Brownsville Area School District

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BASD FAQ

INFO REGARDING REOPENING OF SCHOOL

Start of School:  September 8, 2020

End of School year:  June 4, 2021

Common Start time for school:  8:15-2:40

Vo-Tech (CTI) students will start classes August 31, 2020.  The students will be attending CTI until 10:00 am every day.  They will be transported home and will complete their BAHS courses beginning September 8, 2020.  Transportation information is forth coming.

When will secondary students receive their schedules:  On or before August 28th

What student learning management system will our students be using for online course work:  They will be using Canvas.

Will parents be trained:  yes, tentative date will be September 3, 2020

What is the current mask requirements in school:  Please see PDE link  <https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/Waivers/MaskWearing/Pages/default.aspx>

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

How will Brownsville schools reopen?

The district will use a scaffolded approach to reopen schools in August. This plan will be a hybrid model that includes both face to face instruction and live online instruction. Our elementary students will return to school Monday through Thursday, and learning will be remote on Fridays. Grades 7-12 will begin the year with live online instruction, and pending CDC guidelines and Covid-19 rates, secondary students will start to be phased back into our buildings after the first 9 weeks.

On Fridays, our staff will conduct deep cleaning/disinfecting of all buildings.

Will the instructional days be shortened?

At this juncture, we will not be altering the hours of the school day. Per PA School Code, Elementary programming must equal 900 instructional hours and Secondary programing must equal 990 hours; lunch minutes do not count towards instructional hours.

What is the difference between distance learning vs cyber education?

Distance learning is taking current classroom lesson plans and instructing the content through printed material and/or online activities which are completed at home; this will include daily interaction between teachers and students through communication tools such as google classroom, google meet, or zoom. Distance learning incorporates the use of current Brownsville textbooks and materials. Distance learning will be delivered live by Brownsville Area School District teachers, and the Fusion platform will be used to house materials and activities related to live instruction.

Cyber education involves the completion of synchronous and/or asynchronous coursework using an online

educational platform. The Brownsville Area Cyber Academy (BACA) uses online courses that are aligned with PA academic standards but the instructional resources, textbooks, and activities might differ from those used by Brownsville Area School District teachers. Coursework may be synchronous, asynchronous, or a blend of both.

 Synchronous learning occurs in real time using tools such as live webinars, instant messaging, video conferencing, and virtual classrooms. Synchronous instruction allows for instant feedback and clarification.

 Asynchronous learning is conducted at students’ own pace using tools such as email, screencasts, flip classrooms (recorded lessons), videos, blogging, and lesson recordings. Students utilize time- management skills to complete coursework and assignments by predetermined deadlines.

What is the difference between Brownsville Online and BACA?

As described above, Brownsville Online uses distance learning and mimics the classroom experience. There is a high level of teacher-student engagement through live instruction. Students are able to ask questions and receive feedback/clarification in real time. Teachers open class at the time it would normally begin in the school building. Schedules are maintained, and attendance is taken each period. Teachers may begin a lesson with live instruction; assign a related learning activity in Fusion; then resume live instruction for discussion on the activity. Both onsite and online academic support (tutoring) services are available to Brownsville Online students. Brownsville Online is designed to support educational continuity and ease the transition back to school. Students who wish to return to school when restrictions are lifted should utilize the Brownsville

Online Learning option whether schools are closed completely or a hybrid transition back to school is utilized.

The Brownsville Area Cyber Academy (BACA) is a completely online educational program operated by the Intermediate Unit I. This will only be offered to students that intend to stay online all year. BACA uses the Fusion Flex Moodle platform for learning. Every course a student would need to fulfill scheduling requirements in the district is available through BACA, but taught by teachers who work for the Intermediate Unit I. The course design is determined by the instructor and may be asynchronous, synchronous, or a combination of both. Those who enroll in BACA remain students of the Brownsville Area School District; may participate in all Brownsville Area School District activities; and, will graduate with a Brownville Area School District diploma.

Are PA State Cyber/Charter Schools free?

PA State Cyber/Charter schools are paid by local tax payers, the tuition is paid by the local school district in which the child resides. The amount a charter school charges per student is based on a statuary funding formula. Tuition rates differ for general education and special education students.

Last year (2019-20 SY), the per pupil expenditure rate for Brownsville Area School District students was

$10,183. This amount pertained to general education and special education students, unless a child with special needs required a more restrictive, expensive out-of-district educational placement.

While it costed only $10,183 for a Brownsville resident to attend the Brownsville Area School District, the cost for a Brownsville resident to attend a State Cyber/Charter School was $13,145 per general education student and $30,460 per special education student. That’s an increase of $2,962 for general education students and a

$20,277 increase for special education students. State Cyber/Charter tuition rates will increase for 20-21 school year.

Would it be possible to assess the needs of families with higher risk learners who have financial needs or child care needs so they may attend more often?

