

BEST ACADEMY (6-12)
1190 NORTHWEST DR. NW
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30318
404.802.4960

August 2, 2020

Dear BEST Family,

I trust that everyone has remained safe and in good health during this difficult period. I am happy to report that both the district and our school are making exceptional progress with finalizing plans for when students begin school on Monday, August 24.

As shared previously; a decision was made for all high schools in APS to change from our current 4x8 block schedule to a 4x4 block schedule for the 2020-2021 school year. We know that students will have a difficult time seeing 8 teachers in a hybrid or face-to-face model. This change allows students to focus on just 4 classes per semester, instead of 8. The 4x4 is a simplified, less difficult, approach that has been used in high school settings for many years. Many of the questions you might have about the change to the 4x4 schedule will be answered in the FAQ below.

We have plans to have one of the “BEST” virtual models for learning in the state of Georgia. While this is a bold claim, our teachers, non-instructional and administrative staff are ready to “put in” the work. I encourage you to stay informed about plans as they continuously develop and change.

Sincerely,

Dr. Timothy Jones

High School Frequently Asked Questions



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Q: What is APS' rationale for returning to school virtually?

A: The health and wellness of our students and staff in Atlanta Public Schools has always been our top priority. Every decision we make is being made through the lens of public health and based on the scientific data related to our local community.

In Atlanta, the data is showing an upward trend in the trajectory of new COVID-19 cases. Atlanta is in "substantial spread" of COVID-19, which demands that we take the utmost of caution and do what's best for our students and our community. That's why we're opening virtually.

Our decision is consistent with what we're seeing in the city of Atlanta right now. The city has moved back to Stage 1 of their recovery process in light of the current COVID-19 trajectory. Fulton County has pulled back to Stage 1 of recovery as well.

We are committed to maintaining consistent communication with the community as we prepare to reopen. During the first nine weeks and throughout the school year, we will continue an ongoing assessment of the public health data to determine whether our recommendation should change. We will keep our families updated as we make those ongoing assessments.

Q: Can you explain your reopening plans in more detail?

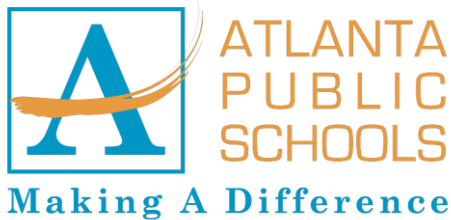
A: Pre-planning activities and our "Runway for Return to Learning" will run from August 3 through August 21 with mostly virtual activities but may require some in-person activities for small groups of parents to pick up needed supplies and materials for the nine-week period.

That time will focus on Student Wellness & Preparation, Assess Student Learning, provide Social Emotional Learning Supports as well as Health & Wellness Checks; distribute Student Supplies, and collect Emergency Contact Information.

Day One for us will be Monday, August 24, where we will provide Virtual Learning for all students for at least the first 9 weeks of school or until we have entered minimal/moderate spread and based on public health guidance. In addition, to focus on student learning, we will conduct additional student assessments and get-to-know-you activities and set learning expectations to get a strong start for an unconventional school year.

As part of this Phase I of reopening, APS will implement a virtual instruction model for students where they remain enrolled at and receive instruction from teachers at their school. While similar to last spring, the model offers key improvements focused on greater connections, engagement, and best practices for distance learning.

Through our Department of Student Services, we will align our ESOL and Gifted programs to the virtual model, develop a Whole Child Supports Framework with social-emotional learning and positive behavior supports at its core, and create a "Trauma to Transition Team" to help the most vulnerable students and



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staff with this return to school. We are developing Intervention Services and Targeted Support for Students with Disabilities as well.

In regards to Technology, we have a series of critical tasks that include:

- Ensuring that all students/staff have access to a working device or hotspots to students with no devices or connectivity challenges
- Reorganizing technology resources to provide additional virtual support
- Providing additional instructional technology tools and apps to students
- Offering parent learning sessions for working in a virtual environment

In the area of Operations and Health Services, we are mandating a variety of safety and cleaning protocols. These include requiring the use of masks and other personal protective equipment; placing signage as reminders about our health practices, protocols, and hygiene; providing hand washing and sanitizing stations; and regular screenings and temperature checks.

