**Attention Bridges Preparatory School Families**

If you are anything like me, I know you cannot wait to be back together again as the

BPS family!

As we plan for the opening of the 2020-2021 school year, we are confident that we will

be together as an entire community on Wednesday, August 12th for the first day of school.

Prior to our opening day, we will have our Back-To-School visitation schedule to prevent large groups in our schools. I will be communicating our new safety protocols and procedures via a video message prior to the opportunity to meet your teachers. This video will outline the expectations for the school year, prior years accomplishments, and facility changes for our coming year.

While we are confident that we will begin our school year on time, we are prepared to be flexible and proactive should any government mandate or shift in public health demands require it.

Since April, the BPS administration and the Reopening Planning Committee have been working through every detail for the opening of the school year — no matter what that looks like.

Within this document, you will find brief explanations for the most likely scenarios that may unfold.

Likewise, it will also briefly explain the scenario process we went through to create a return plan for starting safely back to school. This included a task force for reopening that was made up of parents, board members, faculty and staff members, and registered nurses.

This Return to School plan provides clarity and strategies for responding to an evolving health

crisis and will include:

• Health and Safety

• Dexterity for Learning

• Facilities and Operations

Our top priority in reuniting our community is the health and safety of our students,

faculty and staff, and parents. We do not anticipate new campus closures, but we will

be flexible and ready regardless and will continue to provide the world-class education

that you have come to expect.

In a safe and healthy way, we want to get back to school and help you get back to work.

We look forward to providing your family with another memorable school year!

Gary S. McCulloch

Chief Executive Officer

**Health and Safety**

**DAILY TEMPERATURE AND SYMPTOM SCREENING (AT HOME/ON CAMPUS)**

**THREE STAFF NURSES AND ILLNESS ROOMS**

**HAND-WASHING AND HYGIENE STATIONS**

**VENTILATION AND FILTER CLEANING – GPS COLD PLASMA UNITS INSTALLED ON BOTH CAMPUSES**

**CONTINUAL SPRAYING AND DISINFECTING (MICROSHIELD 360-IF APPROVED)**

**DISTANCING WHEN REQUIRED**

**MULTIPLE RECESS LOCATIONS**

**WATER BOTTLE REFILLABLE STATIONS**

**FACE MASKS AND SHIELDS PROVIDED FOR ALL FACULTY MEMBERS THAT CHOOSE TO WEAR THEM**

**WELL-BEING OF STAFF AND STUDENTS**

Our wonderful Bridges family has grown in physical space and enrollment, as our school community is buzzing with life. BPS is thoughtfully considering the challenges that a K-12 school encounters on a daily basis when operating within a pandemic. The physical health of our youngest students up to our faculty nearing retirement is at the forefront of this careful planning. While we cannot control the threat of

COVID-19 until a vaccine is developed, we can minimize the risks as much as possible for the protection of our entire BPS community. We, therefore, commit to:

• Remaining well-informed by the government, public health officials, and medical experts on updates to virus behavior, safety protocol, and sanitization strategies.

• Reducing risks to our BPS family through daily temperature checks and screening of all faculty, students, and visitors until restrictions loosen.

• Focusing on the equally important social, emotional health of our students and staff.

• Serving and supporting our community as we face anxiety and unknowns.

• Educating students on the importance of reducing the risk of exposure with simple and consistent hand-washing and personal hygiene practices.

• Providing flexible learning options, as outlined in this document, to families with

health concerns.

**SAFETY AND SANITIZATION**

As we develop strategies for the health and well-being of our school community,

BPS is also putting many additional safety protocols in place:

• Following CDC hygiene protocols and posting signs throughout campus.

• Hiring a third full-time nurse with rooms for students who become ill.

• Hiring a school resource officer to be on duty for the duration of the school day.

• Daily use of safe, handheld sprayers on prepped surfaces and all public spaces.

• HVAC/AC system cleaning and maintenance of high-grade filters in all facilities.

• Using only EPA-approved, safe disinfectants.

• Continual cleaning of common interior spaces throughout each day.

