

MEMORANDUM

To: All APS Families

From: Dr. Lisa Herring, Superintendent

Date: October 9, 2020

Subject: Preparing for our Phase II Reopening: Return+Learn

Thank you for joining us on our virtual town hall yesterday, October 8, on the [Atlanta Public Schools \(APS\) Facebook page](#). It was so encouraging to see so many of you engaging with us during the time we had together. That town hall and all of our previous virtual town halls are available on our Facebook page for viewing on-demand.

I want to thank our APS parents and this community for the resilience, focus, and patience you've shown throughout the first phase of our Return+Learn plan which began on August 24. I ask for that same commitment as we prepare for Phase II.

Ensuring that we keep the lines of communication open with each other is of utmost importance to me, and I am committed to staying connected with you as we make decisions together.

Based on current COVID-19 health data and because of safety measures and protocols we have in place, we will make a final decision regarding the next steps of our reopening plan on October 16. We will base that decision on the most up to date public health data.

As a reminder, the indicator to shift to our Phase II plan remains guided by the Department of Public Health data that suggests at least less than 100 new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 Fulton County residents over a 14 day period. We are monitoring that data daily and will be posting updates leading up to our decision on October 16.

Once the public health data trends favorably, as part of our Phase II plan we can start allowing some students to return for in-person learning beginning October 26. These student groups include:

- Students with Disabilities attending low incidence programs including our regional, self-contained classes, and
- Students attending Pre-K through 5th -grade classes in traditional APS schools.

We plan to allow students whose families are comfortable with face-to-face teaching and learning to come for four days of in-person instruction each week. All other students would remain in virtual instruction either in their home school or Atlanta Virtual Academy.

I must emphasize that virtual learning will remain an option for families in this next phase, and families can choose what works best for them.

First, we have the Virtual Instructional Model, which is currently in place and is designed for families who don't feel comfortable sending their children back to school but plan to remain with their current school for the rest of the school year.

Second, we have in-person instruction in our schools, which is designed for our families who feel comfortable with returning their students to a face-to-face, in-school environment.

Third, we offer virtual instruction through Atlanta Virtual Academy and Atlanta Virtual Academy Jr., which is designed for our families who wish for their students to remain in a virtual environment regardless of how we shift delivery models at our local schools.

Please visit our website at www.atlantapublicschools.us/reopen for more information about our instructional models and our reopening plan.

All of these proposed models remain contingent upon health data. If public health data trends unfavorably, a return to a full virtual model may be warranted at any time.

Complete Your Intent to Return Declaration Form Today!

To help us prepare for our Phase II reopening, we need all families to complete the Intent to Return Declaration form by 11:59 p.m., Monday, October 12. Completing this information is an important part of our reopening process, and I want to thank the thousands of families who have already completed the form.

But, we still need to hear from ALL of our families by the deadline. The form is available on our homepage at www.atlantapublicschools.us. Please complete it today.

That information will give us an accurate account of students planning to return for in-person instruction. This data is critical in creating schedules, assigning students, and developing plans for the rest of the school semester.

If a parent doesn't complete the form by the October 12 deadline, the form will default to virtual instruction, meaning your student will remain in the virtual instructional model they are currently in, whether it is with their school or with Atlanta Virtual Academy.

Please help us plan for the rest of the school year by making your decision today.

Students are out Monday and Tuesday

Don't forget that Monday, October 12, is Indigenous People's Day and Tuesday, October 13, is a teacher professional learning day. Students will be out on both days.

Celebrate Georgia PreK-Week!

It's not too late to celebrate Georgia PreK-Week! It's the 10th year, and [I had so much fun reading the picture book *Behind the Little Red Door*](#) as part of the annual celebration of the state's prekindergarten program. The book ponders what kind of adventures and environments

might exist just beyond a red door as described by Coy Bowles and illustrated by Joanna Davidovich.

In years past, Atlanta Public Schools invited our community, our legislators, and our parents into our schools to participate in Pre-K activities. We cannot open our schools in that traditional fashion, but we can still use this time to help our students get excited about reading and shine a spotlight on our hardworking Pre-K teachers.

I encourage you to take the time to read a book to our youngest learners and spark in them a lifelong passion for reading. They will be so excited to hear you read an exciting story. Take time today and use the hashtag #GAPreKWeek to help celebrate our teachers!

Thank you again and please continue to connect and engage with us. We really do appreciate hearing from you. Maintaining open communications during times like these is important. Have a great weekend and please be well.

Yours in Service,

Dr. Lisa Herring