



June 26, 2020

Hello Indian Nation,

I hope that this message finds you enjoying summer break, spending time with family, and experiencing good health. Biloxi Schools staff have spent the month of June researching, planning, and exploring multiple options for a safe return to school in August. As you will recall from early June, we issued a parent survey asking you to indicate which return to school option you would allow for your child. Data from that survey revealed that 71% would return in a traditional setting, 19% would return with small groups attending on alternating days, and 10% preferred to remain in a distance learning environment. Your input has been crucial in guiding us to find the best solution for our students to return in August.

Leadership teams at the secondary and elementary levels spent time exploring and discussing multiple return options. These teams also weighed the benefits and negative impacts of a traditional return, alternating schedules, and continued distance learning. Ultimately, we concluded that a traditional return is best for our students and community. We are confident that we can develop a safe learning environment and mitigate the potential spread of Covid-19 using safe practices and procedures.

Our goal during the next month is to put together detailed schedules, plans, and procedures to make each school as safe as possible. Plans will vary slightly from school to school based on buildings, space, enrollment, staff, and other factors. School level leadership teams will have input on best practices for each individual site. As we all know, social distancing is the greatest deterrent to the spread of Covid-19. Our goal is to accomplish social distancing in all areas that we can, but realistically, we realize that it is not possible to do so in all school environments. For that reason, we will require students and staff to wear masks at school. In situations where social distancing can be achieved (6 feet or more), masks will be allowed to be removed.

We understand that no one enjoys wearing masks, but following such guidelines could be the factors that allow us to keep school open in a traditional manner throughout the year. The school district will provide masks for all staff and students. Individuals may also choose to wear their own personal mask. In addition to masks, the school district is prepared to provide extensive cleaning in all buildings, hand sanitizer for staff/students, water filling stations (in place of water fountains), and cleaning of school buses between routes.

We will provide bus transportation, but meeting social distancing suggestions is not likely for most bus routes. For that reason, we encourage those with the ability to provide private transportation to please do so. Your efforts can help us greatly reduce the number of students on school buses. For those that will rely on bus transportation, masks will be required at the bus stop and on the school bus in order to mitigate the potential for virus spread.

Currently, school activities such as sports and organizations are participating in controlled environments. There has not been a final determination from the Mississippi High School Activities Association as to how activities and events will look in the fall. They are meeting regularly to devise a plan to answer those questions. We will share that plan with the community as soon as it is released.

While we are excited about a traditional return for August, we understand that some families may not be comfortable with that plan. We will offer a distance learning option for those families who are uncomfortable with a full return. Those choosing this option will be required to commit to it for a minimum of one semester (through December 18). This is due to the scheduling and resources that must be devoted to making distance learning successful. Distance learning will look different than it did in the spring of 2020. Students will have scheduled class times requiring attendance, real time participation, and real time assignments. In addition, students choosing the distance learning option will not be able to participate in extracurricular activities such as athletics, band, choir, show choir, etc.

As we have all come to learn during this pandemic, this is a fluid situation, and these plans are subject to change based on many factors. In the meantime, the school district is planning to implement an amazing school year for 2020-2021 that is safe, engaging, and unlike any ever seen. In the coming weeks, parents will be asked to indicate how their child will participate during the 2020-2021 school year (traditionally or via distance learning). We will then provide more details as planning is finalized.

Biloxi is such an amazing community, and together we will ensure that our students continue their pathway to success. BILOXI STRONG & INDIAN NATION PROUD!

Thank You,



Marcus Boudreaux

Superintendent Biloxi Public Schools