

MEMORANDUM

To: All APS Families

From: Dr. Lisa Herring, Superintendent

Date: July 10, 2020

Subject: School Reopening Plans and other Important Updates

It is with great joy and excitement that I have joined Atlanta Public Schools as your new superintendent. I believe strongly in the inner strength, power, and talent of our children and that with strong teachers and schools, we can maximize their talents so they can pursue whatever life purposes they choose. I could not feel more honored to work in service for you and your beautiful children.

I recognize that I join Atlanta Public Schools during a pandemic and civic unrest. But I truly believe that when all of us – students, parents, educators, support staff, and administrators – work together, we are empowered to do all we can to ensure the success of every child in APS. Through a close partnership, we can meet our mission to prepare every student for college, career, and life in a caring culture of trust and collaboration.

With a new school year rapidly approaching, I wanted to update you on the district's plans to reopen schools for 2020-2021.

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.

Middle School Athletics

Earlier this summer, Atlanta Public Schools reopened sports activities for high school athletics to allow for summer conditioning. The district has at a minimum adhered to guidelines as set forth by the Georgia High School Association.

Unfortunately, we have decided to cancel APS fall sports for middle schools. Due to the rise in COVID-19 cases, we felt this was the safest and best practice at this time. As it stands, we will look to resume middle school sports during the winter sports season.

Graduation Ceremonies for Class of 2020

In alignment with the current public health status in Fulton County and the substantial spread of COVID-19 in the state of Georgia, Atlanta Public Schools will no longer host the 2020 in-person graduations the week of July 20th. The ceremonies will be postponed to a later safe date.

While we understand that this decision is a disappointment to the Class of 2020 and their loved ones, the safety of our graduates, families and district employees remains a top priority. We are committed to rescheduling graduations when the community health status improves.

Again, we still believe #APSGrad2020 is #worththewait and look forward to honoring our graduates in person soon!

Please continue to connect with us on our website at any time using *Let's Talk* at <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us>. We always look forward to hearing from you. Enjoy your week, and I'll be back in touch with you soon!

Yours in service,

Dr. Lisa Herring