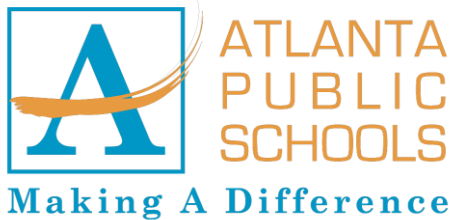
During the first nine weeks of school, APS will provide breakfast and lunch through weekly distributions beginning on Monday, August 10. We will provide details in the near future.

Q: Will the distance learning model be similar to the spring? Or will it be a different model? How much direct instruction will there be? Will there be remediation at the start of the year?

A: Virtual learning for the 2020/2021 year will be different from last spring's virtual learning. Please keep in mind that last year when face-to-face instruction was suddenly halted, teachers had one day to plan for virtual learning during an unprecedented and unpredictable time. This new school year, teachers will have 3 weeks to prepare for virtual instruction for students. We will also implement a new program, Standards of Service, which has been developed by APS and provides guidelines and expectations for virtual learning. The Standards of Service also indicates how much each child in each grade will be engaged in small group synchronous and asynchronous instruction. In essence, we are hoping to streamline expectations and develop more consistency between grade levels this year. The district has also purchased a content management system to help with this process. More information will be forthcoming about this new system.

Q: For families with kids in multiple grade levels, will the school day be similarly structured?

A: Yes. The District is entertaining the possibility of differentiating start times. An example would be K-2 starting at 8 am and 3-5 at 8:30 am. While this is not yet set in stone, different grade levels will follow similar schedules with specials and breaks embedded into the days or weeks. At BEST 6-8 graders are maintaining the 4x8 schedule while High School students will be on a 4x4 schedule. Start times are the same.



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Q: Are there childcare sharing platforms or options for collaboration for parents who have to work?

A: The district is currently exploring ways to support families who have to work. Neither APS staff nor APS facilities may be used for the purpose of childcare.

Q: Will there be any meal distribution to children during virtual learning. If so, how?

A: As part of the Summer Seamless Option (SSO) APS will resume free community meal service on Monday for two weeks, August 10, and August 17, the district will distribute 10 meals – five breakfasts and five lunches to any child in the community. BEST Academy will be a food distribution center/location.

Starting August 24 – the first day of school – **APS will only provide meals to APS students.** Meal distribution will occur Monday each week through the entire period of virtual learning. Meals will be distributed from 12 central school sites via bus routes or parent pick-up. Families that do not receive free or reduced lunch **MUST** pre-order meals each week through the <https://www.myschoolbucks.com/login> online pre-order system. All families paying for meals will need to submit payment through the MySchoolBucks online payment system. Schools will not be collecting money for school meals.

For the 2020-2021 school year, BEST Academy (6-12) will participate in the Community Enrichment Program (CEP), which provides all students in the school with free breakfast and lunch. All students **MUST** apply to qualify for free or reduced meals. Free meals will continue for all students at these schools for 30 days. After the first 30 days of school, students will pay full price for meals until their application is approved. Here is the link for the online application:
<https://www.myschoolapps.com/Application>

Q: Will there be any physical materials that will be handed out?

A: Yes. Parents and families will be able to pick up (via a touchless drive by) supplies, textbooks, school folders, and technology supplies during the week of August 17th. More information to come.

Q: Will students be allowed to complete schoolwork and zoom meetings on a flexible schedule to accommodate parents that are at work, working from home, or who have siblings?

A: Absolutely. Teachers will need to be flexible with parent work schedules. Expectations and grading will be communicated prior to Day One. We understand that this is a balancing act, and we ask for the same understanding for our teachers who are balancing their own children at home as well. Flexibility in grading and classwork will be given within the boundaries of the district's grading policy.



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Q: How will children in special services get the support they need? SST, IEP, 504?

