (b) transportation guidance, (c) how athletics/physical education/music will be handled, (d) MTA/DESE negotiations, (e) and the trajectory of the COVID virus six weeks from now. Things could change in a moment's notice, and we all have to be prepared to pivot quickly should it be necessary.

I want to emphasize, again, we share your concerns and are actively working to devise a plan to educate our children that is well contemplated with safety being the highest priority, while at the same time, provides for your needs as parents and caregivers to the extent practicable. If you have questions, you are welcome to contact me at [chandfield@auburn.k12.ma.us](mailto:chandfield@auburn.k12.ma.us), Dr. Elizabeth Chamberland, Assistant Superintendent, at [echamberland@auburn.k12.ma.us](mailto:echamberland@auburn.k12.ma.us), or your building principal(s). I will be back in touch with you in the next week or two.

Most Sincerely,

  
Casey J. Handfield, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools