

Dear Beaufort County School District Families:

The 2020-21 school year is quickly approaching, and the District's focus this summer has been dedicated to ensuring a strong start. Although increasing COVID-19 infection rates have made this an extremely difficult task, we have been planning comprehensively for the challenges that lie before us.

Let me begin by acknowledging the amazing patience and hard work by our parents during these extraordinary days. You have been thrust into unpredictable roles and managed personal inconveniences. You have withstood both frustration and uncertainty while remaining incredibly supportive of the school district. For this and more, we thank you.

## **WHERE WE STAND**

Although more details will be released in the coming days, please know that **families will be able to request virtual (online) or in-person school experiences**. While we recognize that some families may need more specific information before making their choices, we know from two surveys that many have already made their decisions.

**For those families who already know their preferred option, registration will open on Monday, July 13. Parents of returning students will receive e-mails on Monday that direct them to the district's online registration system. Parents of new students will need to contact their schools for the link to the registration system. Registration information needs to be entered accurately. For more details, click here: <https://beaufortschools.net/cms/one.aspx?pageid=224708>. The school district's reopening plan will be released next Friday, July 17.**

We encourage you to register your child as soon as possible. Parents who register now will help school principals meet physical distancing requirements and safety protocols for face-to-face instruction.

Here's an example of what I mean: Let's say Principal Smith manages a school with 800 students. If Principal Smith knows that 300 of her students prefer online learning this fall, she also knows that she must plan how to arrange classrooms and teaching staff for 500 face-to-face learners. A second principal, Principal Jones, also manages a school with 800 students, but 500 of his students prefer online learning. It's easy to see that principals Smith and Jones have very different challenges when it comes to planning for their individual buildings. But they can only complete their plans – and help ensure the safety of their face-to-face learners and school staff – AFTER they know what their students' families have decided.

Let me repeat and emphasize this point: By registering now, you will fast-track your child's enrollment process while helping schools complete their plans for a smart and safe reopening. Our No. 1 goal is to keep your children as safe as possible while also providing an excellent academic experience, whether that's online or in person.

As parents make their virtual or face-to-face requests, it's important to note that BCSD's 2020-2021 virtual program will be more robust than last spring's model, which was created as a rapid response to the governor's statewide closure of all schools. In addition, our "new and improved" online platform will better position the district if there is another state-mandated school shutdown this fall.

NOTE: Parents who select virtual learning will be contacted later this month by school counselors who will confirm that decision.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

Parents have heard me mention numerous times in previous messages: We are navigating uncharted waters in unprecedented times. In addition to the challenges posed by COVID-19, we also find ourselves in the midst of national debates over social and cultural change. These trying times affirm and deepen our resolve to produce educated young people who have an abiding respect for one another, and for their neighbors. Strong and healthy school communities are indispensable components to a strong and healthy nation, and our children will determine just how strong and healthy our communities will be.

I remain confident that we can meet our challenges and emerge stronger and more resilient than ever. We are all in this together, and we remain #BeaufortCountyStrong!

All my best,  
Frank Rodriguez, Superintendent