A: The school will continue to adhere to guidelines set forth in the IDEA by meeting the individualized needs of students. Teachers will implement students' IEPs to the greatest extent appropriate in the virtual environment. Prior to the start of the school year, each student with an IEP will be provided a digital learning plan. The digital learning plan will outline how the services in the student's current IEP will be executed in a virtual format. This letter will detail what that will look like and if any concerns arise the IEP team can meet to discuss *further*.

Q: Is there a possibility of in-person options?

A: There are currently no options for in-person learning at this time. Decisions regarding this will ultimately come from the district.

Q: Am I allowed to enroll my child in another program while maintaining enrollment in APS?

A: As long as a student participates and attends all lessons each day, the student is considered to be actively enrolled in Atlanta Public Schools.

Q: Will virtual tutoring be offered?

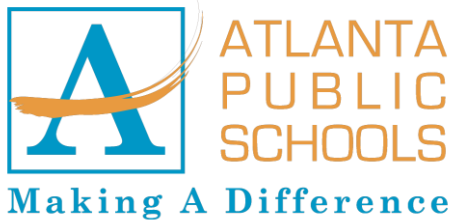
A: There is an APS Board policy that prohibits APS teachers to receive pay for tutoring APS students. However, teachers may offer times for after school tutoring on a non-pay basis. Best students also have access to MyTutor.com

Q: Will there be consistency with instruction within grade levels?

A: Yes. We understand the importance of consistency among staff and are working hard to make sure all staff are planning, teaching, and delivering instruction in sync throughout the grade level and school..

Q: When will we know what will happen after the 9 weeks? Is there any chance that this 9-week period will be shortened?

A: The superintendent has stated that we are in substantial spread of the virus with Fulton County (Greater than 100 cases per 100,000 residents) and we must get to Moderate spread (6-99 cases per 100,000 people) in order to entertain face to face learning. This can be accomplished by wearing masks, social distancing, and refraining from attending large gatherings of 10 or more people.



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Q: How are teachers and students going to be held accountable for attendance and completing classwork?

A: Staff will follow the same attendance guidelines as set forth by Atlanta Public Schools. They are to clock in by 8:15 am and are contractually relieved by 3:45 pm (7.5 hours/day). Students will be held accountable for attendance through daily participation logs taken each morning. When we receive more guidance from APS around grading expectations; it will be shared.

Q: How can parents sign up for access to Parent Portal Infinite Campus?

A: Parents can get information at this website: <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/domain/11609>

Q: Will there be any testing at the beginning of the year to determine where students are academically?

A: Yes. During the week of 8/17, teachers will begin to administer district assessments. Students will be required to take these assessments virtually, at home. This will give teachers data around learning gaps and student needs. A parent To Do/ Not To Do informational sheet will be given to parents as a helper when students are taking at-home assessments.

Q: Will families have access to school facilities and playgrounds?

A: At this moment, families will not have access to school facilities and playgrounds per APS guidelines.

Q: Will parents have access to teaching materials, teacher notes, and textbooks to help supplement their child's learning?

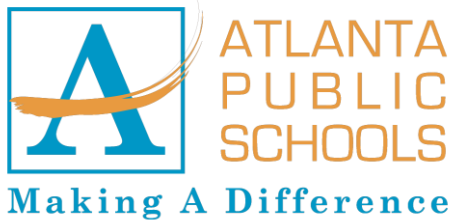
A: Yes. There will be pick up times for students and parents to retrieve curricular materials for their children as needed. Local school teams will designate pick up/retrieval times that work best for their respective communities.

Q: Can zooms be divided into "optional/social" and "educational/mandatory" times?

A: All Zoom calls set forth by the teachers will be deemed Optional or Educational. For the most part, any time a teacher is holding a zoom call (HR teacher, Gifted, Specials, Intervention, Spanish), the call will be mandatory.

Q: Will we still follow the APS calendar and have the same breaks?

A: Yes. We will follow the APS calendar. The calendar has been shortened by 10 days, other than that, it will remain the same.



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Q: Will there be Milestones testing this year?

