

July 31, 2020



Dear Stokes School Community,

I hope that this letter finds you and your family safe and healthy and that despite the constraints of the pandemic, you've managed to relax and enjoy the summer. We are all learning how to adjust and function within our new circumstances as best we can. The adjustments can be very daunting but we will persevere with the support of friends, family, and community.

I am reaching out today for two reasons. First, you may have learned that Mayor Bowser announced that DCPS, as most other school districts in the DC, MD, VA area, will begin the school year with 100% virtual learning for all of their students. This decision was made based on the changing trends of COVID-19 in this area and around the country. As previously announced, Stokes School will proceed with 100% virtual learning for all of our students. However, our plans to begin in-person attendance with small cohorts of educationally high-risk students **WILL BE POSTPONED** until November 20th or until health conditions improve. We understand the magnitude of this decision and are in the process of gathering additional resources and supports for those students and families directly impacted by this change. We will be reaching out to those families early next week to discuss the ways in which we can provide these additional supports.

Secondly, as I announced during our annual board meeting presentation, Stokes School received a Payroll Protection Program loan from the Small Business Association in June. For ours and many other charter schools that received these funds, the Payroll Protection Program has provided essential financial assistance during a time of crisis. Because of the PPP loan, our school was able to retain and continue paying staff throughout the school year and, at the same time, make the necessary adjustments to our new COVID-19 reality. Because we received PPP funds we were able to procure digital devices and provide internet access for students and staff. Because of PPP funds we are able to purchase large quantities of life-saving personal protective equipment (PPE) for our students and staff. Because we have PPP funds we can also make the expensive but necessary retrofits and upgrades to our buildings to make them safer for students and staff when we return to in-person attendance. We are extremely grateful to be one of the recipients of this forgivable loan. Without these funds, it would be next to impossible to take the measures necessary to increase the safety and well-being of our students and staff.

There is still a tremendous amount of fear and uncertainty for families and schools as we embark upon the new school year, but my hope is that at Stokes School, we will continue to focus on the most important tasks ahead - supporting each other in these very difficult circumstances, and building a stronger community.

We look forward to welcoming you back in a few short weeks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erika Bryant".

Erika Bryant
Executive Director