January 21, 2021

Dear Parents, Staff, and Students:

After reviewing data from the MA Department of Health and in consultation with our local Boards of Health and school nurses, I have made the decision to enable our students to return to the hybrid model beginning Monday, January 25th until *at least* our winter break scheduled for Monday, February 15th - Friday, February 19th.  Please be aware that this decision is predicated upon spikes and cases in the schools that require periods of quarantine or any mandatory shutdowns made by the Commonwealth.

There are several factors that have gone into this decision, and my intention is not to prioritize but to outline the process.   The first is looking at numbers in our towns and schools.  Boylston and Berlin are experiencing similar scenarios (towns in red) but all schools are experiencing very low numbers.

Positive case numbers, while high enough to place our towns in the red category, are not a reflection of what is happening in our schools. In fact, we currently have a total of 5 students out of school due to positive COVID testing.

With safety as the primary concern, the move back to hybrid will also enable our students to return to classroom interactions with their teachers and friends, a factor that we consider very seriously. The face-to-face contact provides social-emotional support and a connection to our students in a way that remote learning cannot easily replicate.

I realize that not all families and staff will agree with my decision to return us into a hybrid model.  I do hope that you will know that it has been made after careful consideration, numerous discussions, data collection, and an intrinsic desire to do what is best for our children.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey T. Zanghi,
Superintendent of Schools