

Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2020

Dear BPS Families,

Our message last week shared a delay in our middle school and BCS 5-8 return as we awaited approval of our Mitigation Plan to the Oakland County Health Division. We are still awaiting approval of the plan from OCHD, but are moving forward following discussion with our Board of Education and directives to carry on with in-person hybrid while in our BPS Orange color status. Elementary, preschool, post-secondary and other special education services remain in their current learning models.

However, staff capacity remains strained at this time and is anticipated to get worse. Prior to COVID, BPS and all Districts across our state wrestled with severe teacher and substitute shortages. The health pandemic has only worsened the situation. BPS has hired a temporary staff member to oversee substitute placements in an effort to head off these staff challenges, but the fact remains that these employees are in exceptionally short supply. Unlike private schools, public schools are required to meet several standards and requirements to place substitutes in classrooms. Anyone interested in applying as a substitute can contact [amelton@birmingham.k12.mi.us](mailto:amelton@birmingham.k12.mi.us) to begin the process.

Staff capacity issues, while following directives to keep in-person options open when possible, will cause intermittent in-person closures. We cannot predict these changes but will navigate them with plans in place that are communicated with families and staff so that we can all learn to toggle back and forth in the most manageable way possible. This will not come without challenges and frustration and we want to be clear from the beginning that with COVID cases spiking, these instances will occur.

As we discuss staff capacity, it has become clear that some members of the community may be under the impression that staff quarantines are due to choices being made by our staff that may be exposing them to COVID. As a District, we would like to emphatically refute those sentiments. Just as our parents and community members have spouses, aging parents and neighbors to care for, children and responsibilities that must be met, so to do our staff members. Everyone is doing their part to remain as healthy as possible during this time. **Our respect and deep appreciation cannot be overstated for our teachers and support staff that are managing multiple learning modes at one time in the name of academic excellence for our students.**

We will remain focused on data specific to BPS and the students we serve. We appreciate the kindness being shown in this difficult time and encourage anyone with a supportive message to continue to reach out to your teachers, neighbors and family members with these compassionate sentiments. They make a difference. We extend our continued wishes for good health and wellness for all within our community.

Sincerely,

***BPS Central Leadership Team***