



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

prepared & empowered

April 8, 2020

Dear Portland Public Schools families,

I am writing to inform you that, based on a recommendation yesterday evening by Maine Education Commissioner Pender Makin, the Portland Public Schools will continue to deliver learning remotely throughout the rest of the 2019-2020 school year. The commissioner's decision that Maine school districts continue with remote learning is supported by the governor. It is based on guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that recommends an 8- to 20-week timeframe for avoiding large group/in-person instruction once there is evidence of community transmission of COVID-19.

This is a difficult decision for us. I acknowledge the difficulties that extending remote learning to the end of the school year now poses for everyone in the Portland Public Schools community. It means you will have to continue to cope with childcare and managing school expectations while grappling with the other financial and personal impacts of this crisis. However, the safety of everyone in the PPS community is our prime concern.

We are already working on plans regarding the end of the school year, including issues such as grading and developing alternative ways to redesign graduation and other rituals to provide both continuity and closure. We will be communicating with everyone about those before our scheduled spring break begins on Friday, April 17. We are maintaining spring break because we believe it's important that families and staff get a respite from our initial intense push to move the district to remote learning. Then we'll all get back to work to close out the year.

Although there will be no classes during the break, meals for students provided from 10-12 on weekdays at our nine school sites will continue during that time, with the exception of the Patriot's Day holiday, Monday, April 20. Learn more about [food resources](#) for students and families.

When we started the 2019-2020 school year, no one could have guessed that we would end the year physically separated from one another, learning remotely. I continue to be so proud and impressed with how everyone in the Portland Public Schools – staff, students and families – is doing their best to not only cope with our new learning reality but also to make it as successful as it can be. Thank you all!

Please continue to practice physical distancing and stay safe. I will be communicating again soon.

Sincerely,

Xavier Botana
Superintendent