



**DRACUT PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
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*Steven Stone*  
*Superintendent of Schools*

December 15, 2020

Re: Snow Days and Remote Learning

Dear Members of the Dracut Public Schools Community:

For the 2020-2021 school year only, school districts may avoid school cancelations caused by inclement weather by conducting them as remote school days, so long as the construct of those days meets the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) guidance and expectations:

*As set out in DESE's regulations, remote learning may include synchronous or asynchronous components, provided that students have opportunities to regularly interact with teachers, such as through feedback, office hours, and other regularly scheduled individual student interactions. Remote learning models must include the following components:*

- 1. procedures for all students to participate in remote learning, including a system for tracking attendance and participation;*
- 2. remote academic work shall be aligned to state standards;*
- 3. a policy for issuing grades for students' remote academic work; and*
- 4. teachers and administrators shall regularly communicate with students and their parents and guardians, including providing interpretation and translation services to limited English proficient parents and guardians.*

*The Commissioner has determined that for this school year only (2020-2021), if there are days when schools must close because of inclement weather or other emergency, districts may choose whether to treat those days as "snow days" to be made up later or provide all students with remote learning on those days in a manner that is consistent with the regulatory requirements listed above. This decision will be made at the local level.*

Last evening, the School Committee voted to approve my recommendation to allow me the latitude to designate certain days where I may have previously canceled school, to instead, determine that the day will become a full remote learning day for all students. This would avoid the need to make up the day late in June.

While I understand that this decision may impact families who are already bearing the burden of remote learning, being able to avoid making up a school day in June means that we can avoid having students and staff wear masks and adhere to physical distancing and other COVID restrictions in schools that have been warmed by the late spring sun.

**The Town of Dracut is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer**

I know that I will likely be responsible for eliminating some snow days for students. I am not so removed from childhood as to forget the joy of hearing my district's name announced on the radio (although I am removed enough to remember when you heard about school cancelations on AM radio...) when it was snowing outside of my window. This will be particularly hard on seniors who don't need to make up the days. That said, any decision to turn a prospective snow day into a full remote day will be made with a complete focus on avoiding the potential of a hot June school day.

**General Considerations:**

- When inclement weather or other emergencies occur, I ***may make the decision to call for a school day to be designated as a full remote day for all students.***
- The capacity to have a snow day become a full remote day may be dependent on some level of prior preparation to ensure that learning experiences are consistent with DESE guidance.
- Circumstances may require the full cancelation of a school day (wide-spread power outage in the community, etc.) that would have to be made up in June.
- If a full remote day is announced, schools will operate on a normal start/end schedule.
- All learning opportunities will be a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning.
- The presence of inclement weather ***does not automatically mean a school day will be held remotely.*** The district will announce any change via existing communication vehicles (website, app, social media, television, radio).

**Student and Family Responsibilities if a snow day becomes a remote learning day:**

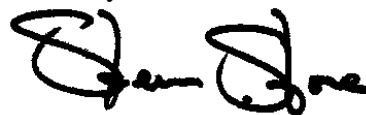
- Checking into and participating in classes via Zoom or Google Meet at predetermined times for attendance, lessons, instructions, etc.
- Completing learning activities as assigned by their teacher(s) via Google Classroom or other delivery methods.

This is a new experience for all school districts. I will be communicating closely with principals in the wake of snow days turned remote days to assess whether adjustments need to be made. As always I beg everyone's patience as we add one more new thing to our school year. If you have questions related to this prospective process, please feel free to contact a building principal or contact me directly.

I wish everyone a healthy and peaceful Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

#MIDDIEPRIDE

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Stone".

Steven Stone  
Superintendent of Schools