

## MEMORANDUM

To: All APS Employees

From: Dr. Lisa Herring, Superintendent

Date: February 26, 2021

Subject: **COVID-19 Vaccinations, Testing at Douglass, AP Honor Schools, Air Purifier Donation, and Other Updates**

As I celebrate my first Black History Month as superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools, I have thought about the underlying evolution and purpose of this traditional part of our school calendar. While we certainly celebrate those African Americans who shaped our culture, our politics, and our way of life, do we do enough to delve into our personal heritage or our own possible impacts on the history to come?

As for my own history, it is humbling for me to reflect on the many trailblazers, historians, civil rights leaders, and cultural architects who have shaped my journey and the black female leader that I am. My journey has been shaped by the fact that I am a granddaughter of both a sharecropper and business owner. I forever celebrate that I am a daughter of a pastor and civil servant.

In knowing my history, I know that strong African-American men and women help give me the strength and assurance to tackle such challenges as achievement gaps, equity, or learning, leading, and serving others during a pandemic.

I share more in my blog at [www.talkupaps.com](http://www.talkupaps.com), and I encourage you to take a look.

### **COVID-19 Vaccinations and Staff Survey Deadline**

We were thrilled to hear the news about Governor Brian Kemp's plans to expand the list of people eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine to include teachers and school staff. The state has launched a pre-registration site for all Georgians at [myvaccinegeorgia.com](http://myvaccinegeorgia.com).

In the meantime, APS continues to work with the Fulton County Board of Health on future vaccination events for APS employees. As soon as we have a firm date for an APS vaccination event, we will let you know. But, we want to encourage everyone to get vaccinated. You don't have to wait for our APS vaccination event to get vaccinated.

Earlier this month, we sent you a brief survey to opt-in or out of planning through this partnership. Responding to this survey does not constitute consent for treatment, but if you opt in you will be contacted again when appointments are available and will be able to decide at that time if you want to take the vaccine. Please complete the survey by **5 p.m. today** so we can

ensure the Board of Health reserves the adequate number of vaccines needed for our APS staff. If you have any questions, please contact [CovidVaccine@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:CovidVaccine@atlanta.k12.ga.us).

Details about vaccinations are available at [www.atlantapublicschools.us/getVaccinatedAPS](http://www.atlantapublicschools.us/getVaccinatedAPS). If you wish to volunteer to help at the vaccination events that are being planned, please check [www.signupgenius.com/go/GetVaccinatedAPS](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/GetVaccinatedAPS) for updates.

I also want to note that we will have another APS Protects: COVID-19 Testing Strategy learning session on APS XChange. Please tune in at noon on Wednesday, March 3. Join us live on <https://aps.workplace.com>.

### **Drive-up & Walk-up COVID-19 Testing at Douglass High**

I am proud that we launched a drive-up and walk-up COVID-19 testing site for our students, families, staff, and the community at Douglass High School this week. The District teamed up with some of Atlanta's leading healthcare organizations – Viral Solutions and pediatric researchers from Emory University and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta – to bring highly efficient drive-through PCR COVID-19 testing at no out-of-pocket expense to the entire APS family.

Our APS family also has the choice of being tested again at the same time, using new, emerging, easier, and simpler methods. This second free test will help researchers develop test-at-home technologies that will save lives – from Atlanta to all across the globe. Each person tested a second time receives a gift card, along with the assurance that they played a part in helping end this global pandemic.

The outdoor testing area is located on the north side of the building and will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, through the end of the school year.

### **State Names 2021 AP Honor Schools**

The Georgia Department of Education this week named the state's AP Honor Schools for 2021. As a state, Georgia's public school students for the Class of 2020 posted the 17<sup>th</sup>-highest Advancement Placement pass rate in the nation, according to College Board data. I am pleased that several of our high schools were highlighted for achievement, high levels of participation, access and support, and more.

Congratulations to principals, teachers, school counselors, and staff at Atlanta Classical Academy, Charles R. Drew Charter, Grady High, KIPP Atlanta Collegiate, Maynard H. Jackson High, North Atlanta High, South Atlanta High, Therrell High, and Booker T. Washington High. For the full lists and descriptions, please click [here](#).

### **Donation of Air Purifiers**

We are grateful to Operation HOPE, 100 Black Men, and other philanthropists for the generosity that they have shown our schools. These groups donated more than 100 air purifiers at the Alonzo A. Crim Center for Learning and Leadership this week, which we will soon distribute to

our schools. A big thank you to John Hope Bryant, Tommy Dortch, and Fred Maxik for helping us continue to protect our Atlanta Public Schools community.

**Suspicious Mail Awareness**

Our Office of Safety and Security this week received an alert from the Federal Bureau of Investigation about suspicious mail received recently at several Florida schools and a high school in Georgia. Although there has been no specific threat to any schools in Atlanta Public Schools, I wanted to make you aware in case you come across any suspicious packages. Should you have any concern at all about anything in the mail, refrain from handling the mail and call the Office of Safety and Security immediately at 404.802.2000.

**GO Team Candidacy Deadline**

If you wish to serve on one of our GO Teams, candidacy declarations are open now through Feb. 28. GO Teams have decision-making authority over individual school strategic plans, budget approval, school-based solution flexibility requests, and more. No experience is needed; training will be provided. Learn more at [www.apsstrongschools.com](http://www.apsstrongschools.com).

Thanks as always for your service and dedication! Please stay healthy and be well.

Yours in Service,

Lisa Herring