Per PA School Code and FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) regulations, all students must have equitable access to educational opportunities. Legally, schools are unable to provide more instruction to one group over another.

Could siblings be scheduled on the same day?

Sibling groupings will be attempted, but cannot be promised as decisions must account for busing demands and class counts.

What would be expected of teachers and students on Fridays, when instruction is remote for everyone? Brownsville teachers will conduct online instruction and assign time-bound related activities just as if school was in session. Students will fully participate in teacher-led instructional activities and complete assignments accordingly.

Could a scaffolded plan allow for Group A students to come in AM, Group B to come in the PM?

It would be cost-prohibitive to add mid-day bus runs. Additionally, it would hinder the ability to minimize the spread of germs and to meet the time requirement for instructional hours per day.

Is recess possible?

At least during the warm months, recess is a possibility; however, recess will need to be organized and maintained using social distancing protocols of 6 feet. Shared use of playground equipment/items will be prohibited.

Will intermediate grades (4-6) change classes?

Most likely, homerooms will be organized to accommodate student groups who remain together throughout the day; teachers will move from room to room to provide instruction.

Is the school district locked into the designed plan for the entire year?

Health and Safety Plans are living documents that may be altered and modified as needed. As mandates and regulations change, the district’s plans and educational programming will be modified accordingly.

What is the plan if the county/state moves to red phase or school must be closed?

If Fayette County or the state moved into the red phase, all schools would be closed and all students would transition to full time remote learning. If the county or state would move to a less restrictive phase, the district would adjust accordingly.

How will IEPs/support services be implemented?

As per PA School Code, FAPE, and IDEA, all specialized programming must be implemented. Students will most likely move to their specialized classrooms for instructions and therapies. Groupings of students will remain extremely consistent to minimize exposure.

How will unified arts instruction (music, library, art, gym, STEM) be conducted during the first quarter?

Specialty teachers of grades K-6 will instruct their content in the regular classroom setting. Specialty teachers of grades 7-12 will conduct instruction online. Library books will not be checked out; however, we will teach students how to gain access to e-resources through our public library system. All programming will be altered to prohibit the sharing of materials and/or resources.

If cyber is offered, could a family decide to change to traditional at any time?

In order to maintain consistency with grading and content execution, enrollment/withdrawal periods will be offered on a quarterly basis at the end of each 9 weeks.

Would parents be able to preview Brownsville Area Cyber Academy (BACA) before choosing this option?

Yes, the Brownsville Area Cyber Academy offers Brownsville students the option to complete their education completely online under the direction of PA state certified teachers. Contact the building principal to request a BACA program of studies/handbook. The curricular content is aligned to grade level PA Academic Standards to ensure that common skills are taught at each grade level. The lessons, assignments, resources, textbooks, materials, and activities may be different from those used by Brownsville Area School District teachers; however, any needed instructional resources and/or equipment is supplied by the Intermediate Unit I. BACA participants remain Brownsville Area School District students.

Would cyber lessons coordinate to what is happening in the traditional setting?

At this time without knowing exactly how the programming will be arranged, we are not sure lessons can be totally aligned. Curricular content will be the same, however, the actual lesson taught, resources, and activities may vary. In addition, timing of presented content may be slightly different. Students who wish to transition back to face-to-face classrooms are encouraged to choose the Brownsville Online Learning option to maintain live interaction with Brownsville teachers each school day.

Can activities within 6 feet be conducted if students are wearing masks?

With current mandates, activities will be conducted to the best of our abilities to maintain social distancing requirements; in addition, materials/resources are unable to be shared. Students will be provided individual sets of materials.

Masks are mandated by the state at the current time, are there exceptions?

The PA Department of Health has articulated the following exceptions:

Schools may allow students to remove their face coverings during the following scenarios:

1. Eating or drinking when spaced at least 6 feet apart

2. Seated at desks or assigned work spaces at least 6 feet apart

3. Engaged in any activity at least 6 feet apart

4. If individual has a medical condition prohibiting the use of a mask

What electronic devices are being used next year?

Students who do not have access to hardware needed for the Brownsville Online Learning, such as a Chromebook, will be permitted to sign out a district device. Students who elect to participate in the Brownsville Area Cyber Academy will be provided a device from the IU1.

What would be the difference in programming between green vs yellow phase?

Our plan allows for a fluid transition between yellow and green, which grows more or less restrictive based on data and guidance provided by the PA Departments of Health and Education.

Can a student attend extracurricular activities if s/he choose a cyber-education program?

Yes, if a student attends the Brownsville Area Cyber Academy option, s/he can participate in extracurricular activities. Transportation to and from activities will be the responsibility of the parent. If a student attends a PA State cyber/charter school, students may request permission through the Superintendent’s Office to participate in BASD extracurricular activity so long as their enrolled cyber/charter school does not offer the extracurricular activity.

What about holiday parties?

At the current time, no visitors, parties, and/or field trips are permitted.

