

## ***Benton County School's***

### ***Plan to Return to School for the 2020-21 School Year***

***Approved 6-26-2020***

March 12, 2020, schools were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we never imagined it would be the last day of school. Since that day, Benton County Schools has been committed to making sure our students have the opportunity to have a safe learning environment and an opportunity to succeed.

During the past few weeks, we have been monitoring the Covid-19 cases in Benton and surrounding counties. At this time, we plan to begin school as scheduled on August 3, 2020, but we will incorporate additional protocols to ensure our students and staff have the safest learning and working environments possible.

1. School starts Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> – After reviewing the results of our back to school survey and consulting with local health officials, we are planning on starting school on August 3 and following the 2020-21 school calendar. Future health conditions may require modifications to the calendar and/or procedures.
2. Grades Pre-K through 5 – Benton County Schools will provide online instruction options for all grade levels, but we feel it would be extremely difficult to provide high quality instruction for students in grades pre-k through 5 using online formats. Building foundational skills to be successful learners requires person-to-person interaction between the student and teacher. We encourage parents to send their children to school.
3. Online platform – We are developing a plan and scheduling professional development to insure all our teachers will be able to provide instruction on-line.
4. Virtual learning opportunities – We understand that some parents due to high risk health concerns will have reservations about sending their students back on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you are in this group, Benton County will offer a virtual learning option so your student can stay enrolled in our school system. We are currently meeting with vendors and providing professional development to our staff in order to provide an efficient and effective virtual learning experience for our students and teachers. All online assignments will be mandatory and graded.
5. Starting the week of July 6, 2020, please call the Benton County Board of Education at 731-584-6111 if you are interested in enrolling your child/children in virtual learning courses.

6. **School issued computers – We are currently working on a plan to provide computers for students who do not have a device at home and are utilizing the virtual learning option. Parents will be required to sign a contract that they do not have a computer/laptop available at home.**
7. **Parent support – Our Family Engagement staff will work with our Technology team to provide resources and support for parents to better assist their child with online instruction.**
8. **Internet Connections – Unfortunately, approximately 60% of our students do not have access to high speed internet for virtual learning. Benton County Schools will be creating free WiFi opportunities in school parking lots and will be working with other organizations to increase WiFi access throughout the county.**
9. **Participation in individual classes – We understand some high school classes require more hands-on learning, and students would rather attend these classes in person. For example, we may have some of our CTC classes which require hands-on work and are not as appropriate for online work. School principals will work with the parents and student to determine the feasibility of these class offerings.**
10. **Post-Secondary – College Courses will be offered to eligible students at CHS & BS high schools, but the universities/colleges will establish their own protocols for these courses.**
11. **Special Education – During the closure it was a challenge to meet the needs of all our students with disabilities. At the beginning of school, we will resume services as determined by the child’s IEP. We will continue to work with the TN Department of Education, administrators, and teachers to develop the appropriate level of support for students who are identified as medically fragile and unable to attend school.**
12. **Transportation – As long as COVID-19 cases remain low in Benton County, we intend to provide transportation as in the past with additional safety protocols. Although there are recommendations to limit the number of students on buses, we do not feel these are practical. Additional bus safety protocols include assigned seats (families will be grouped together), disinfecting the bus after each route, and making sure students do not ride the bus if they have COVID-19 symptoms. Please do not put students on the bus if they are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.**
13. **Schools Meals – We intend to continue serving breakfast and lunch to our students as we have in the past. Additional procedures will be put in place to comply with health recommendations when possible.**

14. During normal school operations, parents, grandparents, and guardians are welcome to visit our buildings. However, during these unprecedented times, visitors will not be allowed.
15. Health Procedures – We will increase cleaning and disinfecting throughout all our campuses, provide additional handwashing opportunities, install hand sanitizer stations, and encourage social distancing when possible. If students are sick, they will be placed in a room away from other students and staff until they are picked up. Also, students and staff who have a fever of 100 or higher will be required to wear a mask until they leave campus unless they have difficulty breathing or other underlying health conditions.
16. Although opinions vary on wearing a mask, we will not require our students or staff to wear a mask at this time. If you choose to have your child/children wear a mask, please educate them on the proper procedures of wearing a mask.
17. An additional health procedures checklist will be implemented by Benton County School nurses when school begins.
18. Partial or long term closure – The Benton County Schools District Leadership team is working on a Continuous Learning Plan that will include online instruction, learning packets, special education services, meal distribution, and other support services in the event of a partial or long term closure.
19. Extra-Curricular Activities – **As government requirements allow,** extra-curricular activities will be offered with safety measures in place for participants and spectators.
20. Please remember that future health conditions may require modifications to the school calendar and/or these procedures.