BCS BEGINS 4-DAY IN-PERSON LEARNING

After several weeks of blended learning, scholars in Birmingham City Schools can begin in-person learning four days a week starting on April 5. Families still can choose the virtual option in all grades.

Superintendent Dr. Mark Sullivan announced the change after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently issued new guidelines regarding in-person learning in school buildings. The recommended spacing for schools has been reduced from 6 feet to 3 feet.

“This change is in the best interest of our scholars” said Superintendent Dr. Mark Sullivan. “We have maintained that we would be guided by science in making our decisions. In this case, science shows that we can safely educate students following safety protocols and maintaining a social distance of 3 feet.”

Sullivan said the return to four days of in-person instruction will give educators a greater opportunity to impact students who often do not respond as well to virtual learning.

“Many of our scholars are doing well with virtual learning. There are others who can stay on task better when a professional educator is physically present and giving instruction and guidance,” Sullivan said.

In-person learning also helps teachers and school leaders identify social or emotional issues with students, Sullivan said.

“Our Birmingham City Schools teachers do more than provide instruction. They are often the first ones to notice if something is not going well emotionally with a student,” Sullivan said. “This year has been difficult for our scholars and our teachers who really care about them.

Consistent in-person learning is crucial when it comes to removing barriers to education.”
Superintendent Speaks

For more than a year now, we’ve been dealing with the impact of COVID-19 on our community and our school district. I have always maintained that we would make decisions on school openings and operations based on science. In Birmingham City Schools, we care about the health and safety of our scholars, our employees and their families.

There has been a lot of talk recently about changes in requirements for face coverings. As long as science tells us that wearing face coverings helps prevent the spread of the virus and saves lives, we will follow the public health guidelines. We have personal protective equipment for all students and employees, and we encourage you to use in all of our facilities.

During spring break, many of you may choose to travel or spend time with family. Don’t let your guard down. Follow the protocols – wash your hands, cover your face and keep socially distanced.

The number of positive cases is declining in Jefferson County, but COVID-19 is still present in our community. We have to continue fighting the virus with common sense tools so we can soon return to some sense of normalcy.

After Spring Break, our scholars will have an opportunity for four days of in-person learning. Research has shown that consistent in-person instruction can make a difference in academic success for students, especially in primary grades. Families who prefer virtual learning still will have that option.

In a few days, we will introduce new and robust offerings for scholars in Learning Strong – Summer 2021. Programs will include a mix of challenging and fun enrichment classes at various schools throughout the district. We’ll also have opportunities for students who want to recoup some of the learning they may have lost as a result of COVID-19.

The programs offered through Birmingham City Schools this summer will be free – but the learning students receive will be a huge investment in their futures.

The next academic year will begin on Aug. 2. We want our scholars to return for an exciting year of learning. Once the registration portal opens up online in April, please register so we can have all the tools in place for you once the school year begins.

We are BCS Strong!

Superintendent
Dr. Mark Sullivan

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SCHOOL BOARD APPROVES NEW 2021–22 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The Birmingham Board of Education has approved a calendar for the next academic year, including more opportunities for enrichment and remediation for scholars.

Under the 2021-2022 Academic Calendar, students return to school on August 2, 2021 and will still receive 180 days of instruction. Breaks between each grading period will be used to provide classes and other activities to help bolster academics for each scholar, regardless of their grade or proficiency level.

Teachers will work 187 days, including professional development. The new calendar was presented after receiving feedback in two different surveys. A majority of parents and employees opposed the first proposal to start school in mid-July.

We listened to our parents and employees and made changes in the calendar proposal,” said Superintendent Dr. Mark Sullivan. “They agreed that we needed an intentional and strategic plan for remediation and enrichment as we emerge from the grips of the COVID-19 pandemic, but they wanted us to do something different from our original proposal.”

Teachers will not be required to work during the breaks, Dr. Sullivan said. The district will work with community partners to provide enrichment and remediation during that time.

UAB REGIONAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR WINNERS

**Behavioral & Social Science**

2nd Place: Sydnee Allen, 8th Grade, W.J. Christian School, Project Title: Hawthorne Effect: I'm

**Medicine & Health Science**

1st Place: Kaylen Wilkerson, 8th Grade, W. J. Christian School, Project Title: Should Masks be Worn?

