

MEMORANDUM

To: All APS Families

From: Dr. Lisa Herring, Superintendent

Date: November 20, 2020

Subject: Reopening Update, Communications, Return from the Holiday Break

Dear APS Parents,

As we all prepare for the Thanksgiving holiday, I'd like to take the time to update you on our most recent thoughts for continuing this semester and moving into January 2021. Please allow me to first acknowledge my appreciation for your kind words and well wishes during my personal management of COVID-19. I tested positive several weeks ago and am grateful to be well.

The current surge of the COVID-19 and our ongoing need for safety remains the most critical area of focus for us all. We continue our work with health experts and partners to manage our day-to-day efforts and prepare for the future re-opening of school buildings. I want to express my sincere appreciation to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Emory University's School of Public Health, Morehouse School of Medicine, CDC and the Fulton County and Georgia Department of Public Health for their guidance, partnership and access to expertise.

Although it may not look like it now, this surge will end and we must continue to prepare our students, staff, and community for the reopening of school buildings. Based on the advice of experts and guidance we have been leveraging since the start of the pandemic, we are preparing for a January 2021 reopening of school buildings.

I have heard a wide range of feedback, so I want to make certain that you know we will work to ensure all information is articulated well and that the details related to health, safety and well-being are effectively communicated. We also want to ensure that when you receive information, you have access to us to provide answers, clarity and effective communication.

To that end, I am delaying the launch of the Intent to Return Survey until the week after Thanksgiving. We are delaying because it is important that we not release critical information about reopening during a time when we are not readily available to answer your questions due to the holiday.

Upon return, we will release details and host a District Townhall on December 3rd to discuss the reopening of school buildings. We will then open the Intent to Return Declaration Form for you to complete. This form covers the third nine weeks, *January 19th through March 15th* and will be open from December 3rd through December 21st. This is an opportunity for families to change their previous declaration or to declare if they didn't do so previously.

In the meantime, I am asking all of APS to take the upcoming week to focus on your family. For many of us, it will look a lot different because of the constraints COVID-19 has placed on us. We may not all be able to spend time with family and friends in person this year or reach out and hug them like in years past. Still, I want to encourage all of us to remember the love that keeps us bonded to family and friends no matter the distance between us.

Have a wonderful weekend, a Happy Thanksgiving, and please be well.

Yours in Service,

Dr. Lisa Herring