

MEMORANDUM

To: All APS Employees

From: Dr. Lisa Herring, Superintendent

Date: July 10, 2020

Subject: School Reopening Plans and other Important Updates

With an unprecedented school year ahead of us, the Atlanta Public Schools community - and many of our colleagues - anxiously await essential updates about how we are dealing with a global pandemic. I will continue to provide you with regular reports of our work in an attempt to alleviate some of the anxiety we all are feeling.

With Day One of a new school year rapidly approaching, I wanted to update you on the district's plans to reopen schools for 2020-2021 and efforts to keep staff, students, and the community safe and well.

School Reopening Update

During this pandemic, the health and wellness of our students, educators, and staff remain the top priority. At this time, the trajectory of new cases in Atlanta, Fulton County, and Georgia more than suggests – it demands – that we take the utmost of caution and delay any in-person return to our schools.

Therefore, as part of our plan to reopen schools, we will propose to the Atlanta Board of Education that we delay the first official day of school by two weeks, moving it from Monday, August 10, to Monday, August 24, when we will resume teaching and learning within a virtual model.

Because this proposal includes a change to the school calendar, the Board has to approve it. I will be making this recommendation during a special called Board meeting on Monday, July 13. More work is contingent on the Board approving a new calendar with the delayed first day of school at the meeting on Monday. I will provide you with more information and dates next week.

APS leadership and I relied heavily on a considerable amount of data and research to develop a plan to return to school for the 2020-2021 school year. This included reopening surveys that were distributed to staff and the community. I am planning to review the results of those surveys during Monday's Board meeting.

Reopening for Central Office Staff

Amid the extensive research and planning for reopening schools for the new school year, many

have asked about when central office staff would return to the Alonzo A. Crim Center for Learning and Leadership and other district office buildings for in-person work.

Although we had considered Monday, July 13th, as a possible return date, I have made a decision that we will not bring staff back to work on-site at that time.

Even before I was sworn in on July 1st as the new superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools, I had been working with senior leaders and facilities experts to develop a safe, efficient, and effective way for all of us to return to work at CLL and in our offices. Because of the substantial spread of COVID-19 across Metro Atlanta and Georgia, I felt we could not risk reopening CLL.

Thus, we will continue to work virtually until we determine a safe method for our return. Such a method will involve a variety of health and safety practices and procedures including staggered schedules, enhanced social distancing and health measures, and work station enhancements. We continue to work through those details.

Thank you again for your commitment to the work of APS. Stay healthy and have a great weekend

Yours in service,

Dr. Lisa Herring
Superintendent
Atlanta Public Schools