



Mrs. Cheryl-Watson-Harris, Superintendent

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Dear DeKalb County School District Families:

I hope that you had the opportunity to view the Family Town Hall meeting on December 14, 2020 where the District provided updated information relative to DeKalb's plan to re-open schools. Thank you for sharing feedback that included questions, concerns, suggestions, and comments. The District has considered feedback from principals, staff, and parents as well as guidance from members of the Medical Advisory Group and health organizations to update the decision tree and prepare for a safe return. The school district will focus on the implementation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's five key mitigation strategies: wearing masks correctly, social distancing, hand washing, cleaning and disinfecting, and contact tracing in partnership with the DeKalb Board of Health. The CDC's five key mitigation strategies and other strategies will lower the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in schools. Please know that the health and safety of our staff and students are a priority.

The District's leadership team has met with principals regularly to refine local school procedures and protocols, address identified areas of concern, and share innovative strategies and ideas for re-opening schools and maintaining a safe working and learning environment. In addition to regular meetings, we have collaborated with principals, conducted walk-throughs, developed a re-opening checklist, and facilitated town halls for stakeholders to ensure that we are prepared to welcome staff and students in January 2021. Also, the Division of Human Resources will continue to support teachers and staff by answering questions, providing information, and sharing resources that are available. The return dates have been shared; now, it is time to put our many months of planning into action.

Although the number of COVID-19 cases is increasing, DCSD's leadership, with guidance from the COVID-19 Task Force, CDC, and DeKalb County Board of Health, agrees that we must be vigilant and focus on the mitigation strategies to reduce transmission and prepare for re-opening schools in January 2021. The District will proceed with high quality instruction in a concurrent learning environment. The concurrent learning environment will support students based on their families' choice to either attend school in-person or continue with distance/remote learning. We acknowledge that virtual learning has been successful for some while challenging for others; therefore, we want to emphasize families have the option to choose the option that works best for their family.

As you know, DCSD has developed a phased-in approach for reopening schools. Please review the following key dates and expanded calendar:

Dates	Action
January 4, 2021	Begin Phase I: 10, 11, and 12-month Staff Return to Work
January 4 & 5, 2021	Asynchronous Learning (These are asynchronous learning days, so students will learn virtually and complete assignments on their own.)
January 13, 2021	Conclude First Semester
January 14, 2021	Teacher/Staff Workday (Students do not report)
January 15, 2021	Host the Professional Development Institute (Schools Closed)
January 19, 2021	Begin Phase II (Selected Grade Levels): Hybrid Learning Environment for Pre-K - 2nd grade, 6th grade, and 9th grade (if selected by the family) Students who opted for hybrid learning will begin two days of in-person learning.
January 25, 2021	Begin Phase III (Selected Grade Levels): Hybrid Learning Environment for 3rd-5th grade, 7th-8th grade, and 10th-12th grade (if selected by the family) Students who opted for hybrid learning will begin two days of in-person learning.
February 8, 2021	Students in all grade levels who opted for hybrid learning will begin four days of in-person learning.

Select the [link](#) to access the expanded calendar.

Your local school is utilizing the Intent to Return to School data to organize classes into two cohorts based on last name to adhere to social/physical distancing requirements and safety guidance. Your school will provide your child’s cohort assignment if you have chosen for your child to return for in-person learning. If you did not complete the Intent to Return form, your child is being programmed as an in-person learner. However, parents may contact the local school by January 8, 2021 if you want to change your preference. School leaders will collaborate with families to align the schedules of siblings. In the hybrid learning model, Wednesdays will be reserved for small group instruction, tutoring, appointments for student conferencing, parent conferencing, services, professional learning, and instructional planning.

Together, we will work to ensure that our vision and mission become a reality every day, in every classroom throughout the District. We are committed to inspiring our community of learners to achieve educational excellence that leads to higher education, work, and life-long learning. Thank you for your continued support and collaboration.

For more information, please check the website, news releases, and social media.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Cheryl Watson-Harris, Superintendent