How will social distancing happen in hallways and transition times?

Travel through all entrances and hallways in the school will be limited to one direction at a time in accordance with social distancing guidelines.

Where will students eat lunch?

Lunch plans are still being determined.

TRANSPORTATION

Do students have to wear masks on the bus?

Yes, under the current mandate, BASD is strongly recommending that students wear a mask on the bus.

How many students will be on the bus?

The District and bus company to the best of our abilities will follow social distancing guidelines for transportation. In addition, the District will provide procedures for those parents who are able and willing to transport their child/ren to and from school.

Can siblings sit together?

Yes, family members will be required to sit together to assist with mitigation efforts. Also, seats will be assigned by bus stop so that the first students to enter the bus are seated furthest back, and those who enter after are seated progressively closer to the front of the bus. A minimum of one seat directly behind the driver will be left empty to comply with social distancing guidelines. Kindergarteners will be seated on a case-by- case basis.

Can Plexiglas be installed on buses?

No additional alterations may be made on any school bus per PA transportation regulations.

Bus and Van Covid Procedures

The driver and all passengers are required to wear a mask while on the bus/van.  Students will be seated one to a seat unless they are sitting with a family member.  After each run the bus/van will be sprayed with an approved disinfectant.

HEALTH

Will temperatures be taken upon entering a bus or the school?

At this time, BASD is not looking to take temperatures due to the lack of reliability in a group setting. However, symptomatic students/personnel will be surveyed and screened on individual bases.

What is the protocol for a student/teacher who tests positive for COVID-19?

At this time, our understanding is that anyone testing positive for the virus must be isolated and quarantined. This would include any student/staff that came into direct contact with the quarantined individual. The District will notify all necessary individuals/families should the situation arise.

Will the District provide masks?

The District will have additional masks if a student forgets, loses, or breaks his/her mask. However, it will be the responsibility of parents to provide a clean face covering on a daily basis.

How will masks be monitored?

School personnel will address in a developmentally appropriate manner students who may be displaying difficulty with the mask mandate. Parents will be notified if issues persist. If a student defiantly attempts to create an unsafe environment for others and does not respond to redirection, his/her actions may be addressed through the disciplinary system.

If a child/teacher tested positive, would everyone in that class be quarantined?

At this time, our understanding is that only the students in direct contact would be quarantined. This would include all individuals with direct contact with the positive individual including interaction on the bus and in the school building.

If a vaccine becomes available, will students be required to get the vaccine?

This decision is not up to individual school districts; this requirement will be determined by health experts at the state level.

What is the protocol for contact tracing?

We are being told that if an individual tests positive for COVID 19, the regional Department of Health would contact the PA Department of Health, and tracing would begin through their office. At the same time, the PA Department of Health would notify the PA Department of Education, who would in turn advise the district of appropriate action. In addition, it is our understanding that the individual should communicate positive results to the district immediately. It is the responsibility of the individual to be upfront and honest.

PERSONNEL ISSUES

How will instruction continue if a teacher becomes ill and needs to be quarantined?

Just as in the past, if a teacher becomes ill, a substitute teacher will continue classroom instruction. If a sub is not available, the responsibility will move to a unified arts teacher or other certified building personnel.

FACILITY OPTIONS

What would be the desk count and student ratio in rooms?

At this time, we are able to fit 20 desks 5.5ft apart which was satisfactory until July 1. As of July 1, we are being instructed that seating must be 6ft which will decrease the desk number by 5 to 15 desks per a classroom. The set up includes removing all additional furniture such as book shelves, storage units, and the like.

How will desks be cleaned?

Each classroom will be disinfected daily. Each night, our cleaning personnel will disinfect all surfaces with a commercial grade cleaner which is safe for school use but appropriate for virus disinfecting. Every Friday, all three buildings will receive a more concentrated cleaning.

What is the process for cleaning throughout the day?

The district currently has an assigned custodian to each building during school hours, along with a maintenance crew who assists with any daily management needs. The District has purchased cleaning equipment and disinfectant to thoroughly sanitize high track areas such as door knobs, stairwell railings, and restroom fixtures, etc.

Are outside areas an option?

The District is looking at using outside areas for additional space, as long the weather permits.

How will other areas of the school be used?

The Administration is working to be extremely creative in the use of learning spaces throughout the building. The District is striving to resume normal functions as soon as it is safe to do so.

Will drinking fountains be available to students?

No, at this time, drinking fountains will not be available for use. Parents will be required to send a filled water bottle to school each day with their child/ren. In addition, students will be allowed to refill their water bottles throughout the day either using sinks or bottle refill stations. Free tap water will also be available during all lunch periods.

Do our schools have proper ventilation and air filtration systems?

Our air ventilation system is working well and meets all requirements. All unit ventilators in the classrooms are air conditioned, as well as heat. Air filters are recommended to be changed every 9 weeks; however, at this time we will be changing them once a month.

Committed to Excellence