



August 11, 2020

Dear District Staff, Parents & Guardians,

COVID-19 has created many challenges for our society. At Berrien Springs Public Schools, we also see many new and exciting opportunities. Today, the school district officially announces the public release of the Berrien Springs Public Schools "Return to School Roadmap."

The "Return to School Roadmap" provides staff, students and parents with a detailed plan the district will follow for a variety of scenarios related to COVID-19. The plan's emphasis is on the health, safety, and well-being of students and staff. The district has collaborated with all of the school districts in Berrien County and the Berrien County Health Department in developing a plan for the safe return to school that meets the requirements of Michigan's Return to School Roadmap.

Planning for each of the required scenarios has been prepared for implementation during any one of the following recovery phases as outlined in Michigan's Safe Start Plan:

Phase 1 - Uncontrolled Growth - 100% remote learning for schools.

Phase 2 - Persistent Spread - 100% remote learning for schools.

Phase 3 - Flattening - 100% remote learning for schools.

Phase 4 - Improving - In-person learning with strict safety protocols.

Phase 5 - Containing - In-person learning with moderate safety protocols.

Phase 6 - Post-Pandemic - In-person learning with minimal safety protocols.

Currently, our region of Michigan, Region 3 the Kalamazoo region, is in Phase 4 of the MI Safe Start Plan. The Governor has stated that school districts may do in-person learning during Phase 4. However, due to a continuing upward state-wide trend in confirmed cases of COVID-19, the Governor has stated that in-person learning for the start of the school year may be in jeopardy. Schools believe any change in this status may not be announced by the Governor until late in August. Our district will be starting the school year with an in-person "phase-in" plan. The following is a summary of the "phase-in" plan for in-person learning to be implemented at Berrien Springs Public Schools to start the new school year.

Elementary Schools (PreK-5)

1. Four half-days the first week of school (8/31 thru 9/3) - Friday, September 4 and Monday, September 7 are holidays (No School)
2. School start time will be 8:40 a.m.
3. School dismissal time will be 12:00 p.m.
4. Bus drop-off at buildings will not be any earlier than 8:30 a.m.
5. Operate both an AM and PM schedule on alternating days
6. All hourly and salaried staff will work their normal scheduled day

Secondary Schools (6-12)

1. Four half-days the first week of school (8/31 thru 9/3) - Friday, September 4 and Monday, September 7 are holidays (No School)
2. School start time will be 7:40 a.m.
3. School dismissal time will be 11:00 a.m.
4. Bus drop-off at buildings will not be any earlier than 7:30 a.m.
5. All hourly and salaried staff will work their normal scheduled day

Our district's plan was developed through the collaborative work of seven different workgroups made up of district administration and staff. The primary components of the "Return to School Roadmap" are as follows:

- **The district will be offering 3 different options for student learning:**
 1. 100% in-person learning with strict safety protocols.
 2. 100% remote learning from home with teacher instruction and full supports.
 3. 100% virtual learning through the district's Virtual Academy.
- **The "Return to School Roadmap" was developed with a priority for health and safety protocols around the following school functions:**
 1. Student and Staff Safety Environment & Protocols
 2. The Learning Environment
 3. Mental and Social-Emotional Well-Being (Positive Environment)
 4. Operations and Facilities
 5. Communication
- **Student and Staff Safety Environment & Protocols**
 1. School Health and Safety
 2. School Facility Modifications
 3. School Bus Transportation
 4. Food Service
 5. Athletic & Fine Arts Venues
 6. Operations and Human Resources (HR)
- **The Learning Environment**
 1. Student Arrival/Dismissal
 2. Instructional Methods
 3. Technology
- **Mental and Social-Emotional Well-Being (Positive Environment)**
 1. Social-Emotional Learning & Mental Health
 2. Participation in Extracurricular Activities
 3. Before/After School Programs
- **Communication**

Our district's plan is fluid, provides flexibility and allows our staff to transition between phases 1-6 quickly. COVID-19 is not a concrete sequential disease. Schools must be able to adjust instruction and

operations for changes in the different phases of recovery should the state or our region's recovery status be progressing or regressing.

Building principals will be distributing "Back to School" information packets the week of August 10th. Included in the packet is a one-page flyer explaining the three learning options available to Berrien Springs Public Schools families. Please contact your child's school directly with any questions about these three learning options and with your preferred learning option for the start of the new school year. Principals are asking that parents/guardians make their choice by no later than Friday, August 14 to allow for appropriate scheduling, staffing assignments and other related arrangements.

The Berrien Springs Public Schools vision statement reads, "Together, inspiring students to think, learn, achieve, and care in a global community." The "Return to School Roadmap" was developed integrating the district's vision statement into each aspect of the plan. We believe this plan provides opportunities for our students to be challenged while supported and with the ability to be successful learners regardless of the circumstances or situation. Our staff care deeply about your children with their health, safety and well-being being their primary focus. In addition, our teachers are committed to providing a positive learning experience for all students throughout this very challenging time in education.

Thank you for entrusting your children to us and for your continued support of the Berrien Springs Public Schools. We take this responsibility very seriously. I personally am committed to providing the leadership and direction needed to make this plan work well for all of our students, staff and parents. Go Shamrocks!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Eichberg".

David Eichberg, Superintendent