



**BALTIMORE CITY**  
**PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

# **Safe Return to In-Person Schooling**

Baltimore City Council  
Education and Youth Committee Hearing  
February 4, 2021

# In-Person Learning

*“[T]he harms attributed to closed schools on the social, emotional, and behavioral health, economic well-being, and academic achievement of children, in both the short- and long-term, are well-known and significant. Further, the lack of in-person educational options disproportionately harms low-income and minority children and those living with disabilities. These students are far less likely to have access to private instruction and care and far more likely to rely on key school-supported resources like food programs, special education services, counseling, and after-school programs to meet basic developmental needs.”\**

\*“The Importance of Reopening America’s Schools this Fall”  
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools.html#fn4>)





# Student achievement levels and attendance rates have declined

The number of students failing one or more courses in the first quarter has increased:

Grades	Q1 2019-20	Q1 2020-21
PK-1	29%	39%
2-5	30%	55%
6-12	38%	60%

Charter schools, alternative schools, and separate public day schools were not included in this analysis. For the school-level analyses, only schools that are open in the SY2020-2021 school year were included.

# EWI Quarter 1 Snapshot – First Time 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**Almost half of first-time 9<sup>th</sup> graders are Tier 2/3 (attend <90%) and 61% have a Course Flag (Core Course Failure and/or GPA <2.0).**

*The UChicago Consortium found that when freshmen suffer from high absence rates and course failure, many never recover. In fact, these students are much more likely to drop out even if they entered high school with high grades and test scores. On the other hand, students who are On-Track at the end of freshmen year are four times more likely to graduate from high school.*

# High school student GPAs are falling

The percent of students with GPAs below 1.0 by high school grade:

Grade	Q1 2019-20	Q1 2020-21
9th	29%	49%
10th	18%	41%
11th	12%	30%
12th	11%	26%

Other student groups also experienced an increase in the percent of students with GPAs below 1.0.

- 32 percentage point increase for English Learners
- 42 percentage point increase for homeless students
- 19 percentage point increase for students with disabilities



# Social and Emotional Impact

- When schools reopen, many students will still be recovering from the pandemic and may still be reeling from trauma, grief, and anxiety.
- There are many reasons to believe the Covid-19 impacts might be larger for children in poverty and children of color.
- Teachers will need to focus on relationships first. Fear and anxiety about the pandemic—coupled with uncertainty about the future—can be disruptive to a student's ability to come to school ready to learn.



# Roll-Out of In-Person Learning Opportunities

## Summer 2020

### Summer School Programming

200 students attended summer school at 6 sites

#### Prioritized Student Groups:

- Students not engaged in virtual learning in the spring
- Students who are 2 or more grade levels behind

## September 28, 2020

### Student Learning Centers (SLCs) Special Education classes ESOL classes

SLCs: 900 students at 13 sites  
Special Education: 55 students at 8 sites  
ESOL: 100 students at 4 sites

#### Prioritized Student Groups:

- Students struggling with virtual learning (includes high population of homeless students)
- Students with disabilities
- ESOL students

## November 9, 2020

### Separate Public Day Schools Pre-K/K specialized programs\*

Separate Public Day Schools: 100 students at 3 sites  
Pre-K/K specialized programs: 50 students at 5 sites

#### Prioritized Student Groups:

- Students with disabilities
- Early learners

## November 16, 2020

### Additional Traditional and Charter Schools

Approximately 25 schools opened for in-person learning

#### Prioritized Student Groups:

- Students with disabilities (*esp. LRE-C*)
- Early learners (*esp. K*)
- English learners
- Students struggling with virtual learning
- Homeless students
- Transition grades (6<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>)
- CTE

## March 2021

### Additional Traditional and Charter Schools

Expand opportunities for K-5 students in more schools and provide opportunities for high school freshmen and seniors

*Families will continue to have a choice on whether they want to come back in-person or remain all virtual.*





# Second Semester: In-Person Learning

- We know there are groups of young people who desperately need the support they can only receive in person, growing numbers of our families want this option, and we've proven we can do it safely.
- We will launch this effort in three phases:
  - Kindergarten through grade 2 begins Monday, March 1.
  - Grades 3-5 and grade 9 begin Monday, March 15
  - Grade 12 begins April 12, the first day of the fourth quarter
- Families will continue to have a choice to remain virtual if they so choose.





# The CDC has identified **5 key mitigation strategies** for reducing risk of transmission of COVID-19 in schools



- Consistent and correct use of masks
- Social distancing to the largest extent possible
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Contact tracing in collaboration with local health department

A study from the CDC published late last month found little evidence of the virus spreading at schools in the U.S. and abroad when precautions were taken, such as wearing masks, social distancing and ventilating rooms.

**“There is increasing data to suggest that schools can safely reopen and that safe reopening does not suggest that teachers need to be vaccinated.”**

~ CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky

# Testing and Vaccinations

- Since September 28, just one transmission event at our in-person locations and meal sites
- Partnership with University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) for on-site COVID testing
- Partnerships with Johns Hopkins University and UMMS to provide COVID vaccines to staff
- Upcoming expansion of vaccine offerings including at Baltimore Convention Center





# Sick Leave Benefits

- From April to December 2020, City Schools implemented additional leave provisions in federal legislation covering that time, known as the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. While the provisions in that act expired at the end of December, City Schools extended the leave provisions until January 31, 2021.
- Starting in February, employees will be granted leave time (outside of their regular, accrued leave) if:
  - they are instructed to quarantine for a reason other than their own illness (for example, if there's a COVID case in their class that requires the teacher to quarantine), or
  - they develop COVID-like symptoms when there has been a COVID case at their worksite.

# Air purification and ventilation

## 8,336 air purifiers ordered

- Installation is underway. On schedule to be ready when more classrooms open.
- Units will be installed before students and staff use a room. If this does not occur before the first day of class, the room will remain closed.
- A dashboard with regular updates will be launched soon.





# Air purification dashboard

Coming first week of February

## Building Air Ventilation Status Dashboard

**BALTIMORE CITY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

147

# of Schools Assessed

Program Name  
John Ruhrah EM

Council  
All

PlanArea  
All

John Ruhrah EM

Yes

Building Assessed (Yes/No)

79

# of Classrooms

No

Filter Upgrade or Purificati...

0

Total # of classrooms with ...

Filter Upgrade

Permanent Plan

Programs

Room Number	Primary Usage	Classroom Ready (TBD)	Filter Upgrade (TBD)	Air Purifier (TBD)	Unit Ventilator	Supply Fan	Exhaust Fan	Windows - Please See Guidance	Wireless Access
001	Student/Staff Space				✓ Yes- Fully Operational	○ No- System not utilized in this space	✓ Yes- Fully Operational	✓ Yes - at least 1 window/ exterior door can open	
101	Student/Staff Space				✓ Yes- Fully Operational	○ No- System not utilized in this space	✓ Yes- Fully Operational	✓ Yes - at least 1 window/ exterior door can open	
106	Student/Staff Space				✓ Yes- Fully Operational	○ No- System not utilized in this space	✓ Yes- Fully Operational	✓ Yes - at least 1 window/ exterior door can open	
<b>Total</b>									



# Community Engagement

- Opportunity for teachers to visit classrooms the week before reopening
- School-based family meetings on reopening as well as opportunities for open houses where families and staff can see classrooms and health and safety protocols up close
- Attendance bus tour
- Town halls
- Community meetings
- Surveys



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