

# *Baldwin County Board of Education*

## *A Charter System of Georgia*

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July 9, 2020

Dear Baldwin County School District Families,

Thank you for your continued patience and understanding as we work to finalize a plan for how the Baldwin County School District will welcome students back in August. As we started this work, we focused on building details around three scenarios: a traditional schedule with additional safety precautions in place, a hybrid schedule with alternating in-person days for students and a remote learning option. We also formed a task force to develop guidance on how to safely reopen Baldwin County Schools for students, faculty, and staff. The task force consisted of teachers, school and district-based staff, parents, business leaders, community members, health care professionals, local emergency and law enforcement personnel, faith-based organization leaders, civic and non-profit organization members, and representatives from all three local colleges/universities. Through this collaboration, members of the task force were assigned to committees in order to review the wealth of information available to ensure a safe and successful reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

At the Board meeting on Tuesday, July 7, the options for reopening schools and the parent/staff survey results were shared with the board as well as a recommendation to delay the start of the school year for students. The Board approved the recommendation to change the start date for the 2020-2021 school year to Monday, August 10. This weeklong extension from our original start date, Monday, August 3, will help all faculty and staff to be better prepared for the implementation of our new safety protocols based on CDC recommendations, and guidance from the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) and the Department of Public Health (DPH). In addition, this modified start date will also provide time for our faculty and staff to participate in professional learning focused on the social emotional-learning needs of students and staff, curriculum and instruction, and teaching in a remote learning environment.

As the Baldwin County School District prepares for the safe return of staff and students to our school campuses, a number of protocols and procedures will be implemented to maintain the safety and well-being of all our students and employees. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and certain risk factors, it might not be possible for students to return to school in August. In this scenario, we would offer remote learning for all students in grades K-12 until it is feasible for students to return to some form of in-person instruction.

Please see the information below which provides more details about instructional models and safety protocols for the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

### **Instructional Models**

- Parents will have the option of choosing traditional in-person instruction (a regular Monday through Friday schedule) or remote learning for their children.
- Georgia Standards of Excellence and the BCSD curriculum resources will be utilized during teaching and learning.
- Social emotional learning will be incorporated into the curriculum to support the needs of the whole-child.
- A structured schedule that allows flexibility will be followed as we transition between instructional models.
- Accountability measures and expectations will be established to maximize learning.
- Professional learning will be provided to address the learning tools and instructional methods of remote learning for students, staff, and parents.
- For parents/guardians choosing remote learning for their child/children, students in grades K-8 must commit to the remote learning model for a grading period or the entire semester for high school students.
- Baldwin Online Academy will be extending its normal operations to include students and families who are interested in a temporary enrollment in the program as well as a full year commitment.
- Depending on the level of increased spread, a systemwide remote learning model may be implemented.

### **Enhanced Safety Measures**

- Students and staff are required to wear masks/face coverings. CDC recognizes that wearing cloth face coverings may not be possible in every situation or for some individuals. In some situations, wearing a cloth face covering may exacerbate a physical or mental health condition, lead to a medical emergency, or introduce significant safety concerns. Adaptations and alternatives will be considered

whenever possible to increase the feasibility of wearing a cloth face covering or to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading if it is not possible to wear one.

- Faculty, staff and students are required to check their temperature before coming to school. Staff and students are confirming by their presence on school grounds they do not have a fever above 100.3 or any symptoms of illness. In addition, temperature checks for employees and students will be conducted at each school.
- Students and staff with COVID-19 symptoms or a temperature of 100.4 or higher will be isolated immediately and sent home.
- Specific action steps for how the school will respond to positive COVID-19 cases will be implemented. These action steps are still in development.
- All bus drivers as well as students riding the bus will be required to wear masks/face coverings.
- Hand sanitizer for students and drivers will be available.
- Clean and disinfect buses daily after morning and afternoon routes.
- No field trips.
- Desks will be spaced out to improve social distancing in classrooms.
- Reductions in the intermingling of groups (to the extent possible).
- Social distancing protocols in classrooms and other spaces (to the extent possible).
- High traffic areas and "touch points" will be continually sanitized with daily cleaning.
- The school district has purchased disinfecting products known to be effective for use against COVID-19.
- Custodians adhere to CDC guidelines on cleaning and using approved chemicals to fight the spread of COVID-19.
- Ventilation systems will be frequently monitored for proper operation.
- Students are expected to wash their hands with soap for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol throughout the school day.
- Students will eat breakfast/lunch in classrooms.
- Students wash hands before and after meals.
- CDC-designed signage will be displayed prominently throughout buildings to reinforce healthy hygiene and expected school and workplace behaviors.
- There will be restricted use of water fountains and students are encouraged to use water bottles.
- Number of visitors allowed in school buildings will be restricted & temperatures will be taken before entry. Visitors must wear protective masks before entering the building.
- Physical barriers placed in select locations in school buildings to protect against the spread of the virus.
- Athletics and activities following the guidance from the Georgia High School Association (GHSA).

All parents will be required to complete a selection form to let us know the instructional model that they would like for their child/children. The form must be completed by Friday, July 17th using Infinite Campus. If you do not have a parent portal account, you can find registration information on our website.

As we continue to navigate through these unprecedented times, the health and safety of our students and employees will continue to be our top priority. We will continue to seek guidance from the Georgia Department of Education, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Georgia Department of Public Health. Please continue to check the District's website and social media for updates. Thank you for your continued patience and support as we prepare for the 2020-2021 school year..

Sincerely,  
Dr. Noris Price  
Superintendent of Schools