

Herman J. Russell West End Academy 765 Peeples St. SW, Atlanta, GA 30310 Office Ph: 404-802-6800

July 28, 2021

Greetings H.J. Russell West End Academy Family!

We are back with a new beginning! After almost seventeen months of virtual learning and simultaneous teaching, we are on the brink of returning to some form of normalcy.

As you may know, we are no longer named Joseph Emerson Brown Middle School. In December 2020, the Atlanta Board of Education voted unanimously and approved our new school's name, Herman J. Russell West End Academy. As we embrace our new school's name, I want to provide you with some pertinent information that will assist your scholar with their transition back to school and ready for *Day One* on Thursday August 5, 2021.

SAVE THE DATE: HJRWEA Open House – Wednesday, Aug. 4th (3:00 – 5:00 pm) In-Person

Please pay special attention to this information letter, as there are some changes from the previous year.

As you plan the upcoming year, please note the new school hours of operation for middle school are 9:15 A.M – 4:15 PM. The earliest any student can be dropped off at the school is 8:45 A.M. It is very important that your scholar arrive to school on time every day. Attendance is key to taking advantage of all the resources and tools our teachers have to offer, and to help your scholar be successful. The Atlanta Public Schools Attendance Policy can be found in the *Student Code of Conduct* booklet which your child will receive on the first day of school. Review the *Student Code of Conduct* booklet with your scholar. There are several holidays built into our school system's calendar. Please try to plan your vacations in conjunction with the school's holidays so that your child does not miss any important instructional days.

HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

• If you have not done so, you may want to consider a COVID-19 vaccination for your child. This is NOT a mandate. It is important to understand that some mitigation strategies used previously, such as social distancing will not be possible with the return of our entire student body.

Recently, Atlanta Public Schools announced that APS will implement a *Universal Mask Wearing Protocol* in all schools and buildings as we begin the new school year on August 5.

In reviewing our data, here are a few key considerations:

- Approximately 18 percent of our eligible students are fully vaccinated (*source: Fulton County Board of Health*) and approximately 58% of district employees have indicated that they are fully vaccinated or plan to be (*source: Atlanta Public Schools survey data*).
- Children under 12 years do not have the option of being vaccinated and remain vulnerable to contracting and spreading the disease.
- The Delta Variant is now the dominant variant of COVID-19 in the United States and may spread 225% faster than the original virus.
- Consistent and correct use of mask wearing has been shown to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all students and school staff wear masks regardless of whether or not they have been vaccinated against COVID-19. The CDC recommends that all unvaccinated children and adults wear a mask.

Given our low vaccinations rates and increasing community spread, the CDC acknowledges that universal masking would be appropriate. In light of this information and in our efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID- 19, APS will continue to offer COVID-19 surveillance testing weekly.

- In addition, APS will offer COVID-19 vaccines to students and staff during two upcoming opportunities:
- In partnership with Walgreens, APS will offer vaccines to families and staff at the Back-to-School Bash on July 31, 2021.
- Starting August 9, APS will offer on-site COVID-19 vaccinations to eligible students in our middle schools and high schools and staff through our partnership with Fulton County Board of Health. Parents will be notified and provided consent forms. More information on our vaccination plans will be provided in a future communications.
- APS remains committed to ensuring healthy and safe learning environments for the 2021- 2022 school year. Stay abreast of all the health protocol updates on our Back-to-School website at <u>www.atlantapublicschools.us/backtoschool.</u>

IMMUNIZATIONS

As students prepare to come back to school on August 5, 2021. *Georgia state law requires all of our students to have a valid Certificate of Immunization* on file with the district. Be sure you are prepared! Get the full details on our APS **Immunizations Requirements site.**

For hours and locations for vaccination sites and mobile units, or to download the parent consent form for minor patients, visit <u>www.fultoncountyga.gov/covidvaccine</u>

OUR YEARLY SCHEDULE

• This year, Scholars will have seven classes daily.

What does this mean?

- Scholars will take five core classes (Math, Science, ELA, Social Studies and Computer Science/Coding and an Academic Intervention Block.
- Scholars will take two Connections classes that will rotate daily (A/B Block): Visual Arts, French, Band, Physical Ed., Health, Dance, Chorus or REP Reading

SCAN CODE CAN BELOW TO SEE HJRWEA SCHEDULE



BELL SCHEDULE

We have altered the school bell schedule for this school year (2021-2022).

Elementary School 7:45am - 2:45pm [Previously 8:00am - 2:30pm] Middle School 9:15am - 4:15pm [Previously 9:05am - 4:05pm] High School 8:45am - 3:45pm [Previously 8:30am - 3:30pm]

REGISTRATION

- All new and current student registrations are to be completed online.
- Visit <u>https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/63456</u> click the link for **New Student** and Enrollment Tab if you are new to Atlanta Public Schools.
- All existing students and rising 6th grade visit <u>https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/63456</u> click the link for **Transitioning Student Registration and Enrollment** to update your information. All parents must submit the required documents per Atlanta Public Schools requirements for enrollment:
 - ✓ Parents Identification Birth Certificate Social Security Card Immunization Record Ear, Eye, Dental Record Current Lease, Current Georgia Power Bill Notarized Affidavit of Residency

• For registration questions contact: HJRWEA Counseling Department: Anita Fitzhugh <u>anitra.fitzhugh@atlana.k12.ga.us</u>

DRESS CODE CORNER: THE UNIFORM IS BACK!

