

# **BPS Phased-In Re-Opening Beginning February 1, 2021**

## **Main Points**

1. The **Superintendent and Board want BPS students back in school** as soon as it is safe and responsible to do so. We will take steps to compensate for learning loss. But we cannot reverse the life and public health consequences of placing a large diverse urban district at enormous risk too soon.
  - School-based plans will prioritize highest need students, Pre-K – 2, and seniors in Phase 1 of our return to in-person instruction.
2. Per BPS Medical Director Dr. Dennis Kuo, Chief of the Division of Developmental Pediatrics & Rehabilitation for UBMD Pediatrics, **current community spread** of the virus is at an all-time high and will imminently become worse. Dr. Kuo recommends remote learning until at least February 1, for consistency of learning through one semester and time to fully operationalize new testing protocols as well as vaccinate 750 children for MMRV.
3. Because the **BPS was proactive in March** and wisely converted to remote-only instruction first in New York State, broad super-spreading in the early stages of the virus was avoided in Buffalo. We are at a parallel decision point now.
4. BPS is taking **action to address the social-emotional consequences** of the Covid-19 closure:
  - All BPS students participate in **Social-Emotional Circle Time** as a means to complete a daily social emotional check-in with students and to build coping skills.
  - Every school has **Social Workers, Counselors and a Psychologist** who support students with social emotional concerns through tele-counseling services.
  - Every school is connected to a **mental health community partner** to provide expedited individual mental health teletherapy.
5. Virtual Learning is working **as effectively as possible** during this closure:
  - The District has been **recognized by the Commissioner of Education** as a model for virtual learning implementation at several BPS schools and has distributed our plan statewide.
  - Staffing stability is at an all-time high meaning that our **exceptional teaching corps is clocking maximum hours** with their students.
6. Other **academic/support results** for Quarter 1 include:
  - **Grades** for the four core subjects (math, science, social studies and ELA): 76% of the grades were passing; 18% of the grades were incompletes; 6% of the grades were not passing.
  - **Attendance rates** are on par with Big 5 school districts; and not far off from when we are in-person. On average about 83% in elementary grades and 78% for high schoolers.
  - Monitoring of our 2021 seniors demonstrates that we are on pace to exceed last year's **graduation rate** of 76.2%.
  - 97% of BPS students are using a **BPS remote-learning device**. (The other 3% likely have chosen to use their own devices.)
  - The district has established **innovative local and state partnerships** to support **internet connectivity** for learning at home (via hotspots or broadband service) at no cost to student family households.