2nd Place: William Crawford, 8th Grade, W. J. Christian School, Project Title: Electrolytes a Study of Sports Drinks

3rd Place: Kolbe Kimbrough, 8th Grade, W. J. Christian School, Project Title: The Impact of Exercise on Your Blood Pressure

Camari McCain, 6th Grade, Green Acres Middle School, Project Title: An Analysis of Medicinal Experiences Treating Toenail Fungus

**Chemistry**

1st Place: Syrai Pledger, Trinity Reynolds & India Gibson, 8th Grade, W.J. Christian School, Project Title: Watermelon Coffee High

2nd Place: Marcus Montgomery, 8th Grade, W.J. Christian School, Project Title: Density vs. Oil

3rd Place: Tyra Davis, 8th Grade, W.J. Christian School, Project Title: Toothpaste for the Elephants

Honorable Mention: Shamira Jackson & Antwunyce Wilson, 8th Grade, Bush Hill STEAM Academy, Project Title: What Kind of Water Melts Ice Faster Salt Water, Tap Water or Baking Soda Water

**Physical Science**

1st Place: James Giles, 8th Grade, W. J. Christian School, Project Title: Does the Temperature Effect How High a Tennis Ball Will Bounce

**Environmental & Earth Science**

1st Place: Sera Stone, 7th Grade, The Capitol School, Project Title: Using Mushrooms to Remove Oil in Salt Water
COMMUNITY PARTNERS HELP BCS STUDENTS WEATHER THE PANDEMIC

Learning and support didn’t stop for Birmingham City Schools scholars when the COVID-19 pandemic set in last year with massive interruptions. In addition to the school district’s dedicated educators, a variety of partners stepped up to offer some new services or adapt their regular to a virtual space. Here are a few examples. We will have more next month.

SIXTH AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

Space at Sixth Avenue Baptist that traditionally is used for Sunday School classes has become a place for learning and fun five days a week.

With support from the Community Foundation of Birmingham, United Way of Central Alabama, local businesses, individual church members and the church, students have access to support they need to stay on track with the lessons, said Leticia Watkins, the youth director at the church.

“It’s a collaborative effort,” Watkins said. “We’re wrapping our arms around the children to make sure they don’t fall behind. This takes a lot of stress off of parents.”

The program gives working parents the assurance that their children are in a safe and nurturing learning environment throughout the day, Watkins said. In one family, a mom with four children was preparing to nine weeks off with no pay to stay home with her elementary school children.

STAIR BIRMINGHAM

STAIR Birmingham was providing one-on-one reading tutors for students at 11 Birmingham elementary schools. When COVID 19 forced the district to move to virtual learning, the program that helps get students on track with reading by the time they finish third grade had to make some changes.

Tutoring still happens virtually, said Liz Hixon, director of community engagement. “Our curriculum can be done via Zoom or over the phone,” Hixon said. With students in virtual learning and limited access to libraries, Hixon said the STAIR team knew that their support was still important to student success.

They launched initiatives such as Read and Dream and placed free books in the hands of students while encouraging family reading.

BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Birmingham Education Foundation supports scholars and educators in Birmingham City Schools throughout they year. Over the past year, Ed’s work has transitioned to a virtual space, but the impact is still there, said Victoria Hollis.

One of the signature programs this year is the Innovative Education Fellowship. This six-month program is providing support to ambitious, entrepreneurial, high-potential school leaders in Birmingham in partnership with the 4.0 Schools in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Each 4.0 Fellow has recruited five individuals such as alumni, community members, funders, and families for an 8-week course of study on a variety of K-12 topics. At the end of the program, each small team will have developed a plan for innovating within their school. Birmingham school participating this year include Carver High School, Avondale Elementary and Tuggle Elementary. ED also continues to support scholars in Birmingham City Schools with a variety of initiatives including internship and scholarship opportunities, college and career planning and academic success.
CONGRATULATIONS CARVER LADY RAMS

Head Coach Jarvis Wilson and the Lady Rams of Carver High School made history March 4, 2021, by winning the school’s first Girls State Basketball Championship! Not only did these young ladies defeat Mae Jemison 78-69 in the title game, they did so with only seven players. After a strong first quarter, the 25 – 4 Lady Rams never relinquished control of the game to capture the Alabama High School Athletic Association 5A title. This is Coach Wilson’s first championship as head coach, and the school’s first title in any sport since a 1993 win in Track and Field.

