



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PGCPS Safely Welcomes Students Back to Class
During Elementary Summer Academy**

PRINCE GEORGE, Va. - Monday, Prince George County Public Schools welcomed students safely back to class for the first time since March 13 following Governor Ralph Northam's closure of school buildings in Virginia in response to COVID-19 as Prince George County Public Schools held the first day of its Elementary Summer Academy.

The parking lot of L.L. Beazley Elementary was active Monday morning as students arrived both by school bus and parent drop-off for the first day of PGCPS' four-week Elementary Summer Academy, set to run Monday through Thursday from 7:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. until July 29.

This week's return of face-to-face instruction within PGCPS began weeks earlier after Governor Northam announced a phased reopening of K-12 schools across the Commonwealth in early June, focused on providing in-person education while prioritizing the health and safety of students and staff. Since that time, PGCPS has submitted our publicly available health mitigation plan to the Virginia Department of Education that details the school district's strategy of mitigating public health risk presented by COVID-19 and complying with Virginia Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations.

The plan served as the foundation of PGCPS' efforts to safely allow students to return to face-to-face instruction.

As students waited at bus stops, bus drivers carried out temperature screenings before children boarded the bus to go to school. On their way to and from L.L. Beazley Elementary, students wore face coverings and sat with social distancing in mind. After unloading at the school and after taking students home, PGCPS' Transportation Department disinfected student seating areas thoroughly.

Similar temperature checks were in place for families dropping their children off at L.L. Beazley Elementary as nurses were on hand checking students' temperatures before they could exit the vehicle and meet their teachers to go to class for the day.

Once inside, the familiar classroom setting was modified to support social distancing as desks and tables were spaced to provide adequate physical distancing between students and school staff.

As part of PGCPS' efforts to protect students and staff, teachers wore face coverings during times when they were unable to maintain the six feet social distancing recommendation during the teaching day as they helped students with their work. Those teachers also explained the importance of social distancing to young students when they are moving through the building.

While teachers carried out instruction, L.L. Beazley Elementary's custodians led sanitation efforts as they visited classrooms regularly throughout the day to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

Breakfast and lunch were served to students in the students' classrooms thanks to L.L. Beazley Elementary's Food and Nutrition Services team, reducing the amount of congregation in common areas.

Recess looked different for students in the summer program as teachers used special exercise videos and unique experiences to help engage students and provide them with the valuable break.

"It is very exciting to see students back," **L.L. Beazley Elementary Principal Dr. Amanda Clay said.** "Our job is to nurture, support, and care for our students to help them grow, so to see them back excites us all. Safety is the top priority for our students and staff so we are making sure to follow all guidelines and that our staff and parents understand what those guidelines are."

"It was wonderful to welcome our first 61 students back to campus for in-person instruction," **Prince George County Public Schools Division Superintendent Dr. Lisa Pennycuff said.** "Our goal is to get as many of our students back for face-to-face instruction for as many days as we safely can, as quickly as we can. We do plan to have a virtual/remote option in place for our families who are not yet comfortable with allowing their children to return to school."

PGCPS continues to work toward welcoming our students back to class in the Fall of 2020 in a safe manner. The district is in the midst of developing its "Return to Learn" plan, which seeks to resume face-to-face instruction in a way that prioritizes the health and safety of students and staff in all of our schools.

More information about PGCPS' "Return to Learn," including parent surveys, documents, and resources, can be found at Prince George County Public Schools' website at <http://pgs.k12.va.us/ReturnToLearn>.