• Installing 20 touchless hand sanitizing stations to double sanitization locations.

• Providing masks and gloves for use by staff members if required.

• Offering optional student masks (available for purchase in the School Store).

• Suspending use of vending machines and water fountains. Installing water bottle filling stations.

• Changing protocols for campus and visitor access.

* Isolation of students/staff with symptoms
* Daily health reporting to district and health officials. Families will be notified if a student is ill in their class or grade level.

BPS will evaluate these protocols throughout the school year to measure the effectiveness and appropriate need going forward.

**FACTS ABOUT CHILDREN AND COVID-19:**

BPS has compiled information from the CDC and AAP about advocating for children during the pandemic. Here is some information to consider concerning mental and physical health of children:

• Importance of washing hands with soap and clean, running water as the most effective way to prevent spread of infections to others, reducing respiratory illnesses by up to 21%.

• Importance of teaching other healthy habits such as coughing or sneezing into a tissue or elbow and avoiding touching the face.

• Risk of death from COVID-19 in children 1-4 years in age is .004%, ages 5-14 is .007%, and ages 15-24 is .01% per CDC data to date. Early research suggests few children with COVID-19 have had to be hospitalized.

• Ability of children to cope with fear, worry, or feelings of isolation during a pandemic.

• Importance of social and emotional connections and personal interaction for children and teens, especially in crisis.

• Importance of providing a safe-as-possible learning environment for children while parents are at work.

**MONITORING ILLNESS**

It is very possible that members of our school community will get sick. As such, we will follow the “Return to School” guidelines recommended by the CDC for the safety of the BPS family. In addition, if a student, faculty, or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, the clinic and operations staff will maintain health protocols and adhere to CDC procedures:

• Require that parents keep their student home if their temperature is above 99.9°F.

• Take caution to keep your child home if they have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19 or experience symptoms of fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle/body aches, headache, new loss of taste/smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

• Request that parents alert the BPS clinic if anyone in the household has tested positive for COVID-19 or has come in direct contact within a 14-day period with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

• Notify local health authorities of a diagnosis of COVID-19, as well as others who may be affected, as required by the DHEC, while maintaining privacy and confidentiality.

• Require quarantine of the student/teacher for at least 14 days, without return to campus until they test negative. (Will adhere to updated guidelines)

• Require quarantine of siblings and family members living with the affected student for 14 days, with return dependent upon DHEC guidelines (no symptoms, etc.).

• Continue with school utilizing the synchronous/distance learning option if student is able.

• Close the primary area where the student was located for extended time, leave for up to 24 hours per CDC guidance, and heavily disinfect before re-entry.

• With DHEC guidance, trace diagnosed cases within our community to allow for a better understanding of the overall school-wide health condition, localized to campus, building, and classroom.

• Decide about school dismissal or cancellation of school events in coordination with our local health officials.

**DEXTERITY FOR LEARNING**

**CREATED FOR COMMUNITY**

The strength of the mission and core values of BPS is the foundational relationship between a student and a teacher, collaborating on campus together, and growing socially, emotionally, and academically. The fuel for motivation, engagement, and belonging is discovered through teacher and peer relationships in the classroom.

Meaningful connections that ground us and even transform us are nurtured most effectively in person, not through a video conferencing platform. This is as true for our high school students as it is our preschoolers.

In contrast to many school systems, we are fortunate to have the flexibility to make decisions that are appropriate for our school community of approximately 1,070 students and 100 staff members. We also have the advantage of a new campus in which to spread out, yet still create safe environments for interaction and continuous learning.

BPS has identified plans for multiple scenarios and responses to any new government or CDC mandates for safety or physical distancing. However, our strategy involves focusing on the two most likely options which best fit the needs of our families:

1. Return to School (approved schedule)

2. Synchronous/Distance Learning

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**RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN**

Under the current South Carolina government requirements and CDC recommendations, BPS is able to begin school as scheduled on August 12.

