

Pikesville Middle School

443-809-1207

7701 Seven Mile Lane • Baltimore, Maryland 21208

Fax: 443-809-1259

August 14, 2020

Good evening Pikesville Middle School families,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 academic school year! I am so honored to serve the Pikesville Middle School community as Principal serving my 5th academic school year. While the start of the school year is not what many would have hoped for, we are still committed to ensuring that ALL students continue to grow academically during this uncertain time. While our students and staff will not be in the physical school building, rigorous teaching and dynamic learning will still take place for students at Pikesville Middle School. The physical walls of the school building do not define the classroom. Our awesome students and dynamic teachers make the classrooms; so as we move to 100% virtual for the first semester of the 2020-2021 academic school year, our students will continue to help our community grow both academically and socially. Even during virtual learning, as the principal, it is my mission to promote a safe, equitable and learner-centered environment that will inspire and propel our school family to places of continual growth and excellence.

Our school's Leadership Team had an opportunity to collaborate regarding our virtual bell schedule for the fall. We carefully considered student social emotional needs, academic needs, stakeholder input and the impact of COVID-19 on our school community. **Pikesville Middle School will implement a semester-long, 4 period meeting schedule for our students.** This means that students will only have four classes each semester, and they will attend those four classes every day of the week; therefore, there will be no A/B day rotation. A copy of our virtual bell schedule is attached to this communication, will be posted on our school website and will be posted in Schoology. Individual student schedules will be available in [BCPS One](#) by August 21, 2020.

There are several benefits to adapting a semester-long, 4 period meeting schedule. The schedule:

- reduces the student workload from eight classes to four classes. This allows students to decrease their focus by four classes during this uncertain time. Using this schedule during our virtual experience promotes academic success for ALL students.
- allows teachers to teach students every day to support the teaching and learning process in order to get students acclimated back into school, as traditional grading and reporting procedures will be followed.
- allow for less face-to-face contact. Throughout the summer, the numbers of COVID-19 cases in the Pikesville and surrounding areas continued to steadily increase. Therefore, the semester schedule will allow for less face-to-face contact if we go back into the building in January, as students would have 4 classes instead of 8, which reduces the amount of face-to-face human contact for students and staff.

School will begin for students on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 and teachers will take student attendance daily adhering to traditional grading and reporting procedures as outlined in the *BCPS Grading and Reporting Procedures Manual*. During the school year, teachers will be on duty Monday through Friday. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Fridays are teacher-led school days. Wednesday is designated for targeted student intervention, asynchronous (anytime) instruction, individual and collaborative planning, and professional

learning. *In order to maximize instructional time during virtual instruction, Wednesday's that occur during any calendar week with fewer than five (5) school days will follow the schedule for teacher-led instruction as outlined on a typical Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday.* This means that during weeks with fewer than five school days, students will have teacher-led instruction on that Wednesday instead of interventions and small group learning. For example, the first week of school is a short week; therefore, students will have teacher-led instruction on Tuesday, **Wednesday**, Thursday and Friday.

As with any decision, there were some areas of concern with the semester-long, 4 period meeting schedule; however, we are putting things in place to address these concerns:

- PMS will implement an after-school tutoring program that will run for the entire year, for special education and 504 students to support their academic achievement and to assist students in meeting their annual goals.
- PMS will implement an after-school tutoring program during the first semester for any student who has math during the second semester.
- Literacy strategies will be integrated into all contents areas to keep reading and writing as the focal point of instruction for all contents.

Our goal is to work together to support our students, families and staff during these challenging times. Please continue to provide ongoing feedback to teachers, counselors and school administrators about your child's experience and needs throughout the first semester.

For more information, please view the [BCPS Reopening Plan](#).

Yours in Educational Excellence,



Kalisha T. Miller, Principal



Raising the bar, Closing gaps, Preparing for our future