The Lady Rams are:

#11 – Ciondra Darden, #24 – Cameron Dorsey, #1 – Tamia Muse, #4 – Destinee Nelson, #12 – Precious Sturdivant, #5 – Kamaya Wilson, #3 – Randrea Wright, Head Coach – Jarvis Wilson, Assistant Coach – Floyd Smith, Assistant Coach – Seqouyah Griffin, Assistant Coach – LeTrice Ragland, Athletic Director – Aubrey Bennett, Principal – Tikki Hines

GREAT SEASON IN 5A FOR RAMSAY RAMS

Ramsay Boys Basketball
0- PJ Davis
1- CJ Burns
2- Jalen Jones
3-KeShawn Murphy
4-Kerrington Kiel
5-Kamren Ivory
10-Skylar Lykes
11-Cameron White
13-JP Peterson
14-Bernard Burrell
21-Brandon Nixon
23-Montez Dunson
24-Zedrick Powell

Head Coach-Denton Johnson
Assistant Coach-Brian Miller
Assistant-Denzell Stovall
Assistant- Jonathan Piazza
On Wednesday, March 3, several Birmingham City School scholars were celebrated virtually for their STEM competition presentations. The presentation categories could represent one of five areas of study: STEM, Biology, Chemistry, Physical Science and Physics, and Environmental and Earth Sciences.

**Learning Network 1**

**Biology, 1st Place:** Kolbe Kimbrough, W.J. Christian 8th grade  
**Biology, 2nd Place:** Sydnee Allen, W.J. Christian 8th grade  
**Chemistry, 1st place:** Shamira Jackson and Antwunyce Wilson, Bush Hills STEAM Academy, 8th grade  
**Chemistry, 2nd Place:** McKayln Matthews, Wilkerson Middle 8th grade  
**Physical Science and Physics, 1st Place:** Terrion Nevels, Wilkerson Middle, 6th grade  
**Physical Science and Physics, 2nd Place:** Chloe Sanders, Wilkerson Middle, 8th grade  
**Environmental and Earth Sciences, 1st Place:** Reign Jones and Floricela Padilla-Morsales, 8th grade, Wilkerson  
**STEM 1st Place:** Mariama Diallo and Kamorian Osborne, Bush Hills STEAM Academy, 8th grade  
**STEM 2nd Place:** Amy Ledesma Munoz, Wilkerson Middle, 6th grade

**Learning Network 2**

**Biology, 1st Place:** Da’Nasia Middleton, Huffman Middle, 7th grade  
**STEM 1st Place:** Huffman Middle, Madisan Packer, 6th grade  
**Chemistry, 1st place:** Nicolas Page, Wilkerson Middle, 8th grade  
**Chemistry, 2nd Place:** Sharaia Canady, Wilkerson Middle, 8th grade  
**Physical Science and Physics, 1st Place:** Jeremiah Orr, Wilkerson Middle 6th grade  
**Physical Science and Physics, 2nd Place:** James Giles, W.J. Christian 8th grade  
**Environmental and Earth Sciences, 1st Place:** Jakari Dillard & JMarcus Jones, Ramsay, 9th grade, “The Cleanliness of Pennies”  
**STEM 1st Place:** Ca’Mari McCain, Green Acres Middle, 6th grade  
**STEM 2nd Place:** Amy Ledesma Munoz, Wilkerson Middle, 6th grade

**Learning Network 3**

**Biology, 1st Place:** Demetria Winston, Jackson-Olin, 11th grade, “May the Best Mask Win!”  
**Biology, 2nd Place:** K’La Prewitt, Jackson-Olin, 12th grade, “Good or Bad Mask”  
**Chemistry, 1st place:** Shamira Jackson and Antwunyce Wilson, Bush Hills STEAM Academy, 8th grade  
**Chemistry, 2nd Place:** Jayla Stafford and Braelyn Guinn, Ramsay, 9th grade, “Ice vs. Liquids”

**District STEM Fair Winners: Grades 9-12**

**Biology, 1st Place:** Kolbe Kimbrough, W.J. Christian 8th grade  
**Biology, 2nd Place:** Sydnee Allen, W.J. Christian 8th grade  
**Chemistry, 1st place:** Shamira Jackson and Antwunyce Wilson, Bush Hills STEAM Academy, 8th grade  
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**STEM 1st Place:** Mariama Diallo and Kamorian Osborne, Bush Hills STEAM Academy, 8th grade  
**STEM 2nd Place:** Amy Ledesma Munoz, Wilkerson Middle, 6th grade

YMCA Offers School Support Academy

The YMCA of Greater Birmingham will provide scholarships to 125 students for eight weeks who need access to all-day learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We were awarded this grant to offer full-day school support, through our School Support Academy, to more at-risk students,” according to Rhonda Elmore, the Y’s Executive Director of Youth Development. YMCA School Support Academy is an in-person program to support students who are e-learning through their school district until a fully in-school option is available. The program, developed as the Y’s immediate response to school closings during the pandemic, helps children stay on task with their school work, avoid potential backsliding during virtual learning, and encourage their academic, physical and mental health as they return to school.

