



Important Update

TO: Parent and Guardians

FROM: Bill Husfelt, Superintendent

DATE: June 28, 2020

The only thing that is certain right now is that we're living in uncertain times! Like you, I closely follow the releases from the Department of Health regarding cases of Covid-19 in our community and I also read a plethora of articles from the "experts" every day. The truth is, this is an unprecedented situation and there's a LOT of conflicting information out there. It's hard to know what's best to do on any given day but student safety will always be our number one priority.

With that in mind, our community task forces have been hard at work for the past month brainstorming ideas, gathering expert opinions and looking at a variety of options for our planned return to school on August 11th.

I want to make sure you know that the School Board is holding a workshop on July 7th, beginning at 11 a.m., to consider those options and to discuss next steps.

No official decisions can be made at the workshop but it's a time for School Board members to review the recommendations and ideas from the task forces and district staff and to hear any input from the community. Our community task forces (composed of district and school-based administrators, teachers, support employees, medical experts, parents, students and other stakeholders) have been meeting for about a month now and we sincerely appreciate their time and their ideas.

While you're welcome to attend the workshop in person, please know that we will be following the current CDC guidelines for gatherings (no more than 50 people in one place at the same time) and so in-person attendance may be limited. The workshop will definitely be live streamed, however, on our website and members of the public are welcome to email their comments to BDScomm@bay.k12.fl.us. Our Director of Communications will ensure any comments emailed to that address are shared during the workshop.

We will post all of our workshop materials to our website on the day of the workshop so that you can follow along at home or read them at your leisure.

We don't know today what guidelines will be in place in August but we do know that we're doing our best to follow the Governor's "Safe. Smart. Step-by-Step Plan" for reopening schools. The

Governor's plan calls for small groups of students to be welcomed back to campus in July and that's exactly what we're doing with our summer remediation program.

Thanks to special funding from the state, small groups of students in need of remediation are being invited back to this summer program that will run for the month of July (beginning July 7th). Principals are reaching out now to the parents of students who qualify for that program. And then, hopefully, in August (as planned) we will be welcoming the rest of our students and staff back to school.

That being said, as previously discussed, virtual school is still an option for those parents who are uncomfortable returning their children to "brick and mortar" school in August. Bay Virtual School offers the same curriculum as Florida Virtual School and BDS students can enroll in Bay Virtual School at any time this summer or next school year. We are asking parents, however, to try to make the virtual school decision (if applicable) by mid-July so we can ensure adequate staff at both virtual school and traditional school.

The virtual school option differs from the emergency distance learning plan implemented by BDS and parents are encouraged to reach out to Bay Virtual School at 767-4460 to find out more about their program if interested. You can also read their FAQ document on their website at www.bayvirtualschool.com.

Please know that we will always do our best to follow whatever guidelines are in place from the DOH, CDC, DOE and/or the Governor's Office. It should not come as a surprise, however, that true social distancing will not be feasible in the school setting for us or any other school district. We are working on plans, to be discussed at the workshop, to minimize or eliminate large groups of students gathering before and after school and during lunch and we're definitely implementing new cleaning and sanitizing protocols. In fact, we just authorized each school to hire an additional full-time cleaning staff member who will be dedicated to sanitizing protocols throughout the school day.

We know that the concept of returning to school is exciting for some and concerning for others and we want to do our best to ensure that we're listening to your concerns, that we're providing as much information as possible and that we're working together with you for a successful school year.

To that end, after the workshop on July 7th, we plan to send out our second parent survey to gather as much input from you as possible. Please watch for an email via PeachJar and/or information about the survey on our website and social media channels. We hope to reach as many parents as possible and we look forward to hearing your feedback. Before closing, I'd like to sincerely thank you for all of your support so far. Almost every day I still hear from parents who are amazed at how our employees stepped up during emergency distance learning and the ways in which BDS continues to serve the community. I love hearing those stories and I enjoy passing them along to our employees who have been through SO much and continue to work SO hard for our children.

Despite the challenges we've already faced, we've accomplished so much together since the hurricane and I know we can determine the right course of action for our students in this situation as well. We appreciate your patience, your understanding and your faith in us and we will never take those things for granted.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

(Unfortunately PeachJar doesn't allow for live links but the website addresses are below for your easy reference and we have provided a link to our general website which is the starting point for these resources).

About our Covid-19 response in general: <http://www.bay.k12.fl.us/COVID%2019>

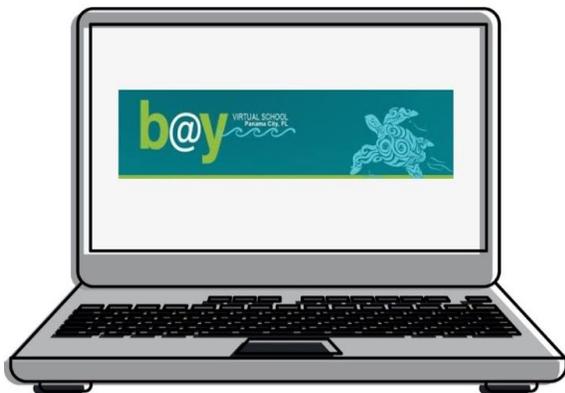
About our FREE summer meal program: <http://www.bay.k12.fl.us/meals%20summer>

About Bay Virtual School: www.bayvirtuelschool.com

About our proposed calendar for the upcoming school year:

<http://www.bay.k12.fl.us/uploads/academic%20calendar/2020-2021%20Calendar.pdf>

To watch the Board workshop on 7/7/20: <http://www.bay.k12.fl.us/school-board-meetings>



VIRTUAL

- If schools are closed by the government, there is no change to instruction.
- All students enrolled in Bay Virtual and taught by BVS instructors.
- All learning occurs independently and completely from home.
- Instruction is mostly self-paced. Students determine their personal schedule, but must meet minimum requirements.

- Florida Certified Teachers
- Full Range of Courses
 - K-12

TRADITIONAL

- If schools are closed by the government, the District will shift to supported distance learning on one cohesive platform.
- All students enrolled in their home-zoned or School-Choice school. All learning occurs at school in traditional classrooms.
- Instruction is teacher-led and with district-led pacing guides.