

MEMORANDUM

To: All APS Families

From: Dr. Meria Joel Carstarphen, Superintendent

Date: May 18, 2020

Subject: End of School Year Updates for APS Families

Can you believe that it's officially the last week of our 2020 school year? What an incredible journey we've traveled together, working our way through the uncharted impacts of COVID-19 on our school system. It wasn't easy, it was sometimes daunting and even exhausting, but our collective focus and hard work have helped position APS for a strong finish. We couldn't have done this work without you, and I am so grateful and encouraged by the support and engagement we received from our parents and this community. Thank you.

End of School Year Virtual Town Hall - Tuesday, May 26

Don't miss our End of School Year Virtual Town Hall on Tuesday, May 26 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. on [Facebook Live](#) (@AtlantaPublicSchools). Be part of the discussion about our virtual summer learning opportunities, our summer food distribution plan, and the District's preparations for the reopening of school in the fall. This is an opportunity for you to ask questions, give feedback, and get the latest updates from APS. See you there!

Class of 2020 Video Celebrations Begin this Week

The wait is finally over! It's time to celebrate the Class of 2020! Please join us on Facebook Live at <https://www.facebook.com/AtlantaPublicSchools> today, May 18 through Friday, May 22 for our video celebrations. We will be premiering 14 celebratory videos in honor of our graduating high school seniors. Each video includes remarks from the school's principal, valedictorian, salutatorian, and myself as well as footage of our beautiful students. Although our official ceremonies with all of the traditional pomp and circumstance are delayed until a safer day, our seniors will be wearing their caps and gowns!

Each school celebration promises a lot of hope and heart, love and laughs, and tears and cheers! You can find all of the details at <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/gradnation>. Here's our #WorthTheWait broadcast schedule:

Monday, May 18

- Coretta Scott King 5:00 p.m.
- Best 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, May 19

- Alonzo A. Crim High, 1 p.m.
- KIPP Atlanta Collegiate 4 p.m.

- Therrell High 7 p.m.

Wednesday, May 20

- Grady High 1 p.m.
- Jackson High 4 p.m.
- Booker T. Washington High 7 p.m.

Thursday, May 21

- Mays High 1 p.m.
- Douglass High 4 p.m.
- South Atlanta High 7 p.m.

Friday, May 22

- Carver STEAM 1 p.m.
- Carver Early College 4 p.m.
- North Atlanta High 7 p.m.

If you miss the live video premieres, be sure to visit our Facebook page to watch those videos on demand. #APSGrad2020 is #WorthTheWait!

Survey Follow Up

By now, you should have received a survey card from us that will help us determine your needs and identify community partners who can help. Please take a moment to complete the survey and send it back to us as soon as possible. You can even complete the survey online by scanning the QR code or simply drop the completed prepaid card in the mail. If you experience any issues scanning the QR code, you can still complete the survey online using the student code on your card and by visiting <https://dig.apsgraphs.com/parentsurvey/> or by clicking the direct link from the [APS district home page](#).

We are all working diligently to do more to help our students achieve. Better schools alone will not ensure that we achieve our mission and educate every child. We need more support from home and our community. While APS cannot do everything, we can make connections with tried and true partners who provide key services that can help our families. Once we receive the information from our survey, we will share it with our generous partners who match our community's needs.

Summer Food Distribution Plan

APS plans to extend its food distribution program into the early part of the summer with the help of our food services vendor, SFE, and our generous partners. As part of the plan, we will end food distribution at our eight school sites and through bus routes following food service on Monday, May 18. The program will resume for three Mondays in June (1st, 8th, and 15th) where SFE will make and deliver five-day meal packs for children. The service will be scaled back to provide 60,000 meals over three weeks, down from 160,000 meals weekly, with spending authority to cover the District's summer school feeding financial obligation through June 30 with

key partners. The food will be provided to Horizons, Breakthrough, and the Boys and Girls Club to be distributed to families enrolled in their feeding programs.

While the student meal distribution from our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) team will also conclude on Monday, May 18, our designated ESOL communities in the Grady and North Atlanta clusters will receive the student meals for three Mondays in June from La Amistad, one of our generous partners. Grocery distribution from the APS ESOL team to these families will end on Tuesday, May 19; however, plans are in the works with additional partners for summer groceries for approximately 1,000 ESOL families across the entire district.