School Support Academy is currently available at the Northeast YMCA and the YMCA Youth Center downtown. “We are supporting virtual learning and keeping children safe, engaged and active during what would be a regular school day so their parents can continue to work,” she says.

Eligible students must reside in a moderate to high SVI zip code in the CDC Social Vulnerability Index in the Birmingham community.

For more information and to see all eligible zip codes, parents can click here. Families may apply for this opportunity for YMCA’s School Support Academy via an email to: childcare@ymcabham.org.
Congratulations to Dupuy teacher Tandy Petrov and her husband, Stanislav Petrov, who teaches at Smith Middle. The duo helped secure three grants -- two for Dupuy (robotics and food) and one for Smith.

Tandy Petrov said approximately 155 students at Dupuy will benefit from the grants and funds will be used for competitions. Here, she shares more about the grants and the grant-writing process:

Tell us more about Dupuy: Dupuy re-opened in 2017 to serve students who are removed from their zoned school due to Class III violations (disruptive behavior at school or in the community). Previously, Dupuy was known as Anna Stewart Dupuy Elementary School. Now, we have a big mission - restore students to learners. And that's why I write grants, so that we can create interactive, engaging activities for our students, teachers, and community. I teach 7th-12th grade science and I also use robotics and food to enhance how we apply basic math and science skills.

How did the grant process start and what was the goal? At the end of 2017, we (Dupuy, the principal and teachers), decided to open a Makerspace/STE(A)M lab at Dupuy for teaching science and also creating interdisciplinary learning objectives. The school and district provided funds after writing our first grant to pilot 3D-printing and simple robots that can be controlled using block-style coding. The students loved the robots so much that in 2018 I wrote and was awarded an AMSTI robotics grant. We received the same grant in 2019, and I was able to continue the tradition and earn a third grant this year for Dupuy. Additionally, I had the opportunity to expand my own grant-writing skills while educating a new teacher on how to write grants. My husband changed careers due to the pandemic and is now a 6th-grade science educator at LM Smith Middle School. Because we both love robots, I helped him write a grant to AMSTI and together, we were able to secure his first robotics grant for Smith Middle. I look forward to the day when our students can compete against each other.

How do you use food to teach science and math and how many students will benefit from this program? The FoodMASTER initiative came about because everyone loves food and we all need to eat. Before Dupuy and since joining the Dupuy faculty, I have been highly involved with UAB CORD (Community OutReach Development). Every summer they host a variety of summer camps designed to mitigate the summer slide and engage students in all aspects of science. Parents, year after year, have wanted camps for their youngest scholars and in 2019, we decided to expand our camps to include 2nd-, 3rd- and 4th-graders; previously camps were for 5th-12th. Using food to teach science and math was a successful endeavor for the first year and the younger learners because they were able to experience real-world math and science. In 2020, the pandemic happened, and we had to get this summer camp online, plus we wanted to expand to 8th- and 9th-grade students. We were able to make kits, use Zoom, and successfully teach a mixed age-group of learners. My principal investigator, Dr. Mike Wyss, recommended me for a grant funding opportunity from the Robert F. Noyce Foundation unit at the University of South Alabama. The Southeaster NOYCE committee thought I wrote a strong proposal and funded me to make this dream a reality. I was even funded an extra $1 over the budgeted award amount. Once I received the grant, Dupuy agreed to help me by making sure that any gaps in providing storage, access to kits, etc are filled. The great thing about FoodMASTER is it takes several teachers to make it happen. Therefore, our small staff of 10 are excited to play our part in making food science engaging.

(Continued on Page 9)
NEWLY NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS

at Ramsay High School. She currently teaches Advanced English II and AP Language and Composition and is a new National Board Certified Teacher in English Language Arts-Adolescence to Young Adulthood. She believes that the best thing about the NBCT process was the way it helped her focus on keeping students first in all of her planning and decision-making.

Lindsey Crider Bloodworth is in her seventh year as an English Language Arts teacher currently working as a Teacher Evaluation Implementation Specialist (TEIS). She attained her National Board certification in the area of Early Adolescence/English Language Arts during the fall of 2020. Her career goals are to improve teacher leadership, help teachers to realize their potential as classroom and community leaders, and to improve professional development.

Sandra Marshall-Pickens has served in Birmingham City Schools for 21 years and is entirely of her career teaching Spanish at Carver High School. She is a proud Ram for life! This certification has given her the confidence to step up as a leader in her school building, and motivated her to pursue an EdS degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. She plans to expand her teaching experience as an ESL educator in the future.

