

From: [Darryl.Williams](#)
Subject: Message from Dr. Darryl Williams
Date: Friday, October 9, 2020 7:55:31 PM

Dear Team BCPS:

From day one, BCPS has prioritized the health and safety of staff and students. We understand that the idea of returning to school buildings is unsettling to many for a variety of reasons. Communication is critical to our work during this pandemic and in our virtual learning environment. We remain committed to engaging the voices of our community in the upcoming weeks through surveys, multi-stakeholder focus groups, and coordination with the scientific community as we implement a safe, phased-in return to small group, in-person instruction. The following information is being shared to update you on our efforts to begin a gradual return to in-person learning:

Health and Safety

- The BCPS Office of Health Services has ordered job-appropriate PPE for staff.
- Staff and students will be expected to wear their own face coverings, but we will have extra on hand (buses, schools) in case a face covering is soiled or damaged during the day or in case a student or staff member forgets their face covering.
- Clear face shields have been ordered for instructional staff (teachers, paraeducators) and will be provided.
- In addition to PPE provisions, hand sanitizer stations have been placed outside of the cafeterias and in the main offices.
- Mitigation strategies are included in the BCPS Reopening Plan– Appendix A: Screen for Symptoms at Home and Prior to Working; Six-Foot Distance; Face Coverings; Shared Items; Facility Cleaning, Sanitization, and Organization; and Response to Positive COVID-19 Cases.
- Dr. Gregory Branch, Baltimore County Health Officer, and his team at the Baltimore County Health Department continue to provide great information, guidance, and advice. Prior to any return to in-person instruction, Dr. Branch and his team will remain involved in the review and approval of actions. They are providing the necessary guidance regarding our health and mitigation strategies in addition to our system operations.

Collaboration with Stakeholders

- As requested, TABCO and ESPBC are meeting with staff to discuss work conditions in order to provide a safe environment for students and staff.
- Critical feedback from our families and staff at our four public separate day schools is being gathered in the survey shared on October 2, 2020. As a reminder, that survey closes today, and we will provide the results as soon as possible.
- The BCPS Reopening plan is guided by the feedback and input of three groups: the BCPS Design Team, the BCPS COVID-19 Task Force, and the BCPS Recovery Plan Stakeholder Group. Across these three groups, membership includes executive staff from all departments in BCPS, the presidents of all five bargaining units, principals, area advisory and parent stakeholder groups, teachers, students, staff from the BCPS Office of Health Services, and doctors from the Baltimore County Health Department. Currently, the COVID-19 Task Force and the Design Team meet weekly, while the

BCPS Recovery Plan Stakeholder group meets twice weekly to ensure external stakeholder attendance.

Next Steps:

- Over the next few weeks, the Design Team will be focusing on the following lines of work:
 - Instructional Delivery. The team is laser-focused on best practices and logistics for maintaining a rigorous virtual option for families who prefer that choice while exploring models for in-person instruction that prioritize safety and maximize learning. Additional opportunities for professional learning will be provided to support this shift.
 - Facilities Organization. The team is working on identifying additional guidance and direction to principals so that schools have a consistent look and feel for mitigation.
 - Communication Updates. The Design Team and COVID-19 Task Force will provide updates to Team BCPS on a bi-weekly basis. In addition, the Design Team will be determining how to best promote the information, resources, and supports that have already been shared via our public Web site.
- The Design Team and COVID-19 Task Force will continue to provide regular updates from the team of staff working on the details of reopening. Team BCPS stakeholders are encouraged to provide input into reopening by sending their thoughts to reopening@bcps.org. While you may not receive a direct response, all input will be provided to the Design Team and COVID-19 Task Force for consideration, and updates and additional information will be provided.

I know there are still plenty of questions and a need for more information. In order to address these questions and concerns and to prepare for our eventual reopening and return to school buildings and offices, we must continue to work together—unions, central office, the health department, and our families—to come up with viable options for our students and staff. There is no other way.

Please be healthy, safe, and as always, thank you for your support and commitment to our students.

Sincerely,

Darryl L. Williams, Ed.D.
Superintendent