

*Monday, Aug. 10, 2020*

Dear BPS Families,

Tomorrow, the Board of Education will vote on a resolution recommended by the Superintendent to begin the school year in a virtual environment for all students. The vote will take place during the scheduled special meeting and study session at 6 p.m. and can be viewed live at [www.youtube.com/birminghamps](http://www.youtube.com/birminghamps).

Over the weekend, many within our community expressed a variety of emotions through letters, social media posts and phone calls regarding the change in direction from a hybrid option, combined with the choice of a virtual academy, to an all-virtual model. As we head into this week, we wanted to share more information through [sample virtual schedules attached and linked to this email, proposed for elementary, middle and high school](#). Post-secondary and BCS schedules will be shared soon, with the post-secondary schedule strongly resembling the high school schedule. These draft schedules reflect a focus on live instruction and offer insights into a typical day in a virtual learning environment. Specific schedules will come to you from the buildings closer to the start of school.

Despite these changes, we know that there are many within our community frustrated and disappointed in the change of direction. We are sorry and we recognize that a virtual start does not provide our students with the same educational opportunities as a face-to-face classroom setting. We know a virtual start means our families are faced with academic, social challenges and childcare uncertainties. In-person learning is vital to the success of many students, and we feel that acutely. However, we are also aware of our responsibility to keep all students and staff physically and emotionally safe in a school setting.

We remain committed to academic excellence for all and to seeking opportunities for our students, families and staff, whether in-house or through partnerships within our community, to meet the needs of every learner within BPS. We will provide proactive interventions to ensure the success of students in a remote environment. We will work diligently to raise our students up when they're struggling and find new ways to support their needs throughout this process. These are the extraordinary measures needed and what we are committed to providing for every student.

Be assured, we are reading each and every letter and aware of the difficult conversations occurring regarding a virtual start for all Birmingham Public Schools students this fall. We have read the letters of support and the letters of dissatisfaction. We take each of them into consideration and appreciate the time taken to engage and express very legitimate concerns on both ends of this spectrum. Each voice receives the equal weight deserving of a decision of this magnitude. We will continue ongoing discussions as a District around a face-to-face return as we lead up to the Nov. 1 reassessment date. We know a virtual start is not a perfect start to a school year. A hybrid start is not a perfect start to a school year. A full return in a global health pandemic is not a perfect start to a school year. But we will use our educational expertise and

our parent partnerships to shift and turn in remarkable ways to provide the quality education our students deserve this school year.

Sincerely,

***BPS Central Leadership Team***

***BPS Board of Education***

**File attachments:**

[BPS Sample Virtual Schedules.pdf](#)