Safe return is a work in progress for Birmingham City Schools. Scholars began returning for in-person learning on Nov. 9, but the work to ensure students and staff are safe and healthy is continuous.

On Wednesday, Nov 18, 41 buses pulled up one-by-one at the Lincoln Professional Center to pick up PPE and health supplies.

Nurse Lavonna Arrington said the project took lots of coordination, and everyone was willing to work. It took the nurses, the Transportation Department and the Operations Department working together to handle the huge task.

The PPE distribution is part of the effort to combat COVID-19 in the schools and in the community. The district posts its cases each week on the BCS COVID-19 Dashboard, which is found on the website and in the Safe Return Portal. The data also is shared with the Alabama Department of Public Health and updated each Friday.

Students are provided proper face coverings in the schools, and hand sanitation stations are available throughout school buildings.

The percentage of students in blended and virtual learning has fluctuated, with an increase in the number of families selecting the virtual option, school leaders said.

A majority of the teachers returned and are teaching from the schools. The district also has employed substitutes to fill positions when needed.

Among the substitutes is retired U.S. Army Gen. George Bowman, a former Jefferson County Commissioner. He is teaching government and economics and assisting with Woodlawn High School’s JROTC program.
A lot of hard work has gone into preparation and execution for the first weeks of in-person blended learning and continued virtual learning. The commitment to excellence from faculty and staff throughout Birmingham City Schools is evident. Thanks for all of your hard work.

While we welcome the opportunity to see our scholars in-person and talk with our co-workers, we must be mindful of precautions that can help keep everyone safe and healthy as we operate during this global pandemic.

In Birmingham City Schools, we follow the public health guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Jefferson County Department of Health. There are no exceptions to these guidelines.

As you work each day, maintain social distance. Wash and sanitize your hands regularly, and always wear a face covering. If your work requires collaboration, use technology – either Zoom calls, Webex, Facetime or another platform. In-person meetings should be avoided.

If you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, get tested. Employees who have been exposed and feel ill should not come to work when exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. It’s imperative that we work together to stop the spread of COVID-19 and remain healthy.

All schools have been provided with personal protective equipment. These supplies should be distributed to teachers and all departments. If you need additional PPE, please contact your immediate supervisor.

These are challenging times for every public school system in America. I am confident we will get through this. We are BCS Strong!

Dr. Mark Sullivan

District Dates

- Work Session – Nov. 24
- Fall Holiday – Nov. 25-27
- Board Meeting – Dec. 8
- Winter Holiday – Dec. 23- Jan. 1
GEAR UP Birmingham is proud to partner with the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) to offer college tuition waivers to GUB students and their eligible legal guardians. The waiver is available for senior students in Birmingham City Schools who successfully complete high school and qualify for admission in Alabama’s two-college system. The GUB College Tuition Waiver also is available to the legal guardians of GUB students. The legal guardians must qualify for admission at a two-year institution or technical college within the ACCS to use the waiver.

“Students are highly encouraged to make sure they have all criteria completed before applying,” said Tanzania Goldsmith, GEAR UP Project Director. “This has been a wonderful opportunity for the GEAR Up cohort. We currently have around 1,200 students in this year’s senior class in all Birmingham City high schools.”

To be eligible to receive the GEAR UP Last-Dollar Waiver, all applicants must acknowledge ALL the following is complete before submitting an application:

• Admission Application for the ACCS college student plans to attend.

• Completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) with the federal school code for the ACCS college student plans to attend.

• Understand that the waiver is a last-dollar, tuition and fees only waiver. This means the dollar amount will be determined once all other financial resources have been exhausted. This includes all federal and or state grants, institutional waivers, outside waivers, and any other gift aid.

GEAR UP Birmingham (GUB) is a federally funded college awareness and readiness program that empowers students to attend and succeed in college. Funded through a 7-year grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education, GEAR UP Birmingham’s main focus is to promote success by providing a cohort of Birmingham City Schools’ students with opportunities to learn the necessary skills needed to attend and to graduate from college. GEAR UP Birmingham provides a plethora of resources and activities that promote a college-going culture for students, parents, and educators alike. GEAR UP Birmingham believes that all students can attend college, if they choose, and because of this belief GEAR UP Birmingham is committed to supporting a cohort of Birmingham City School students on their collegiate journey.

Visit GEAR UP website here.

Students must complete the above criteria and understand that incomplete waiver applications will not be reviewed for eligibility.

Click here for application.
ACADEMY SPORTS GRANTS $10,000 TO WOODLAWN FOOTBALL PROGRAM

The football team at Woodlawn High School started off its week earlier this month with a shopping spree at Academy Sports & Outdoors in Hoover.

After realizing the team was in need of new equipment and uniform pieces, the store decided to donate $10,000 to help out.

Head Coach Gentrell Eatman talks more about the generous, and much appreciated, donation.

Watch the video.

NOVEMBER STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

Woodlawn Senior Destiny Miles was featured as a Rising Star on WBRC Fox6 News.

BIRMINGHAM PROMISE

The Birmingham Promise is about providing equal opportunities for all Birmingham City Schools students. College-bound high school seniors, please take some time during the upcoming holiday breaks to complete the checklist. For more info, click here.

Ramsay High Senior Kyndall Bailey has signed her national letter of intent. She will be competing with Purdue University softball in the Power 5 Big Ten conference.
RAMSAY SENIOR ANSWERS CALL FOR COVID-19 ESSENTIALS

Jaiden Smith, a young entrepreneur, likes to make his own way and his own money. The Ramsay senior launched Quarantine Essentials Shop this spring after the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Ramsay High School honor student Jaiden Smith has proven to be passionate about service for others with a business mindset unmatched by most teens his age. The 17-year-old, who plans to attend Tuskegee University next fall, launched an online business to help those in need acquire essential household items as COVID-19 hit.

