

January 22, 2021

#ReopenStrong Community Corps Spotlight: Garfield Elementary School

Spotlights

Written by Kennard Branch, Principal

At Garfield Prep Academy, we were very excited to reopen our school community for Term 3. To make sure we considered perspectives from a variety of voices, we established and maintained a *Reopen Community Corps* (RCC) to help guide our decision-making. We invited students, teachers, parents, grandparents, staff, and community partners to join us for a series of Reopen Strong meetings from November – January. During our meetings, which were held virtually via Microsoft Teams, we discussed how we would reopen our school for Term 3, while specifically focusing on our students, talent (staff, parents, and partners), safety and operations, and master scheduling for a virtual school and an in-person school. From November through January, our diverse group of school-level stakeholders supported and advised our *Academic Leadership Team* (ALT) in understanding all four reopen learning models and the impact each model may have on our school community as we planned to reopen strong for In-Person Learning (IPL) and CARE Classrooms in Term 3.

Each RCC meeting we held typically lasted two hours on Tuesday afternoons. In addition to our RCC members, Ms. Sharona Robinson attended every meeting and to our delight, Chancellor Ferebee took advantage of an invitation to join us for one of our December meetings as our corps had a series of probing and clarifying questions that were best answered by our chancellor. After meeting with Chancellor Ferebee and with Ms. Robinson's support at each meeting, we were able to create a reopening plan with several highlights:

- In addition to the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) DC Public Schools provided us on an ongoing basis, Ms. Kristin Roe and her team from Paul Hastings Law Firm purchased over 200 student desk shields for our IPL and CARE Classrooms back in October.
- We established a shared vision which aligned to our commitment to baseline expectations for students, talent, safety and operations, and scheduling to ensure equity of access and opportunity across DCPS.
- We decided on a school-wide instructional model (**Model A: One Teacher Instructs**

One Cohort All Week) with flexibility for personalized instructional models (**Model B: One Teacher Instructs In-Person and Virtually All Week with Support Staff**) for teachers in our self-contained specialized programs.

- Our school-wide model allows for our building to be closed on Wednesdays for deep cleaning. While our building is closed, teaching and learning will continue as our students will be engaged in asynchronous STREAM (science, engineering, reading, arts, math) activities and our teachers will be engaged in professional development sessions through-out the day with an hour of that time specifically dedicated to our health and wellness series, **Take Time for Self-Care**.
- Our RCC came to an agreement as we realized it would be best to bring back one IPL classroom at each grade level (inclusive of a K-2 and 3-5 CES classroom), while maintaining and growing (according to data and need) our CARE classrooms. We currently have one multi-age CARE classroom that has been operating since Wednesday, December 9, 2020.

In our initial RCC meetings, we were planning to bring back one IPL classroom and one CARE Classroom for Term 3, but as we thought about the needs of our total student body, our historic data, and the unfinished learning that occurred last school year, we felt it wouldn't be equitable to only open one IPL classroom for 11 children, so with a focus on prioritizing our highest needs students and serving as many students as possible, we

decided to open one IPL classroom at each grade from PK3 – 5 (8 total classrooms). We're also a school with a significant focus on inclusion, so it goes without saying that in addition to the 8 classrooms, we also invited our K-2 and 3-5 CES classrooms back for Term 3.

At Garfield, our Enrollment Committee is always focused on recruiting and retaining students, so new and current families can learn more about Term 3 at Garfield by visiting our school's website: <https://garfieldes.org/> (<https://garfieldes.org/>) and by following us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/GarfieldEs?s=20> (<https://twitter.com/GarfieldEs?s=20>).

Equally important, our current parents can also learn about Term 3 by viewing our school's ClassDojo page, attending our virtual open-house meetings, and by reading *The Garfield Inquirer – A Sway Parent Newsletter*, which we distribute via ClassDojo as a Virtual Tuesday Folder.

Address: District of Columbia Public Schools
1200 First Street
Washington, DC 20002

Phone: (202) 442-5885



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(<https://dcps.dc.gov/>)



GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

(<https://mayor.dc.gov/>)

En español
(<https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/en-espanol/>)

አማርኛ
(<https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/amharic/>)

Contact
(<https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/contact-us/>)

For staff
(<https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/for-staff/>)

SY20-
(<https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/sy20/>)



twitter.com/dcpublicschools



(<https://www.facebook.com/dcpublicschools>)



(<https://www.instagram.com/dcpublicschools/>)



(<https://www.youtube.com/user/dcpublicschools>)