Birmingham City Schools, Live HealthSmart Alabama, and the UAB Minority Health & Health Disparities Research Center (MHRC) are partnering to offer bi-weekly COVID-19 testing for students participating in fall sports, cheerleading and band. The nasal swab testing will be offered at BCS high schools beginning Sept. 28. Each school will be assigned a specific date and scheduled time for testing.

“As we continue to look at data, it is abundantly clear that this disease is wreaking havoc on majority black and brown communities. Our goal in offering the test is to help protect our students and their families,” said Superintendent Dr. Mark Sullivan. “This is a game-changer that will help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our community.”

“Community testing is an essential part of the strategy to contain and ultimately end the pandemic,” said Mona Fouad, M.D., director of the MHRC at UAB. “The MHRC has been a leader in community testing for COVID-19 in Birmingham and Jefferson County since we launched mobile testing locations on April 30, 2020. We are pleased to partner with Birmingham City Schools to students, their families, teachers and school staff safe.”

Positive test results will only be reported to the student or his or her parent or guardian. Each family is asked to report any positive test to the principal at the student’s school. Students who test positive for COVID-19 will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days. Individuals who have been exposed to the positive case also will need to self-quarantine. The cost of the tests will be covered through private insurance or through CARES Act funding from Jefferson County.
Superintendent Speaks

I am excited and encouraged by the way our Birmingham City Schools scholars, faculty and staff have embraced the start of the school year with remote teaching and learning.

While this method is new to many, it helps lay the foundation for the future. As I observe classes, I see educators who are going the extra mile to engage with their students. I also see students who appear eager to learn.

When we decided to begin school with remote teaching and learning, we knew we would need a well-developed plan for instruction, and we knew we needed to regularly provide meals for our scholars. I applaud everyone who has worked to get our electronic devices in place. I also appreciate our families who have been patient while we have dealt with delivery delays and other challenges with devices and programs. We also knew as we developed plans or instruction, we needed to provide regular hot meals for our scholars.

Our Child Nutrition Program and our Transportation Department have collaborated to ensure that students have hot meals five days a week. Students are no more than a mile away from a hot meal each day. It’s time now for us to look ahead to the next nine weeks. Already, we are meeting with public health officials and our academic teams to determine our next steps.

As I have said, we will be guided by science. We want all of our students to learn and achieve at their highest potential. We also want all students, faculty, and staff to remain safe and healthy during this COVID-19 pandemic.

We don’t know what will happen in future months. But I know the resilience and strength of our scholars and our entire BCS team. Together, we are BCS Strong.

- Dr. Mark Sullivan

District Dates

- BBOE Board Meeting – Oct. 13
- BBOE Work Session – Oct. 27
- Hispanic Heritage Month - ends Oct. 15
Jeremiah Williams, the No. 3 overall college football prospect in Alabama, has been officially honored as a 2021 All-American. The honor was presented during a virtual jersey presentation as part of the first episode of the Road to the Dome digital series. The episode was part of the Road to the Dome digital series. It was released Sept. 23 on the NBC Sports YouTube channel.

"Being an All-American is the icing of the cake for my high school career," said Williams, a senior at Birmingham’s Ramsay High School. "It shows that all my hard work has not gone unnoticed." Having been selected to play in the twenty-first edition of the All-American Bowl, Williams will play in the annual East vs. West matchup inside the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas. The Bowl will be nationally televised, live on NBC, and will feature the nation’s top 100 high school football players.

Want to know what’s happening in sports? Stay up-to-date on all happenings with our BCS sports teams by visiting our athletic website.
GLEN IRIS 5TH-GRADE PUBLISHES BOOK

Ayrika Jones is a 5th-grade student at Glen Iris Elementary School in Birmingham. She has written her first book titled "How Did You Know It Was Me, Mr. Tomato?" The book has been published online and it's available for purchase. She spent two months writing her book while school was out during the early stages of the pandemic. She credits her parents for inspiring and helping her publish her first book.