A: The USDOE has said yes to Georgia Milestones this year, however, we are submitting a waiver and waiting on a response.

Q: Can teachers be required to teach from their classrooms at school?

A: Currently, teachers CANNOT be required to teach from their classrooms; however, some will be able to teach in their classrooms on a voluntary basis.

Q: Will Fridays still be designated as a FLEX learning day?

A: According to the Standards of Service set forth by APS, all schools and students will participate in a 5-day work week. This means that Fridays will no longer be designated as FLEX learning days.

Q: Who do we contact if we need IPAD/Technology assistance?

A: All students will have the opportunity to receive a digital device in the coming weeks leading up to day 1. In the meantime, feel free to contact Get Our Kids Connected for more information.

**For more information, contact 404.802 KIDS (5437) or getourkidsconnected@apsk12.org
Learn more at www.atlantapublicschools.us/getourkidsconnected**

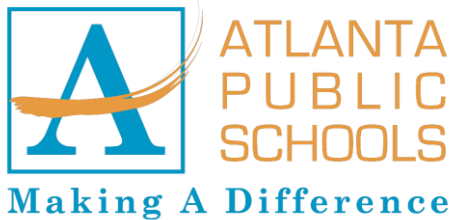
Q: Will the virtual learning be live or recorded? Will my child need to be in front of a computer at specific times?

A: It is the expectation that virtual lessons are recorded and made available for viewing at a later date. While we encourage students to be engaged in the daily lessons, we understand individual family needs and will be flexible to accommodate.

Q: How can I get a backpack and supplies for my student?

A: Atlanta Public Schools is working in partnership with the Empty Stocking Fund. Please register at the following link: <https://www.emptystockingfund.org/aps-backpack-request-2020/>

Hybrid & Face to Face Learning:



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A: Virtual learning for the 2020/2021 year will be different from last spring's virtual learning. Please keep in mind that last year when face-to-face instruction was suddenly halted, teachers had one day to plan for virtual learning during an unprecedented and unpredictable time. This new school year, teachers will have (3) weeks to prepare for virtual instruction for students. We will also implement a new program, Standards of Service, which has been developed by APS and provides guidelines and expectations for virtual learning. The Standards of Service also indicates how much each child in each grade will be engaged in small group, face to face, synchronous and asynchronous instruction. In essence, we are hoping to streamline expectations and develop more consistency between grade levels this year. The district has also purchased a content management system to help with this process. More information will be forthcoming about this new system.

Student/ Daily Schedules:

Q: Has there been consideration of the school schedule with 15 min breaks between classes so students can have screen breaks, restroom, snack breaks, etc.?

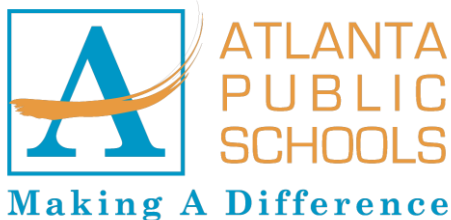
A: Students may receive breaks up to 10 minutes between classes and a lunch period each day. This will allow students a break between classes and maximize the amount of time they spend in class daily.

Q: Is there consideration of ending school between 1-2pm and allowing the afternoon to be set for office hours/tutorial/extra support?

The required hours for students to receive daily instruction, in all four classes, does not allow school to end prior to 3 pm. The daily schedule will allow time for students to receive support each day from 3:10 to 4:00 pm.

Q: Will students be required to set appointments for office hours or are teachers expected to be available until a certain time for support?

A: Teachers are expected to offer support to students as indicated in the daily schedule. Students should reach out to their respective teachers if they have questions and need additional support.



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Q: Will there be an opportunity to adjust schedules if there are classes that don't seem feasible or necessary to take virtually (i.e. electives)? Also, a rumor is circulating that the students may end up only having 4 classes each semester. If this becomes reality, will there be an opportunity to adjust schedules?

A: All classes that students are scheduled to take, including electives will be offered online/ virtually. Counselors are currently reviewing student schedules. Student schedules were set prior to the switch to the 4x4 schedule. With a few exceptions, students' classes will remain the same for the school year.