Herman J. Russell West End Academy dress code is strongly encouraged; however, students will not be penalized for not wearing school uniforms. APS dress code policy will be strongly enforced.

All students must wear royal blue tops and black, navy, or khaki bottoms.

Dress Restrictions (Not Allowed): MALES

- Jeans or Denim
- Sweatpants, warm-up pants, athletic shorts
- *T-shirts
- Excessively long shirts Tank tops
- Wearing shirts over the collared shirt
- Visible underwear (NO SAGGING)
- Overalls or Sleepwear
- Hats, headwear, hoods, bandanas
- Excessively ripped, frayed, unhemmed, patched, or torn clothing
- Bedroom shoes, Flip-flops, slides Wallets with Chains
- Sunglasses, Hats or Bandanas Jerseys or Jogging Suits
- Do-Rags

Dress Restrictions (Not Allowed): FEMALES

- Jeans or Denim
- Sweatpants, warm-up pants, athletic shorts skinny leg pants/Leggings/Split skirts/dresses
- Visible underwear, see through, or skintight clothing Wearing shirts over the collared shirt
- *T-shirts
- Excessively revealing or tight clothing
- Tank tops/ Low-cut necklines/bare backs/Bare midriffs Overalls or Sleepwear
- Headwear, hats, hoods, bandanas
- Excessively ripped, frayed, un-hemmed, patched or torn clothing
- High-heeled shoes
- Bedroom shoes, flip flops, or slides
- Sunglasses, Hats or Bandanas
- Jerseys or Jogging Suits
- Jewelry with sharp spikes
- Head Bonnets or Blankets

LOCKERS

Lockers will not be issued to 6th and 7th Grade Scholars. However, lockers for 8th Grade Scholars is a privilege. Please note, lockers will not be shared with their peers. The locker fee is \$5 for the year. We will begin selling lockers during HJR Open House on August 4, 2021.

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

- We will have a strong focus on ATTENDANCE. ATTENDANCE WILL BE TAKEN EVERY DAY, EVERY CLASS beginning with 1st block at 8:45 AM.
- In addition, for excused absences and tardiness (such as for doctor's visits or illness), please submit the necessary documentation to our attendance clerk Ms. Kermela Brown at <u>kemela.brown@atlanta.k12.ga.us</u>

ONE-TO-ONE CHROMEBOOK DISTRIBUTION

- ALL Students will be issued a Chromebook as part of our District's 1:1 initiative.
- Students are responsible for the care, safety and security of their assigned Chromebook both at school and at home.
- Details are forthcoming about the Chromebook distribution plan at H.J. Russell open house on Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2021.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY: MYBACKPACK is THE Key!

- Your scholar must utilize his/her district Username and Password to access key district accounts that are essential to education. (Note: most students from APS know this already)
- Username = 1st initial of FIRST NAME + LAST NAME (up to7 letters) + last 4 of Student ID #.
- **Password = Lunch ID # (NOT student ID, which may be different if coming** from a charter)
- My BackPack is the key portal for the valuable instructional technology resources. This requires your scholar to log-in with their district information, as described above. The link to My BackPack is <u>https://launchpad.classlink.com/atlanta</u>
- Once logged-in with district credentials, most programs are Single Sign on (SSO), so they typically will not need to keep entering UN/PW each work session.
- Related to access, what if my child is having problems with his/her student account access?

For student access issues (i.e. Username/Password), please contact our Media Specialist, Ms. Nikki Bivins, at <u>nbivins@atlana.k12.ga.us</u>

TEXTBOOKS

- Most of our textbooks offer digital versions. The teachers will share this information on their syllabus that will be sent home with each student.
- In general, we do not issue a textbook to every student. Instead we utilize classroom sets. Textbooks serve as resources to support instruction.
- We understand that some students prefer a hard copy for various reasons. If you would like a copy of a particular textbook, please contact the appropriate subjectarea Instructional Coach (their information is in the contact table towards the end of this letter).

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS AND VISIT PROTOCOL

- All classroom visits require a 24-hour notice please call 404-802-6800 to set an appointment to visit a class.
- APS School Visitor Policy Guidelines must be followed upon arrival (refer to student handbook)
- Visitors are not to speak to students, teacher, or request materials during visit.
- If materials are requested, the request must be made in writing. Requested materials will be delivered within 24 hours.
- When in the building conduction a visit, visitors should sit in designated area, and not move around the classroom. Visits should be no longer than one hour in length.
- Please put away all cell phones and make sure they are turned off.

Final Approval - 5/4/2020

APS Student Calendar 2021-2022 (option D)

