

November 27, 2020

#ReopenStrong Spotlight: Payne Elementary School

Spotlights

Written by Principal Stephanie Byrd (<https://dcps.dc.gov/biography/stephanie-byrd>).

"Recess is best part of the day!" Once tethered to a computer in a dimly lit bedroom with her little brother, both too young to understand that big sisters' online learning requires more than any home can offer, 3rd grader Lauryn is excited about her return to the playground.

Recess, undoubtedly the best part of any day, has been summoned out of its tomb and resurrected on the grounds at Payne Elementary School. (<https://profiles.dcps.dc.gov/payne>)

Some students, regardless of risk factor rating, need to physically be in school. Likewise, there are some students who are thriving at home. We approached this dichotomy with students at the center:

- Teaching and learning every day
- Morning meeting, lunch, and recess on Microsoft Teams
- Weekly data meetings based on weekly student assessments
- Daily monitoring of instruction with feedback
- School online: Fall Field Day, Spirit Week, Back to School Night, Literacy Night, etc.
- Community engagement: partners raising money for computers, Thanksgiving baskets delivered to homes, and conversations about race

CARE Classroom programming includes recess each day.

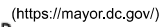
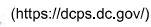


While we poured our energies into online learning and building school community, DCPS Operations teams delivered HEPA filter units, detailed nurses to take temperatures and staff isolation rooms, stored of Personal Protective Equipment, water, and cleaning supplies. We secured staffing and opened CARE classrooms.

One the first day, students entered with fear across their brows as parents released their children to face-shielded, mask-donning staff members. Bravely, they unhinged the fingers that gripped their parents' hands. Each child stepped up to have their temperatures taken, masks secured, and hands sanitized. Each breath was suspended as parents sought to get one last glimpse of their children entering the building. At the threshold, students turned

Recess has returned to the grounds at Payne Elementary School. Joyful screams and laughter fill the air. Ashton chases Nicholas, Lauryn slides, and Theo pushes Suraya on the swing. On a warm day in November, coats are strewn across the number three, which was painted on the black top as an indication of where third graders should brighten their spirits.

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