Q: In a 4x4 schedule (four classes every day for each semester) how are AP courses and tyesting being handled?

A: Students taking AP classes will take them in the 4x4 format, completing the class in either the fall or the spring semester. Students that take AP classes during the fall semester will receive support from teachers during the spring semester to review for their AP exams.

Q: How will one-semester classes be handled in the 4x4 schedule?

A: Students will receive half credit (.5) after and before the first and last 9 weeks of the semester. An example of this would be a Health and a Personal Fitness class. Both are one-semester classes. A student would receive a grade for Health after the first 9 weeks of the semester. At the conclusion of the first 9 weeks, the student would take Personal Fitness and receive a grade at the completion of the next 9 weeks.

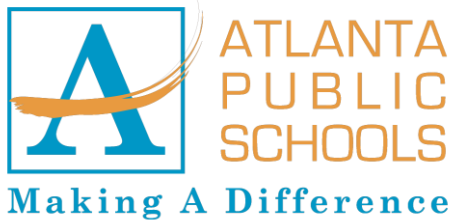
Q: What processes will be different about grading? If teachers are slow to grade, grades will be final in a very short 9 weeks giving students little time to understand what they are missing.

A: We fully acknowledge the need for teachers to enter grades into the portal and return work in a timely manner. This process will be closely monitored by the administration. Parents and students are encouraged to reach out to content administrators if there are concerns regarding grading.

Technology:

Q: What technology upgrades have APS purchased to ensure the best experience for students?

A: Upgrades to Zoom, which include expanded capabilities for longer sessions, more participants, breakout sessions and better monitoring capabilities have been purchased by the district.



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Instructional:

Q: How will you gauge how well students are learning in this environment?

A: Students will be given formal and informal assessments during the semester to gauge their level of content mastery. Instructional Coaches, Master Teachers and Administrators will be observing classes consistently throughout the semester.

Q: If teachers aren't required to go to their schools to teach, how will they be held accountable?

A: Regardless of where teachers are conducting their lessons, the criteria for teacher accountability (live classroom observations, viewing of recorded material, lesson planning, student engagement level, student assessments) remains the same.

Q: Can teachers be required to teach from their classrooms at school?

A: The district is not requiring that teachers teach from their classrooms at school.

Q: Will students receive graded work from teachers in a timely fashion so that they can learn from feedback/comments? Will teachers be required to put grades in infinite campus before moving on to new material, so students know where they stand?

A: This process will be monitored and a system has been developed to ensure that all grades are entered into the gradebook in a timely manner. Teachers will reteach material when formal and informal assessments indicate that students have failed to reach mastery.

Q: Will teachers be required to teach (not just assign work)?

A: Yes, all teachers will be required to teach live virtual lessons daily. The lessons will be student centered and require student engagement.

Q: Can students text/call teachers within reasonable hours in the event that immediate help or attention is needed?

A: Teachers will inform students of their available hours for communication both during and after school. Students can reach out to teachers using acceptable forms of communication when they need support.

Q: Will class lectures/instruction be recorded (zoom etc.) so students can go back to see instruction and enable supervision and follow through by administration?

A: Yes, it is a requirement for all lessons to be recorded for the exact reasons stated in the question.



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Q: May I use a virtual textbook?

A: Yes. Your teacher will let you know if a virtual textbook is available for your course.

Q: Can I receive a physical textbook?

A: Most of our courses have digital versions of the textbooks, and your teachers will let you know how to access them. If you need a hardcopy of any textbook, we will have a way for you to request one and pick it up from the school. More information is coming soon.

Q: Will the school utilize Edgenuity?

A: We will use it as a supplementary resource, but it will not be used as the primary instructional tool. It will, however, still be utilized for unit recovery.

Q: For students who struggle with a specific class, is it possible for them to receive in person instruction by appointment?

A: There are currently no provisions for face to face instruction. Students in need of extra support should reach out to their teacher(s) to schedule appointments for support.

