

August 3, 2020

Dear Hurricane Families,

Keeping you informed with the latest school reopening information as it becomes available remains a top priority as we work through this very complicated and continually evolving situation. As you may have heard last Thursday, the Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) issued an announcement recommending that area schools begin the upcoming academic year by operating remotely due to elevated health risks posed by the coronavirus pandemic. The organization also advises that schools discontinue extracurricular and athletic activities when the school year starts remotely.

Over the course of the past three weeks, I have had conversations with parents and have responded to emails with many differing opinions as to how we should open. I want you to know that I understand your perspective both as an educator and as a parent. I have a freshman and junior in high school that have also been impacted by this crisis, in particular by the suspension of student activities in our home school district. As you, I feel a sense of disappointment and frustration for all students and families. I want you to know that I fully understand the impact of every decision that is made regarding our reopening plan. I certainly understand the position of the Cuyahoga County Board of Health and appreciate their guidance. Our district cannot go against a recommendation from this group of health professionals.

If we were starting school this week, based on the recommendation from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, we would indeed start school in a remote setting. However, there are still more than five weeks between now and our start of school. Based on what we have experienced, a great deal can change in that time. I believe that we need to take a slower approach in making this decision. This week our administrative team will be meeting to determine the best approach to starting the school year.

Please take a few moments to review the latest updates and recommendations regarding the BCS reopening plans below:

- Last Friday, I hit the “pause” button on athletics and activities for two main reasons: 1) In an abundance of caution to allow for the district to thoroughly analyze the recommendation from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH); 2) To analyze the Ohio High School Athletic Association’s return to play guidance that was released on Friday. Guidance from both of these organizations are key in our decision-making process as we safely return to activities and school this fall.

- In the meantime, we realize there will be many specific questions relating to athletics and co-curricular secondary activities (such as marching band) as those activities have currently planned practices and camps that are scheduled to occur in the coming weeks - before the official start of the school year. On Sunday, the Ohio Department of Health issued a new order allowing for sports and activities to resume. **We will follow this order and allow these programs to resume under summer OHSAA protocols, starting immediately. Both athletics and band will be following strict health protocols and following Phase 1 and Phase 2 guidance provided by the OHSAA.** For the remainder of summer workouts and participation we will be adhering to a strict NO PHYSICAL CONTACT between students. Additionally, programs will not participate in scrimmages or competitions with other schools until further notice. This will help our students maintain their conditioning activities under controlled circumstances prior to competition resuming for sports. Detailed communication will be shared by our staff in the coming days.
- Any additional information that needs to be shared with athletes and/or band members will come directly from the athletic department's head coaches or from the band director to their respective students and families. We also want to emphasize that this situation continues to be very fluid and is subject to change at any time. Please understand the safety and wellness of our students and staff is our primary concern in any decision-making process. As always, we will follow the CCBH guidelines regarding suspected or diagnosed COVID-19 cases for students and staff.

Finally, I realize that many districts throughout the county have already released their revised reopening plans, in which school districts have committed to a quarter or semester of remote learning. We will continue to make our decisions to allow for the opportunity and flexibility for as much in-person learning as possible. **To allow the district to continue to monitor the health recommendations from CCBH and for family planning purposes, our School Reopening Format (in-person or remote) will be officially communicated to families next week.**

I appreciate your continuing patience and support during these uncertain times.

Respectfully,

Dr. Theodore Caleris
Superintendent/Chief Executive Officer

Brooklyn City Schools