OLIVER ELEMENTARY EDUCATOR AEA’S AP OF THE YEAR

Congrats to Tamara Burney, assistant principal at Oliver Elementary. Burney has been selected as the Alabama Education Association’s AP of the year. She was instrumental in working and collaborating with her principal to improve Oliver Elementary’s State Report Card from grade F to grade C. As a result of the improvement, the school experienced more parental involvement and participation from community stakeholders. Burney began her teaching career in Jefferson County and worked there before accepting a position as a curriculum coach with Birmingham City Schools. She served in that capacity for six years before being named AP at Oliver. Burney is a two-time graduate of Alabama State University, earning both her bachelor’s and Master of Science degrees in elementary education. Click here to read the full article.

WEST END ART TEACHER RECOGNIZED

Congratulations and a sincere thank you to Ms. Joi Black, a first-year Art teacher at West End Academy. Ms. Black was nominated by her peers for her efforts in the District Mentoring Program. The faculty and staff said: ”Ms. Joi Black is definitely a stand out amongst others in the program. She has been heavily active in all professional developments offered to help strengthen classroom instruction strategies. She has been very active in our monthly T.E.A.M. Talk Mentor meetings as well. We are very impressed with her efforts and she is a very dedicated hard-working employee.”
Future plans: We want to build an urban garden (we sorta have one now, in two garden boxes that are not very big) and help provide fresh produce to the Kingston neighborhood. We also want to finish our patio and continue the murals of Dupuy.

“All-in-all, I do this because I love to write and there’s something special about being awarded money for writing and researching. But I chose these ideas and visions because of the students. They shared their interests and their problems, then we found ways to include them into the lesson planning. Our job is more than lesson planning and teaching, it is cultivating an entire person to see the beauty in learning. When students complain about the cafeteria food, well, let’s challenge them with applicable skills to fix the problem. I hope FoodMASTER empowers students to make real change that affects their world, while teaching them how to use math and science daily. And maybe one day, Dupuy and Smith Middle scholars will use their robot knowledge to take care of their urban garden and help make their meals.”

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Dr. Mark Sullivan
Superintendent

The BCS Report will be distributed monthly. Please submit story ideas to Nikki Seaborn (cseaborn@bhm.k12.al.us), by the 10th day of each month.

BIRMINGHAM CITY SCHOOLS
BUILDING LEADERS, IMPACTING THE WORLD.

MARCH 2021
VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

THE NAOMI H. TRUMAN SCHOLARSHIPS: DEADLINE 4/19/2021

The Naomi H. Truman Scholarship Foundation aids individuals who reside in the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District (HABD) Public Housing or Section 8 Assisted Housing Program. In order to encourage academic excellence and higher learning, HABD established a scholarship foundation to serve the residents through educational financial assistance. To apply, click here.


The Serious Injury Law Group is offering middle and high school students an opportunity to receive a scholarship to continue their education. Parents and Guardians: Please see award and scholarship opportunities for students from Serious Injury Law Group. For more information and to apply, click here.

HOOPER CITY ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIPS: DEADLINE 4/30/2021

The Hooper City Alumni Association, Inc. Scholarship was established to provide financial assistance to deserving college bound students in Jefferson County, Alabama. This scholarship is for $500 per semester for a 4-year period. To apply, click here.

SUPPORTING WOMEN IN SCIENCE (SWIS) STEM SCHOLARSHIPS: DEADLINE 5/1/2021

SWIS STEM scholarships are one-time awards of $2,500 given annually to up to 4 undergraduate women pursuing degrees in any STEM field. One of the scholarships is reserved for women who are the first in their immediate family/household to seek a college degree (FirstGen STEM Scholarship). Scholarships are intended to assist with the attainment of educational goals (e.g., tuition, books, field work, travel to a scientific conference). For more information, click here.

NPHC SCHOLARSHIP: DEADLINE 5/3/2021

In said commitment to scholarship, community service and cultural enrichment, the National Pan-Hellenic Council awards scholarships to graduating seniors that exemplify high academic achievement, leadership, and involvement within the community. To apply, click here.

THE RICE AND CARTER SCHOLARSHIPS: DEADLINE 5/17/2021

John W. Rice, Jr., Angelina Ray Rice Scholarship, and Clyde L. Carter Scholarship Committee of Westminster Presbyterian Church is pleased to announce two annual college scholarships. A $3000.00 Scholarship, in honor of John W. Rice, Jr. and Angelina Ray Rice, and the second scholarship of $2000.00 is in honor of Clyde L. Carter. The scholarships will be awarded to graduating high school seniors who are either active members of Westminster Presbyterian Church or residents of the Greater Titusville Community, Birmingham, AL. To apply, click here.