**Computer virus wipes out internet access in Lynn schools for more than a week**

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A computer virus is setting schools in Lynn back 20 years as students and staffers are left without internet access.

Lynn Public Schools Superintendent Patrick Tutwiler assured teachers and parents that the district is committed to sorting the issue out as soon as possible, while continuing to educate more than 15,000 students in a district without any internet address.

As of Thursday, there was still no timetable for how much longer things will carry on with the old-school pens and paper.

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"The effort has been gargantuan, as has the communication effort, to explain precisely what the issue was," Tutwiler said.

Lynn Public Schools have been without internet since last Wednesday, with an aggressive computer virus infiltrating and shutting down the school's network for more than seven days.

Now, Tutwiler said the school district and a third-party security company it hired are both doing everything possible to work through and resolve the widespread issue.

“We have to go old school with it with paper and pen, but instruction is happening and kids are safe," Tutwiler said. "I think a week without internet would be a tough predicament for anyone."

An internal memo sent by the superintendent to all teachers in the fifth largest school district in the state urges them to not use Lynn Public Schools computers or bring personal devices on campus for use, and asks them to refrain from connecting to any school device using a cellphone hot spot.

"We know this virus is collecting usernames and passwords to banking sites and other web sites such as Amazon.com," the memo said. "We recommend that everyone connect to all of their sites and immediately reset passwords."

Teachers at all schools -- through the high school level -- are working through the difficulty of having to manage daily lesson plans without computer access.

“It’s awful, I feel so bad for them," Brandy Rodriguez, the mother of a 9-year-old who attends the Aborn Elementary School, said. "Even simple things like attendance, it’s not so easy anymore."

Lynn Classical and Lynn English high schools were both forced to delay MCAS testing by two days, with students taking the exams on paper, instead of electronically.

"Kids have been preparing to take the MCAS, the teachers have been preparing kids to do that," Rodriguez said. "I just feel for them, they're scrambling."

The virus is believed to have captured saved sites and passwords, as well as keystrokes. The security company CrowdStrike is still working to determine where and how it started.