



## BREWER SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

### Brewer, Maine 04412

---

6.18.2020

Dear Brewer Schools' Families,

I am sending you two documents related to options around the start of school this fall, 2020, along with this link to the [Maine Department of Education's guidance on reopening schools](#) which is a draft that will be updated throughout the summer.

The first is this letter, itself, that will help explain and color in some of the possibilities that are represented in the second document, a Brewer School Department framework for three different possible levels of return to the 2020-2021 school year -- full remote learning, partially remote combined with a partial return to live learning in our school buildings, or fully returning to live learning in the buildings.

Please know that the Brewer School Department will align its practices to Maine Center for Disease Control (M-CDC) and Maine Department of Education (M-DOE) guidelines around how to keep everyone safe as a core priority this fall. That's what is required of us, and it will be our highest priority.

That said, we are balancing three safety factors for our students -- physical safety, social/emotional safety, and the need for growth in learning. Each of these need to be considered. Students need to have in-person learning experiences with teachers and one another. This helps create social and emotional wellness. And, of course, everyone needs to be physically safe. The difficult part of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis is that it has pitted these three parts of school safety against one another where they would normally work in harmony.

Forced to prioritize, we must consider physical safety first. If the M-CDC and M-DOE determine that it is not safe to have students and staff in school together then we will build off what we learned this spring and do a good job providing an updated version of remote learning (**Level 1** in our framework) until factors surrounding the virus change for the better. If there are ongoing virus concerns but trends are improving as detailed by the M-CDC and M-DOE, then we could have a mixed, or hybrid model (**Level 2**) where students were at school on given days and also continue with remote learning on other days. Finally, as health trends continue to improve and/or proven solutions are discovered and employed -- such as a vaccine -- then we will be able to fully return to in-person learning 100% of the time (**Level 3**).

It is also possible that we will need to move from one level to another during the school year based on local conditions and cases. I also wouldn't be surprised if, initially, criteria is different by zone or county.

---

Superintendent of Schools  
261 Center Street  
(207)-989-3160  
(207)-989-8622 Fax

Brewer High School  
79 Parkway South  
(207)-989-4140  
(207)-989-2657 Fax

Brewer Community School  
92 Pendleton Street  
(207)-404-5700  
(207)-404-5730 Fax



## BREWER SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

### Brewer, Maine 04412

---

Level 2 options could include either having every student get at least one day at school per week (on the low end) coupled with multiple days each week of remote learning instruction to, on the higher end, students spending 50% of the time at school for in-person instruction with some virtual support time in the mix.

Special considerations will be taken for students who have learning plans such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or what is referred to as a 504 plan (from Section 504 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act). This could mean that while other students are returning to school a student, based on a learning plan, could still require more remote learning or, in the opposite case, a student with a learning plan might have additional time spent accessing in-person support and instruction beyond where the plan is at for the district overall.

You will see in the framework that at certain places in different levels we would reduce student movement around each school to concomittently reduce risk of infection. Students and staff would be in learning pods so that, should anyone test positive, that group of people could quarantine and focus on remote learning for two weeks while others, in a different learning pod, could still be able to attend in-person. We have purchased gallons of hand sanitizer, thermometers, and will continue to stock up on other safety items and equipment over the course of this summer. We'll be ready for whatever level we're allowed to flex based on M-CDC and M-DOE criteria. We expect that guidance to be firmed up between late July and mid-August, and as soon as we receive it we will delineate a specific Brewer School Department plan that will be shared with parents and guardians so everyone can get ready. We know there are many issues that depend on how much we are able to open our schools, and we will notify you with specifics as soon as we are able.

We'll also communicate about open houses, transitioning students into a new school year with new faces and routines, and how we can help our students to process thoughts and feelings around this unprecedented disruption. Another detail I've been asked about are the traditional school breaks next year, and at this time we are planning to have our 2020-2021 school calendar maintain those regular breaks.

In the meantime, please keep our framework handy as a reference and a shared language around the possibilities.

I hope this information helps as we head into late June. Thank you for your support and trust in us throughout the recently completed school year. I am proud of students and staff, and deeply appreciate everything parents and guardians did to help us keep our school program up and running. I am hopeful there will be much good news as we move through the coming year together.

Sincerely,

Gregg Palmer, Superintendent of Schools

---

Superintendent of Schools  
261 Center Street  
(207)-989-3160  
(207)-989-8622 Fax

Brewer High School  
79 Parkway South  
(207)-989-4140  
(207)-989-2657 Fax

Brewer Community School  
92 Pendleton Street  
(207)-404-5700  
(207)-404-5730 Fax