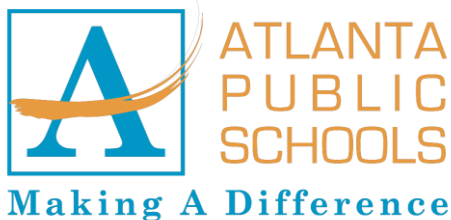
Q: How will schools support students that struggle or fail classes this school year, will they be required to take the subject again virtually (which is not helpful if they have difficulty with remote learning) If they fail on multiple subjects are they required to essentially take double the classes in the next academic year to catch up?

A: The virtual learning option is the only option currently offered. Students will receive support using this model until it is safe for students to return to the school building. Students that have to retake classes, typically, make up those classes in summer school and/or take them online during the school year. Counselors adjust student schedules to make it manageable for students that need to retake multiple classes.

Seniors/ College & Career:

Q: What will be done to support students during the college application process during the virtual learning time period? Will they have an opportunity to meet with the Graduation Coach or College and Career Counselor?

A: Seniors will communicate with Mrs. Sullivan (Graduation Coach) and our College and Career Counselor virtually until we physically report to school. The various support systems and activities utilized during the traditional school setting will be utilized during the virtual period.



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Q: How will the 4x4 schedule affect seniors? On a transcript, it could appear that they didn't take a particular course when in fact it will be taken 2nd semester.

A: We are updating our school profile to include the current change to a 4x4 schedule. The school profile is included in each students' application along with a copy of their senior year schedule. Further information will be given on how colleges are altering their admissions process due to the pandemic.

Q: How will Work Based Learning be implemented?

A: During the 9-week period of virtual learning, students in WBL will participate in a virtual program that focuses on employability skills (mock interviews, virtual job shadowing and guest speakers). The district will publish plans for the WBL curriculum beyond the first 9 weeks.

Athletics/ Extra-Curricular

Q: There are students whose strengths lie outside of academics. How will extra-curricular activities like sports, theatre, art, etc. be handled?

A: With the exception of fall sports, all face-to-face models for extra-curricular activities have been temporary suspended.

Student & Family Support

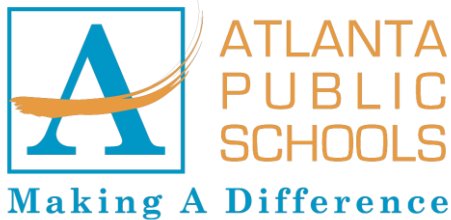
Q: Will teachers be required to use CONSISTENT, ACCURATE and TIMELY methods to communicate with students? Some examples (required that every teacher post their syllabus and all lecture notes/powerpoints in Google Classroom; clearly post remind codes and google classroom codes so that parents and students have access to all information, notifications, etc); (please ask teachers to be as clear as possible with assignments and to "make sure they are sure" before posting so that they do not have to send multiple remind and google classroom notifications to revise/clarify); (please require teachers to check their email daily and respond within 24-48 hours); finally (as others have mentioned, timely posting of grades).

A: Yes, teachers will be required to use consistent, accurate and timely methods to communicate with students. The examples given in the question are excellent. Expectations for communication will be reviewed during teacher preplanning.

Miscellaneous:

Q: Volunteer hours are more difficult to acquire during isolation. If virtual schooling continues past the first 9 weeks, will there be any changes to the deadline or number of hours needed?

A: The district will make a decision within the couple of weeks regarding the requirements for volunteer hours during the period of virtual learning.



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Technology Needs:

Q: Whom do I contact if I need a chromebook or an internet hotspot?

A: The district will be putting out a survey for all families to complete. Please look for that by August 3rd and if you have questions, please email Mrs. Stanley-Turner at lastanley-turner@atlanta.k12.ga.us

Q: Who do I contact if I am having a technical problem with a chromebook or a hotspot?

A: Call APS Support at 404-802-1000.

Q: What platform(s) will teachers use?

A: All teachers will have a Google Classroom. Individual teachers will let you know if there are *additional platforms being used for a course*.

Q: Does my student have an active email address from the district?

A: Yes. The email can be access through MyBackpack. The directions are attached [here](#).