“When the pandemic first started this spring, and we were not in school, I was just sitting around, and I’m the type of person who likes to keep busy. We were watching the news and seeing how bad things were getting,” Jaiden said. That’s when he put his plan in motion.

“I often hear people talk of becoming a business owner but, the hardest part is taking the first step,” he said. “It only took me about three weeks to build my website and it just took off.”

Through his web-based business, Quarantine Essentials Shop, Jaiden said he’s able to save shoppers time by locating hard-to-find products. He shops for hand sanitizers, disinfectant spray and other cleaning products and ships his orders. His mother, ShaToya Brown, also helps with deliveries.

“Jaiden has always been an outgoing and ambitious person. He has a strong passion for entrepreneurship,” Brown said. “He’ll spend hours discussing his business plans with current business owners hoping gain ideas on how to make his future endeavors profitable while helping others.”

Not only is Jaiden a budding entrepreneur, he’s getting things done in the classroom as well. He maintains a 4.0 GPA and scored a 26 on the ACT. He plans to take it again in hopes to attain a score of 30, which could guarantee him a full TU scholarship.

Jaiden is a member of Ramsay’s Engineering Academy and certified in Autodesk Inventor, a 3D-design program. He’s in the National Honors Society and a member of Birmingham’s Kappa League. As a future third-generation TU student, Jaiden plans to double major in architecture and construction science.

After completing undergraduate studies at TU, Jaiden said he wants to attend graduate school at Howard University.

For more on Jaiden and Quarantine Essentials, click here.
DuPuy Alternative School, in partnership with the Birmingham Artist Collective, came together with community volunteers on Saturday, Nov. 7. The school's courtyard received some love and colorful touches that included new plants, cleaning, painting and other needed upgrades that put new life into the patio area for students to enjoy.
WILKERSON HOSTS 'BLUE IS TRUE' RALLY

Recognizing the importance of positive student-police relationships, Wilkerson Middle School hosted its fifth annual “Blue is True” Back to School Rally.

Uniformed police officers and detectives greeted students on arrival and from a staging post in the school gym Nov. 10 and Nov. 12.

“Respect is a major component of our school program,” said Principal Davida Hill-Johnson, creator of the event.

“We teach our students respect for authority, respect for each other, and respect for themselves, and this program was designed to reinforce that concept.” Hill-Johnson also said the event “ensures students of the positive relationship they should have and need to have with law enforcement.”

Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin attended and said the event is a big deal. “It’s important for our younger citizens to know the police are a part of the community. It is important for our police to engage our youngest community when they are not in trouble, to be mentors, and to help guide them” he said.

In addition to the morning meet and greet, a student body forum was held to discuss student issues such as bullying and conflict resolution. Virtual students also were included via Zoom.

Bottom Left: Birmingham Police Officers bring greetings to Wilkerson’s students.

Bottom Right: Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin and Wilkerson Principal Davida Hill-Johnson.
BOARD MEMBER LAUNCHES BOOK-SHARING PROGRAM IN DISTRICT 2

Children who grow up without books to call their own often fall behind in their academics, and District 2 board member Terri Michal has launched an initiative to help combat that problem.

“One of the most successful ways to improve the reading achievement of children is to increase their access to books, especially at home. But two out of three children living in poverty don’t have their own books to read for pleasure,” Michal said.

Last month, she began placing the Little Free Library book-sharing boxes outside at schools in District 2 to encourage 24/7 access to books and encourage a love of reading in areas where books are scarce. Already, she has collected more than 300 books. Michal will maintain the libraries that will be located at Putnam Middle, Huffman Middle, Robinson Elementary, W.J. Christian K-8, Martha Gaskins. Her husband is installing the boxes.

For more information contact Terri Michal at 256-679-7135 or tmichal3@gmail.com

ED Workforce Development Program
Deadline to Apply January 8th, 2021

4 Sessions January - April
Learn about Trades and Technical Career Opportunities
(Limited Space)

DUBS FOUNDATION PRESENTS
INSPIRING ILLUMINATION GRANT
$500 AWARD
APPLICATION AVAILABLE JAN. 2, 2021
APPLICATION DUE DECEMBER 1, 2020
WINNERS ANNOUNCED JANUARY 1, 2021

Eligibility: BCS High School Teachers
- 4 Short Essay Responses
- 1 Recommendation Letter
- Resume/CV
- Itemized Budget

Application: dubsfound@gmail.com
For more information, contact us dubsfound@gmail.com
Congratulations to Portrice Warren, who was recently recognized as Ed Farm’s Teacher Fellow Feature Friday. Warren teaches fourth grade science and social studies at W.J. Christian K-8, and she encourages her students to use technology to solve problems in class.

Congratulations to Woodlawn Principal Dr. Terrell E. Brown on being selected as the Alabama District 5 Principal of the Year!

Woodlawn’s Burgess (BJ) Jefferies has been named a Rising Star in Education and Workforce Development by the Birmingham Business Journal. This recognition highlights the next generation of leaders who are already making waves in Birmingham. Burgess teaches mathematics at Woodlawn and has worked in Birmingham City Schools since 2004.

Congratulations to Sandra Martin, third-grade teacher at Avondale Elementary School. Martin has taught at Avondale for 13 years and has renewed her certification as a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT).