

September 10, 2020

#ReopenStrong: Welcome Back to Learning

From the Chancellor

This post is an email sent by Chancellor Ferebee to the DCPS community on September 4, 2020.

Dear DCPS Families,

It brings me joy to welcome you to a new school year at DC Public Schools! The start to every school year presents new opportunities and challenges, and we are grateful to our entire school community for your patience as we adjust to all-virtual instruction this fall. I am excited by what is happening this week across the DCPS community:

- Students are receiving warm greetings (<https://twitter.com/PrincipalRiddle/status/1300567456658972672>) from our educators (<https://twitter.com/MsGteachesSS/status/1300466847742144512>) — including some in song (https://twitter.com/music_DCPS/status/1301193697820913673) and virtual recess (<https://twitter.com/BurroughsES/status/1300834150275076102>)!
- Schools are having office hours (<https://twitter.com/WhittierECSTEM/status/1301168920167174147>) and setting up “genius bars” (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CEejEVSs8tc/?igshid=1bb8kl8v3yj1e>) to support online learning.
- Families are navigating new routines with grace (<https://twitter.com/TylerTigersDC/status/1300581569011351553>) and excitement (<https://twitter.com/dcbikingmama/status/1300875005656477696>).
- Our greater community (<https://twitter.com/SylviaBurwell/status/1301179323630616576>) continues to advocate for our students (<https://twitter.com/DCSCORES/status/1300456301080776705>) and families.

This week, our teachers launched virtual classrooms across the district, powered by nearly 10,700 Canvas Course Companions using the DCPS curriculum. Our K-12 students are logging online each day (<https://dcps.instructure.com/>) to meet with teachers, participate in live lessons, or access learning materials.

Tech Tips For Learning At Home

We want to make sure every student can use their technology device to learn at home. Follow this link for easy-to-follow directions about how to “Log On, Get Ready, and Go!” (<https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/updates/tech-tips-for-learning-at-home/>).

From using a new computer, to becoming familiar with Canvas, we recognize families had questions this week as the school year started. Technical assistance is just a click or call away!

Visit backtoschool.dc.gov (<https://backtoschool.dc.gov/>) for answers to common questions such as how to reset a student's password and review user guides for DCPS devices. If you would like to talk to someone on our help desk for further assistance, call 202-442-5885 (translations are available).

We increased the number of staff supporting the line to prevent busy signals and other delays. This week, our tech help desk supported more than 6,200 callers. We increased the number of staff available for support, so wait times are now under 1 minute for families needing technical assistance.

If you would like to know more about how to use Microsoft Teams or your Surface device, we are offering family webinars three times a week throughout September. Sessions in English are on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., and sessions in Spanish are on Thursdays at 3:00 p.m. [See the full schedule here \(https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/updates/dcpsathome-with-microsoft-teams-and-surface/\)](https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/updates/dcpsathome-with-microsoft-teams-and-surface/).

To date, we provided over 21,500 devices to students. We continue to distribute devices as students enroll, and our Pre-K families will receive iPads by mid-September. If you have friends, family members, or neighbors looking to enroll in DC Public Schools, they can visit enrolldcps.dc.gov (<https://enrolldcps.dc.gov/>) to start the enrollment process. Our schools are also here to help families with enrolling students for SY20-21. It is not too late for students to enroll!

Please continue reading for additional important information for students and families around attendance, school budgets, and more. As a reminder, there will be no learning at home on Monday, September 7 for Labor Day, and meal sites will also be closed.

In partnership,

Lewis D. Ferebee, Ed.D.
Chancellor

IMPORTANT UPDATES

Every Day Counts!

As a reminder, daily attendance is critical to academic success and is required for students ages 5-17, even in the virtual setting. Attendance will be recorded based on the student activity in Canvas each school day between 6:00 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. This includes Wednesdays when students have small-group or independent learning and follow a different schedule.

If the student is already logged into Canvas (e.g., from the day before), any activity within Canvas will transfer to attendance. This means that a student should click on the link for the day's activities, click on a Teams meeting link, open a course, or work on an assignment in ClassNotebook within Canvas so it can translate into attendance for that day.

Please visit [Reopen Strong – Virtual Attendance Guidance \(https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/resources/attendance/\)](https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/resources/attendance/) for more information on student attendance procedures during virtual instruction days.

On September 15 at 3:00 p.m., join the virtual Parent University session, What Will Attendance Look Like for SY20-21? Learn more about student attendance and what you can do to ensure your child is present and prepared for learning at home. RSVP at [bit.ly/dcpsparentursvp \(https://www.eventbrite.com/c/dc-public-schools-parent-university-universidad-para-padres-cwwxfgp--HICuolZ2J8au/\)](https://www.eventbrite.com/c/dc-public-schools-parent-university-universidad-para-padres-cwwxfgp--HICuolZ2J8au/).

Chancellor Advisory Board Selection

I am excited to announce my [SY20-21 Parent Advisory Board \(https://dcps.dc.gov/node/1436876\)](https://dcps.dc.gov/node/1436876), selected from a competitive pool of nearly 400 applicants. I look forward to partnering with this committed group of parents and guardians who will provide input to district initiatives and recommendations as we navigate the school year ahead.

Applications are open for my [SY20-21 Student Advisory Board \(https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=7kagKk6zM0qSt5md8rwKMgZtRGikl8RGrlK-zz7-pRZUM01YTU5PM0Y0VExHMUs2TUdCTkE1Q0IFUS4u\)](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=7kagKk6zM0qSt5md8rwKMgZtRGikl8RGrlK-zz7-pRZUM01YTU5PM0Y0VExHMUs2TUdCTkE1Q0IFUS4u). This is an opportunity for high school students to interact with DCPS leadership, engage with their peers, and help shape policies that directly impact students. The deadline to apply is September 16.

Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Update

There is still time to help shape how DCPS can best engage in transparent, equitable, and financially sustainable budgeting that empowers schools and improves student outcomes. Please explore the [FY22 Budget Engagement page on our Public Input site \(https://publicinput.com/9375/\)](https://publicinput.com/9375/) to explore how planning is coming along and share your feedback on this work.

Please also save the date to attend a virtual FY22 Budget Town Hall on September 14. [You can RSVP here \(https://www.eventbrite.com/c/dcps-budget-engagement-cwwxzxy--DdMeiKgGVOhB/\)](https://www.eventbrite.com/c/dcps-budget-engagement-cwwxzxy--DdMeiKgGVOhB/).

Please visit [dcpsreopenstrong.com \(https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/\)](https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/) for back-to-school updates and follow @DCPublicSchools on social media.

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