



June 12, 2020

PCPS Parents, Students, and Staff,

As the 19-20 school year comes to a close, I would like to thank the entire PCPS community for their efforts to continue student learning during these extraordinary times. I know this has created challenges for every member of our community, but I am so proud of the efforts of our students, teachers, parents, and support staff to make the best of the school closure.

On Tuesday, June 9, Governor Northam issued guidance on reopening schools along with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). Three comprehensive documents are linked below. They contain information on how schools will be allowed to reopen as well as measures we will be required to put in place to ensure staff and student safety.

[Recover-Redesign-Restart: A comprehensive plan that moves Virginia Learners and Educators FORWARD](#)

[Phase Guidance for Virginia's Schools](#)

[Order of the State Health Commissioner Regarding School Reopening Mitigation Plans](#)

With this guidance in mind, we would like to share an overview of options we are considering to Return to Learning 2020-2021. Each of these models will prioritize the health and safety of our students and staff. We also know that some students and staff may have concerns with returning to on-site face-to-face instruction and we plan to work individually with students and staff to personalize learning as needed. **Given social distancing restrictions dictated in Phase II and III of the Governor's Plan, we do not currently see a path for a full time return to school for all students to begin the year.**

Over the past three months, we have received specific feedback from teachers, parents, and students about the challenges and successes of distance learning. Based on that feedback as well as the need to plan for the fall, we created a PCPS work group to create options for Return to Learning 2020-2021. This work group was charged with the following goals:

- Identify and plan for instructional delivery models for the 20-21 school year
- Determine how to assess student academic progress and social-emotional needs
- Create a plan for curriculum, unit, lesson development, to include supporting teachers

The work group reviewed a variety of resources – local, state, and national – about instructional models based on the different needs of students for re-entry into schools.

After discussion of the resources, the workgroup broke into three subcommittees: Full-time Distance Learning; Hybrid Options; Full-time Return to School. Each of the subcommittees worked with the following guiding questions:

- What are the needs/implications for Assessment, Instructional Planning, Resources/Technology, and Teacher Training?

- What planning and supports are needed for implementation?
- What is the timeframe for implementation?

The [attached document](#) has an overview of the subcommittees' work. Below is additional information about each of the options for families to review.

A. Full-time Distance Learning

- Students who are unable to return to face-to-face instruction may opt-in to a parallel learning option that will allow for continued distance learning during the health crisis.
- Based on stakeholder feedback, any future distance learning models will incorporate lessons learned from the spring, modules available from Virtual Virginia, teacher-created lessons at all levels, and additional instructional supports including direct instruction using video conferencing, such as Zoom or Google Meets.

B. Hybrid Learning options may include one or more of the following:

- Option 1: Alternating days for face-to-face student attendance of two days per week combined with enhanced distance learning for all grade levels. We will work with families to align attendance for your children.
- Option 2: Staggered face-to-face start dates. This model would have certain grade levels return to on-site instruction using social distancing and health guidelines. Other grade levels would return to on-site instruction as guidelines change. Students off-site would participate in enhanced distance learning as described above. This model could impact families with children in multiple grade levels who may not return at the same time.
- Option 3: Distance Learning with on-site facilitators for weekly coaching and/or in-school support for limited face-to-face activities such as labs, assessments, career and technical, or other hands-on activities.

C. Full-time Return to School Buildings (at this time, guidance for Phase II and Phase III does not allow for this option)

- Enhanced DL421 instruction that will include implementation and enhancement of new strategies and technology, as well as supports needed due to closure
- Continue VDH recommended best practices

On June 24th a Return to Learning 2020-2021 Task Force, composed of teachers, students, parents, staff, daycare providers, and other community members, will meet to review guidance from government and health officials as well as the work of the PCPS workgroup cited earlier.

We would also like to provide them with your feedback. **Please follow [this link to take a short survey](#) and share your thoughts on the different options laid out in Return to Learning 2020-2021.**

The work of the Task Force and your feedback will be presented to the School Board in the form of a recommendation on how to reopen Powhatan County Public Schools safely and efficiently. Thank you for your patience as we work through these challenging times together. I look forward to seeing all of our students soon.

Be Safe and Stay Well,

Dr. Eric L. Jones, Superintendent