

May 12, 2020

Good Afternoon,

Up to this point, we have been busy closing up the 2019-2020 school year. We are also planning for the 2020-2021 school year.

TPSD August Blueprint Assumptions

- Schools will remain closed this spring but will reopen in the fall with the potential of localized 14- to 28-day rolling closures triggered by new outbreaks.
- Reopened schools will need modifications based on guidance from national and state health officials, which could include physical distancing, temperature screenings, and frequent disinfecting of classrooms.
- Accommodations will be needed for teachers, administrators, school staff, and students who may be at heightened risk from COVID-19 because of their age or other health conditions.
- A vaccine might not be available for 18 months or more, meaning that plans should take into account both the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years.
- Schools are responsible for meeting the needs of all students, including the distinctive needs of students from low-income backgrounds, students with disabilities, and English-language learners.
- Schools are obliged to find ways to serve all students, even during times of disruption when remote learning requires students to connect from home.
 - Parents and teachers are going to need options. TPSD can't be a one size fits all educational model. Flexibility must become an abiding principal of how we do business.
 - We will go above and beyond requirements to keep our students and our staff safe. This will include measures to safely social distance and flexible scheduling.
 - We are going to need a design that accommodates parents who are comfortable sending their children to school and parents who are not comfortable sending their children to school. We will need a homeschool option.
 - There are policies, handbook procedures, and legislation that will have to change.

- The One-to-One initiative will have to be reinforced by a blended model that includes online and text book resources parents and students can use at home. Relying on Chromebooks is not going to be adequate during this pandemic crisis.
- If CDC guidelines are what they are today, social distancing will be very challenging in schools with large student populations in classrooms that were designed before 1950.

We have assigned five COVID-19 task forces to plan for various contingencies in different areas: Curriculum and Instruction, Health and Wellness, Learning Gap, COVID-19 Response, and Social and Emotional. We have also established a parent advisory group of 150 parents who we will survey on details of our response to COVID-19. We are fully aware everyone wants schools to return to full attendance in August. We want to return to full attendance in August. However, we must be prepared in the event that we cannot return to full attendance in August. I personally promised our staff that the TPSD Board of Trustees would do everything in their power to keep our students and our staff safe.

There are many scenarios that the Mississippi Department of Education and school districts from around the state are discussing. People are discussing three possible scenarios: 1) full distance learning with no students in attendance. 2) A/B week with only half of students in attendance at any given time. 3) students returning to school as if the virus is defeated and we are back to normal. Our team and our principals are working on a plan that will be presented to the Board of Trustees at our next meeting. We all hope and pray for option three, but we need to be prepared and willing to do what is necessary to keep our students safe. We also need to be prepared for those parents who are not comfortable sending their children back to school. That is why I believe we need a viable home school option. We will go above and beyond to make our classrooms, our buses, and our cafeterias safe. However, we will also have a home school plan. There are many promising home school programs we can learn from as we develop our response.

Everything depends on the spread of the virus. I want to encourage all members of our school community to take precautions and stay safe for the sake of our community and our schools.

I want to thank again our food service staff, our bus drivers, and our security staff for the awesome job they have done throughout this crisis delivering food to families in need. Their efforts have truly been extraordinary. I also want to thank everyone involved with the THS graduation ceremonies. Parents and students were very happy and grateful. The graduates all looked outstanding. It took a lot of people to get 475 graduates through a virtual graduation. The operations crew who had to build stages, the communications crew who had to arrange the video production, the security staff, and the high school staff who had to plan and participate in the graduation all did a fantastic job. Mr. Dobbs and the rest of his leadership team made it a very special day for our graduates. Thank You.