

Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Julie Colello Nichols, Director

LISBON SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

November 13, 2020

Dear Lisbon families,

As part of our reopening plan, we said we would communicate with you prior to the need for shifts in learning models. As of November 13th, we have completed 47 days of in-person learning! We are very proud of our students, staff and administration for the successful reopening of the school year. As we shared during our last School Committee meeting, the number of positive cases of COVID-19 in surrounding communities has continued to rise and we are anticipating a change in our county's health designation to move from *green* to *yellow*. Categorization as "*yellow*" suggests that that Androscoggin County has an elevated risk of COVID-19 spread and that schools may consider hybrid instructional models as a way to reduce the number of people in schools and classrooms at any one time. As of yesterday, Lisbon has had a total of 25 confirmed cases and Lisbon Falls has a total of 23. This is an increase of new cases totaling 14 in Lisbon and 7 in Lisbon Falls since September 30, 2020.

If the Governor does in fact move our county to the yellow designation, your school board will meet with the superintendent and myself to make a determination of any changes to Lisbon's Instructional model. Although our intent is to provide communications and updates to families in a timely manner, we hope that you will have some patience and understanding as some decisions/changes will need to be made on short notice. We do know that the anticipated change in color status may have an affect on our school's participation in sports competitions. High school Athletic Directors will be working with local school departments and state organizations to determine what that will look like and further communication will be shared as plans are made. We have spoken with LRTC and confirmed that any status change will not affect the 4 day a week model they provide and students would still attend LRTC programming in their original schedule.

The remainder of this letter is intended to clarify what Distance Learning Model means and when we might need to use those models, and to provide a link to the Lisbon Family and Student Distance Learning Handbook which provides expectations, student daily schedules and meal distribution information. I want to also point out that Special Education students may have a schedule different than that of what is outlined in the handbook, and the special education teachers will clarify any different schedules specifically with families.

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A Distance Learning Model refers to any time that a classroom needs to access learning outside of the face-to-face model. This includes anytime that our district should have to use Hybrid or fully Remote options. In a hybrid model, 2 days a week are work-from-home days, each of which follow an in-person learning day. In this model, there are 4 school days each week. During the in-person learning day, teachers will provide direct instruction and assign work in the grade level digital platform or provide paper take home packets that would then be completed on the following day at home. In a fully remote model, students are learning from their teacher through the computer and online classrooms 4 days a week, Monday through Thursday, with Friday serving as an extension and SEL learning day and provides the opportunity for teachers to meet with students who are needing additional assistance and to meet with their colleagues for lesson preparation.

The decision to move to a fully remote model might stem from the following scenarios- the Governor requires a school closure state-wide, the county is moved to 'Red' and the school committee makes the decision that remote learning is the best option at that time, a classroom has a positive case and the students in that class must quarantine for 14 days, or there are 3 or more positive cases in one school across 3 different families and the CDC requires a temporary move to remote instruction for up to 28 days for a dormant and cleaning period. In any of these cases, you will receive notification from the Superintendent and/or school officials of the change (pages 2 and 3 of linked handbook). The transition to this learning may begin with 1 or 2 days of "no school" to allow teachers the opportunity to prepare for the change and communicate Zoom meeting links with families.

The only time we would move to a Hybrid model would be upon the recommendation and vote of our school committee. This situation might occur should we see a rise in Lisbon/Lisbon Falls of COVID cases that indicate having fewer students in the classroom could provide a benefit to the community and schools. The student cohorts for the hybrid model will be created based on physical home address to accommodate families who have multiple children in the school system. In the case we must make this transition, you will receive notification from the Superintendent and your child's teacher will follow up with specific information regarding learning days (pages 2 and 3 of linked handbook). The transition to this learning may begin with 1 or 2 days of "no school" to allow teachers the opportunity to prepare for the change and communicate Zoom meeting links with families.

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It is important to share that any distance learning model will have expectations this year far different than that of last spring. Last spring's closure brought about an abrupt unprecedented educational experience that our district and state has had time to reflect and improve on. In the event that we must move to a distance learning model this school year, there will be accountability for attendance and engagement in learning. The handbook which provides clarification of expectations is linked on our school department's website as well as linked in this letter. A PDF also accompanies this email. These expectations are laid out to ensure that the students in Lisbon continue receiving an education that will prepare them for their future in the best way that we can, regardless of the effects COVID is having on country.

The link to the Distance Learning Handbook is found below and on our district's website.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LdRjSqwgV6uO8_LwK82aiszlKdZpmWV-lgfMNIwPPcQ/edit?usp=sharing

We are grateful for the ongoing opportunity to partner with your family in the education of your child. When, or if, the time may come for us to use distance learning and you have questions, please reach out to myself, your building administrators or Dr. Green so that your educational family can support you.

Sincerely,

Julie Colello Nichols

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