Huffman High Grad Becomes AP Scholar

BCS graduate Tony Lott earned the title of AP Scholar, which is granted to students who receive scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams. The Huffman High alum is now studying at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Wenonah's Hospitality and Tourism Academy Wins National Award

The award-winning Hospitality and Tourism Academy at Wenonah High School continues to serve up its winning ways under the direction of coordinator Angela Smith. The academy, which gives WHS students industry-related experience, was honored at the National Academy Foundation’s 2021 virtual conference in July. Students were recognized for their skills, high standards and hands-on experience.
Middle school students at Hudson K-8 and Wilkerson K-8 received iPads and connection to a new network of support through Verizon on Friday, Sept. 11. Birmingham City Schools, the only Alabama public school district participating in the Verizon Innovative Learning initiative, joins 110 new schools in the program across the country. The investment in each of the schools totals about $1.8 million and includes 650 devices, according to Verizon. Fred Stewart III, principal at Hudson; and Davida Hill Johnson, principal at Wilkerson, worked with their teams to develop device distribution plans.

At Wilkerson, a disc jockey played upbeat music. Families at Hudson were greeted by teachers and administrators, who directed parents into numbered parking spaces. The team was armed with information and ready to serve parents. At both schools, some parents were in line and waiting to pick up their devices an hour before the roll out began. Parents were assigned specific pickup times based on the alphabet of their last name.

Superintendent Dr. Mark Sullivan visited both sites to observe distribution and talk with parents. “The students and parents were excited to receive the new devices, and I know this will be a great benefit to their academic achievement,” Sullivan said. “We appreciate partnerships. We also appreciate the patience of our families through this process.”

Verizon, through the Verizon Innovative Learning program and in partnership with Digital Promise, provides free technology, free internet access, and experiential learning to help give under-resourced students the technology, education, and opportunity they deserve. Since 2012, the Verizon Innovative Learning program has provided over $535 million in market value to support STEM education, helping students enhance their learning by infusing technology into the school’s curriculum.
Device rollouts and meal distributions continue throughout the school district. Faculty and staff have put in many hours preparing for the school year. Staff are shown at:

The National Foundation for Governors' Fitness Councils and the State of Alabama has selected Smith Middle School as a "Don’t Quit Champion School."

This recognition comes from the school making an investment in student fitness. Studies show that regular physical activity decreases the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. Physical activity also can reduce student anxiety and depression.

NFGFC is committed to breaking the cycle of childhood obesity by providing new resources to help students get fit.

"We recognize Smith Middle as a leader in physical education and wellness and for the commitment to physical education, NFGFC Director Kelly Olin said. "For that commitment, we are awarding Smith Middle with a brand new fitness center."

The fitness center features strength training and cardio fitness equipment. The award also includes design, delivery and installation of the equipment.
Free Homework Help For Students

Starting on Sept. 21, BCS students can get extra help with homework. The Housing Authority of the Birmingham District Community Center remains closed to the public due to COVID-19, which means students miss out on extra help with school assignments. To help solve the problem, HABD is assisting students virtually. Staff will be available via Zoom to assist Birmingham City Schools students ages 6 – 18 years old. HABD’s Armon Matthews says we know things can be stressful for parents and youth dealing with situations they’ve never experienced before. “We want to connect with our residents holistically and cover every aspect that we can so we can help them get through this,” said Matthews. Head here for more information.

To join the Zoom meeting use ID: 936 1905 8508 and password: 198278.

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TEACHER, APPLE CHANGING THE GAME FOR REMOTE LEARNING

As Birmingham City Schools fourth grade science and social studies teacher Portrice Warren prepared to start her classes remotely, she was aware of the challenges this year brings.

Warren is one of nearly 500 educators who participated in a massive virtual coding academy this summer as part of Apple’s Community Education Initiative to bring creativity, and workforce development opportunities to learners of all ages and to communities that are traditionally underrepresented in technology. Apple facilitates and supports CEI programming in 24 cities and regions across the US, 21 of which predominately serve majority Black and Brown students.

View the full story.

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STUDENT OPPORTUNITY

Black Eyecare Perspective and Optometrists of the Birmingham community are being intentional in their impact to recruit students interested in the field. On Tuesday, October 6, 2020, the organization will create a pipeline for students at every HBCU for not only the field of optometry, but the eyecare industry. Any African American student who may be a senior in high school or college is welcomed.

Click here for more info