

September 30, 2020

Dear Stokes School Community:

We have just completed our sixth week of school and have begun to settle into our distance learning routines. This is a very different approach to teaching and learning from what most of us are accustomed to, and we acknowledge that this is not an ideal situation for teachers, parents, and especially younger students. Nevertheless, we are learning to adapt, survive, and sometimes even thrive in our current circumstances. As we continue to familiarize ourselves with and become proficient in the use of new technology platforms and instructional programs for distance learning, Stokes School staff and leadership are also working diligently to prepare for the eventual return to in-person school attendance.

You may have heard or seen in the news recently that starting this week, a few DC Public Schools will begin to bring small groups of students in for Student Support Center and Career and Technical Education programming. Later in October and November, DCPS will bring additional small groups of students into more school buildings to participate various programs including tutoring, social emotional support, physical education, and outdoor learning experiences. Throughout the pandemic Stokes School has worked to align our planning with DCPS to reduce confusion during already chaotic times. Although we do not have an exact re-entry date into our buildings, we do know that it will not happen before the beginning of our second trimester (December 1st). In the interim, we are actively working to get the Brookland and East End campuses ready to open when it is safe to do so. Below is an overview of the activities that we have completed, or will complete, to prepare for in-person learning:

- Contracted with a new HVAC company to install ionization units to clean the air throughout the Brookland facility. The installation should be complete by the end of October.
- Recently completed a two-year renovation project at East End that included the installation of state-of-the-art HVAC equipment.
- Procured masks, face shields, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer stations, and thermometers to accommodate all students and staff.
- Procured portable hand washing stations for playgrounds at both campuses.
- Procured social distancing floor stickers and posters for both campuses.
- Procured plexiglass shield protectors for both campuses.
- Procured two cordless electrostatic handheld sprayers for each campus.
- Completed extensive sanitation in all spaces at both campuses.
- Preparing and organizing classroom spaces for proper social distancing for when students and staff return.
- Refurbishing the outdoor courtyard space at the Brookland campus.
- Renovating the outdoor classroom space at the Brookland campus in conjunction with Anacostia Watershed Society and the DC Department of Energy and Environment.

We also submitted a detailed plan for approval by the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education that outlines procedures upon our return including but not limited to:

- Cleaning and disinfecting schedule
- Health screening protocol
- Hand washing protocols
- Description of meal service
- Descriptions of classroom configurations
- Plans of action for isolating students or staff with COVID symptoms
- Protocols for staggered arrivals and dismissal

We still have some work to complete, but we miss seeing our scholars and colleagues in person and are eager to return to the buildings when it is safe to do so. We will provide monthly updates on our progress towards opening and when we are ready to, we will begin with the small cohort of students whom the Student Support Team previously identified as educationally at risk.

As always, we welcome suggestions and feedback from the community and will send out a survey soon for additional input from the community.

Please be safe and we look forward seeing you in the not-too-distant future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erika Bryant". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Erika" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Bryant".

Erika Bryant,
Executive Director