Students will attend school on the following schedule:

Monday, Tuesday - face-to-face instruction/synchronous learning

Wednesday - deep clean/synchronous learning

Thursday, Friday - face-to-face instruction/synchronous learning

We are thrilled to invite you to campus on Back-To-School visits on a staggered schedule to prevent large groups and give you an opportunity to meet your teacher.

I will communicate return to school procedures and updated policies via video prior to Back-To-School orientations.

• Synchronous learning will be offered using classroom-based camera/distance learning technology for students who have at-risk family members, are at-risk themselves, are currently or who go into quarantine, or who are not ready to begin school on campus.

**Your declaration for Synchronous/Distance Learning will be due to the school by Thursday July 23rd, and will last a quarter. Declaration for a second semester of synchronous/distance learning will be due on December 4th, 2020. This option will hold your place for enrollment.**

Our calendar has not changed but school hours have adjusted for safe arrival, structured transitions, and time for thorough instruction, please take note of the new hours:

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KINDERGARTEN – 1ST GRADE 7:30-2:30

2ND-5TH GRADE 7:45-2:45

6TH-8TH GRADE 8:15-3:15

9TH-12TH GRADE 8:45-3:45

• Since class sizes are already small, students will be spread out within classrooms, where feasible.

• Lunch will be in classrooms or outside in designated areas (weather permitting)

• Masks will be optional (available for purchase in the school store).

**SYNCHRONOUS/VIRTUAL LEARNING (EMPHASIS ON STREAMING AND LIVE CLASSES – TUTORIALS WILL BE PROVIDED ONLINE TO SUPPORT OUR FAMILIES WITH NEEDED RESOURCES)**

In the case of a public health escalation, spike in community cases, or government mandate to shelter-in-place, BPS would mobilize to at-home, virtual learning with these goals:

• A transition to virtual learning would be seamless and ready for implementation.

• Each grade level will craft a schedule to support student learning appropriate to their age and development.

• Middle and high school students will continue to utilize their Connected Learning

Program devices to access instruction remotely via platforms such as Google Classroom/Meet.

• Lower school students who have no device at home will be issued one from the school in order to utilize Google Classroom and Zoom classes.

• BPS will consider all options to optimize campus use where permitted, as feasible.

• BPS faculty will be committed to meeting and exceeding expectations with continuous instruction of the required curriculum within the virtual platform. (School days will be on a set schedule and accommodate meeting times with multiple siblings in mind).

• Faculty will be continuing training, gathering additional tools and resources to be prepared for optimum student engagement, should virtual learning be required.

**Our number one priority is the safety of our students, staff, and households. Please read over our detailed reopening plan to inform your household of the preventative measures that our school will be taking to ensure the safety of all. We are currently offering face-to-face and synchronous learning. We may at some point in the year have to move to distance learning if mandated by our governor, or we receive recommendations from DHEC and the CDC.**

**We have outlined a plan for the safe return to school but have the flexibility as a charter school to change our plan if we have an identified concern.**

**If you are considering synchronous learning, please familiarize yourself with the commitments and expectations. We will be extending the declaration date to July 23rd, and the declaration will be for a quarter at a time.**

**We thank everyone in advance for their questions and positive feedback.**

**Please note that we will offer Synchronous/Distance Learning throughout the school year for students who have at-risk family members, are at-risk themselves, are currently or who go into quarantine, or who are not ready to begin school on campus.**

**Students will have access to their classroom through real-time streaming into the classroom.**

**Please note that their will be designated classroom meeting times, expectations for posted materials, expectations and timelines for submission of student work, expectations for grading and feedback, and daily classroom meetings with all teachers.**

**Please fill out the synchronous learning declaration, if this is the best fit for your household.**

We are very excited to return to school! We are focused on the social, emotional, and academic well-being of our students. We have taken additional measures to ensure the safety of our school community to the extent possible. Our emphasis will be on empathy, and supporting our school community, as we transition back to our amazing school.

It is our continued vision to provide your child with a memorable educational experience. I am confident that our safety measures, as well as our new and exciting special programming, we will exceed your family’s expectations.

Together We Are…………………Bucs!!