Social and Emotional Needs of Students over the Summer

Social and emotional learning (SEL) will continue to be important for our students and families throughout the summer. We've all experienced a very emotionally challenging time these past few weeks. We must be open, honest, and reassuring in our communication about these issues, and we must give our children space to share their fears while we practice active listening. Here's a helpful list of activities that you can use to help your children manage their emotions this summer:

1. **Strike a Pose:** To increase mind and body balance, while decreasing stress and anxiety, practice a few yoga poses.
2. **Pressure Point:** Gently massage the pressure point between your thumb and pointer finger for one minute. Switch hands and do it again. This may calm anxiety and relieve pain, especially headache pain.
3. **Just Breathe:** Practice deep breathing for six full breaths. Model for students by breathing in slowly for 4-counts, hold for 4-seconds, and breathe out slowly for 4-counts. Repeat.
4. **Lyrical Genius:** Create a song or poem to express how you are feeling about the current state of affairs. It can be related to COVID-19, virtual learning, or other topics.
5. **Just Journal It:** Keep a journal (personal or virtual) of your adventures during your time away from school. You may also use your journal to track your emotions. Record how you feel, why you feel this way, and any needs that you may have as a result of these feelings. Encourage students to share their needs with you or an accountability buddy.

Summer Virtual Activities Available

Don't forget that there are lots of summer virtual learning activities available for our students. Go to our [myBackPack for Summer resource webpage](#) to learn more about all of the digital resources available for summer use. MyBackPack, which your student currently has access to, offers a wealth of digital resources for practice, review, or even enrichment. Also, all APS students have access to myON Reader, a digital eBook platform that provides Lexile-appropriate books for students.

As a reminder, our eResources and eBook shelf will still be available to provide teachers and students with databases, information, and books that support learning and independent reading for pleasure. Our eBook shelf is a robust collection of both fiction and nonfiction titles that are aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Additionally, the [Atlanta Virtual Academy](#)

[\(AVA\)](#) will provide Middle and High School students the opportunity to recover credits or participate in courses for advancement. Visit <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Domain/294> to learn more.

Also, APS and Fulton County Library System have launched a tandem Beanstack account, where both APS and Fulton County Library patrons are encouraged to link their accounts and join the Race2Read reading campaign. All minutes read as a library patron or an APS student will help to reach our reading goal. Students are encouraged to read and log 20 minutes every day in Beanstack, even in the summer. Fulton County Library will continue to offer live streaming storytime for children and adults via Facebook and will add a teen book talk program that will be held via Instagram.

Considerations for Re-Opening Schools

APS is planning to open schools this fall on August 10th, which is in alignment with the 2020-2021 school calendar. We are still working to determine the model for instruction this fall. As we prepare for reopening, our internal cross-functional team is developing several potential models and scenarios, each following the most recent health and safety guidelines from the CDC, state, and local public health officials, and best practices for instruction based on transitioning students back into the school environment through a combination of social-emotional and academic supports.

We will continue to vet ideas and seek input from internal and external stakeholders, and will be sharing more information about these models. The new superintendent and administration will need to determine how they will move forward on potential models. More information to come as soon as possible.

Get Kids Connected Campaign

Thanks to the generous support of our partners, [Get Our Kids Connected](#) continues to close the digital divide and give greater access to Atlanta Public Schools students. If you know an APS student who needs an internet connection or a laptop, please complete an intake form at <https://tinyurl.com/GOKCform>. Eligible families will be contacted directly with the next steps. To learn more, please email getourkidsconnected@apsk12.org, call 404 802 KIDS (5437) or visit www.atlantapublicschools.us/getourkidsconnected.

Health Resources for our Families

The Community Organized Relief Effort (CORE) in partnership with the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation is providing free COVID-19 testing in Atlanta at the Home Depot Backyard (1 Backyard Way, Atlanta, GA 30313) at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. To learn more and to sign up to get tested, please visit www.coreresponse.org/covid19-Atlanta. For registration assistance, please call the COVID hotline at Good Samaritan Health Clinic at (404) 523-6571 ext. 4298.

Also, Whitefoord Health Clinics are a valuable resource to our families for most routine and urgent health needs, including COVID-19 testing. Call their hotline number, (470) 427-2634 ext. 123, or visit them online at <https://www.whitefoord.org/covid19>. The Whitefoord Teen Thrive

Line is available Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at (470) 427-2624 ext. 305. This is a resource line and not a crisis hotline. Anyone who is in danger or worried that someone else may be in danger should call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

Connect with APS 24/7 on *Let's Talk* at <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us> and let's continue to work together to ensure student success. Have a great week!

Meria