Q: Will progress reports still be provided at the nine-week mark?

A: No. Grades will be formally posted to transcripts every 9 weeks (October, December, March, and May) as opposed to every 18 weeks (December and May.)

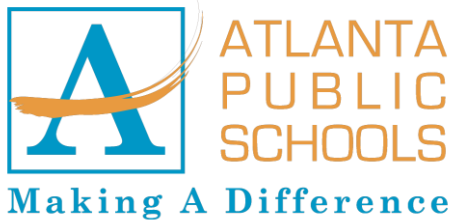
For Those in AP Classes

Q: What about AP exams first semester? There will be months between the class finishes and when the AP exam takes place.

A: We are unsure if or how the College Board will change the approach to exams. We are making plans for review sessions for students to prepare for exams in the spring, if they took the AP class in the fall.

Q: What about the AP exams second semester? Will the teaching be completed in time to take the exams?

A: Our AP teachers will ensure the teaching portion and the content review takes place before the exams. Candidly, this is an area all high schools just don't know a lot about. We will keep you informed as we learn more from College Board.



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For Those in Dual Enrollment:

Q: How will my dual enrollment student be handled?

A: Our counselor will work one-on-one with each Dual Enrollment student.

For Those with EIPs or 504 Plans:

Q: How will my child's REP or 504 Plan be affected?

Your student's case manager or Mr. Cedric Woodard (SELT) will be in touch with you before school begins. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns at that time.

Miscellaneous:

Q: When will the district resume food distributions?

A: Food distribution will begin August 10, 2020. BEST is a Distribution Center. We will let you know the locations and the times.

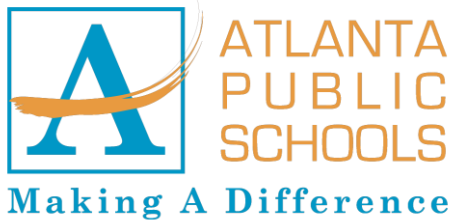
Q: What is APS MyBackPack? How do I locate my credentials for APS MyBackPack?

A: MyBackpack is a "one-stop-shopping" portal for all your frequently-used school files and apps! This is where you will find your email, textbooks, and any other instructional apps that will help you have a successful year. If you are a new user, we will have to assign you a student number. Current USERS Enter the APS student username (username) and lunch id (password)

Click on this link: <https://launchpad.classlink.com/atlanta>

Q: Whom do I contact if I have an issue with a particular subject area?

Subject Area	Name	Email
ARTS, ELA and World Language	Ms. TiJuana Kelley	Tijuana.Kelley@atlanta.k12.ga.us
CTAE, PE & JROTC	Mr. Robert Williams	Rpwilliams@atlanta.k12.ga.us
MATH	Ms. Jackson	stxjackson@atlanta.k12.ga.us
SCIENCE	Mr. Marlon Alfaro	Marlon.Alfaro@atlanta.k12.ga.us
SOCIAL STUDIES	Mr. Larry Guilford	Larry.Guilford@atlanta.k12.ga.us



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Q: How do I get a Certificate of Attendance?

A: The Georgia Department of Driver Services will now accept other items to prove school enrollment. Please review the easier options to prove school enrollment below from the DDS website:

How do I prove school enrollment?

- Below is a list of items we will accept during COVID-19 school closures:
 - A Georgia DDS [Certificate of School Enrollment \(DS-1\)](#) may be signed from the applicant's school and dated within the past six (6) months; [Click here for directions to have that form notarized by the school.](#)
 - Transcript provided by the customer's most recent school of attendance (Transcript does not have to be certified); Transcripts can be printed online in most school districts. Are you a current APS student and need a transcript? Click [HERE](#) to submit a transcript request to the APS Central Records Center.
 - Current progress or grade report with the customer's name on it. Progress reports and report cards can be printed online in most school districts.
 - Current school ID issued by the school or school system.
 - Other forms of school identification, showing the customer's first and last name.

For more information, please visit the Georgia Department of Driver Services' webpage:
<https://dds.georgia.gov/teen-drivers-and-covid-19>