



Bath County Public Schools

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June 22, 2020

Dear BCPS Parents,

As one school year has just concluded, the BCPS administrative team and I are looking forward to the safe return of students to school. We have missed your children and we suspect they are anxious to get back to school with their teachers and peers.

As most of you know, guidelines for the reopening of schools are now available. Immediately following Governor Northam's June 9th announcement of phased guidance intended to mitigate risk of COVID-19 transmission in prek-12 settings to support the reopening of Virginia schools, the Virginia Department of Education released *Recover-Redesign-Restart*, a comprehensive plan to move Virginia learners and educators forward and return to school. Guidelines from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) and the VDH (Virginia Department of Health) are incorporated in the document.

Whether we are in the current Phase II or in Phase III by August, we must follow specific recommendations prior to bringing students back into school buildings. At the forefront are social distancing, healthy hygiene practices, cleaning and disinfecting, and health screenings. We are working on a plan to meet the needs of all students while meeting the restrictions in place, and we will work with the local health department and our risk management contacts to make sure the plan is effective.

Two options are currently being considered for the opening of school under Phase III. Option 1 involves a blended educational approach that will have students working from home three days a week and in the classroom two days a week. Option 2 also involves a blended learning approach but will allow for students to be in the school building four days a week. With either option time will be allowed for teachers to plan, implement remote learning, and provide feedback to students. There will also be opportunity for deep cleaning and disinfecting without students present. Option 2 is preferred but it will require substantial support and help from parents in the area of transportation. In order for students to socially distance on the bus, buses will only be able to run at approximately 25% capacity. *Are you willing and able to transport your child to and from school every morning and afternoon in Phase III until the recommended guidelines might no longer include social distancing?*

A survey will be released on Monday, June 22nd to determine what the transportation needs are within the county. Until we hear from you, we cannot proceed with planning. Please understand that we want nothing more than to keep students safe while meeting their social, emotional, and academic needs. No matter which option is selected, parents may keep their child(ren) enrolled in BCPS for a completely remote learning experience through Virtual Virginia.

The survey will also include technology related questions. Your responses will help us determine needed support for remote learning. The survey will be available on the BCPS website and BCPS Facebook page beginning this afternoon, June 22, and ending on June 25. If you are unable to access or complete the survey, contact your child's school for assistance.

This is a difficult and trying time for everyone involved. The options being considered today are based on current guidelines and may be adjusted as transportation and other restrictions loosen. We appreciate each and every one of you and the help and support you are able to provide for your child(ren) and our school system. Thank you for being a part of our team!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sue Hirsh".

Sue Hirsh
Division Superintendent