

KEEPING OUR KIDS SAFE

A Parent's Guide to the 2020-2021 School Year

A Message from the Superintendent

Welcome Back to School!

I am very excited to be the Superintendent of Bessemer City Schools. I appreciate the board members for believing in me, my leadership and trusting the vision outlined. My eight-months thus far have been very rewarding. COVID-19 has been our biggest challenge yet, but we will get through it together. We will welcome eager and excited students back to school virtually and I all employees are just as excited to provide online instruction to all of our students until it's safe to come back.



The vision of Bessemer of City Schools is to “empower students through excellence in education,” and that is exactly what we will do...provide excellence in education. Excellence requires foresight, planning, knowledge, collaboration, dedication, honesty, intelligence, wisdom, and love for your school, community, and the children we serve. Faculty and staff will provide those characteristics during these challenging times to all students. My expectations for our school system are high and I look forward to all rising to the challenge.

The remainder of this year will be great for Bessemer City Schools. It will require commitment, dedication, patience, and hard work. I am committed to the school system, my continuous professional learning, and providing ongoing professional learning for all employees in order to provide a rigorous education to students. We must be patient, understanding, relentless, aware of emotional needs, and most of all “all in” for Bessemer City Schools. Bessemer City Schools is a diamond in the rough and it will take us all to soar to new heights.

Parents, stay connected with your school, work with your children as best as possible at home, and when in doubt, as for guidance. Teaching through COVID-19 is challenging, but we won't be counted out. Our students deserve the best, and that will forever be our mission!

Let's have a great year!
Autumm M. Jeter, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Bessemer City Schools



Contents

What is remote learning?

What are the expectations of my child?

What will a school day look like?

What support will BCSS provide?

WHAT IS REMOTE LEARNING

Bessemer City Schools students will participate in remote learning during the first quarter of the 2020-21 school year using a variety of online resources through the district's learning management system, Schoology. Students will be assigned the same classroom teachers they would have if we were in a traditional school setting. Those teachers will provide daily instruction, academic support, and intervention with a goal of helping all students be successful. Students will be expected to attend school daily, and we highly recommend that they follow a class schedule as if they were in a traditional school setting.

How will remote learning work?

Remote learning takes place when the students and teacher are not physically present in a traditional classroom setting and must rely on technology to connect them instead. Teachers will connect with their classes via video meetings for live instruction. Information will be relayed online through discussion boards, video conferencing, and other methods. Students will be able to access classroom lessons and material and will submit their assignments to their teachers using Schoology. Consideration will



be given to students and parents who are not able to follow the recommended schedule. Through screen casting, videos will be archived so students can access teacher lessons, content, and assignments within the Schoology platform if they are unable to join the live lessons, as recommended. In an effort to limit screen time during the day, particularly with younger students, teachers will also provide activities that do not involve a computer.

What is the difference between remote learning and virtual learning?

What is the difference between remote learning and virtual learning? Remote learning is teacher-paced instruction, as the classroom teacher provides daily lessons and content. Virtual learning is student-paced. Through virtual learning, which is an option via the Schoology, students in grades Kindergarten -12th move independently through courses at their own pace. That allows them to accelerate their learning if they are able to do so. For more information about the bessk12.org.

Why Schoology?

A benefit of using Schoology is that by having all of our teachers use one system, we will alleviate confusion that some parents encountered last spring when we were using multiple apps and programs. Schoology is a one-stop shop for teachers, students, and parents as all lessons, assignments, grades, and assess-



schoology[®]

ments will be stored and accessed in one place. Parents and students will be able to track their course grades through Schoology. Also, parents will receive weekly emails to track their children's progress and to let them know if their children are turning in assignments. Please make sure your school has your correct email address so you can receive these updates. Students and parents will be able to message their teachers for help through Schoology. Teachers will be expected to respond to messages during school hours. Technical support will be offered on the BCS Helpline (205)432-3098 and academic support will be available from your children's teacher. Students will also have access to academic tutoring and homework help at HomeworkAlabama.org. Students can log on to that site for instructions on how to get the assistance they need. Tutors will be available daily from 10 a.m. until 11 p.m. This service is available free of charge.

What Can Parents Do Now to Prepare for School?

- Complete online registration at www.bessk12.com. All students need to register as soon as possible so that all students can focus on instruction from Day1. If you are moving to a new school and need to provide documentation, contact your school for information about how to complete the registration process.
- Make sure your school has your updated contact information, including phone number(s), email address and home address.
- Follow your child's school's Facebook page and check its website for information about any registration or orientation activities. We also have a district Facebook page, Bessemer City Schools.
- Look for information from your school about distribution of laptops for students who need them for online learning.
- Video tutorials as well as a parent guide and a student guide to remote learning are available for viewing at: bessk12.org.
- Stay positive. This is not where anyone thought we would be months ago, but this pandemic is beyond our control. Your children will react to how you are feeling and to what you are saying. Assure them that everything is going to be okay and remind them that we are here to support them in these unprecedented times.

How will students access Schoology?

Students will log on to Schoology daily using their district username and password. If your student does not know his or her user name and password, contact your school or call 205.432.3098 for assistance Monday—Friday, from 8 a.m.—4 p.m. Schools are also providing laptops to students as needed. Your school will have information soon about distribution, which will be in late-August. BCSS is also extending the Wi-Fi on schools throughout the city that will be equipped to allow students to go online.

Parent Academies:

You can review all Parent Academies by visiting Bessk12.org.

- ⇒ Click on Parent Info tab
- ⇒ Click Curriculum (left margin)
- ⇒ Click Links
- ⇒ Click Parent Academies

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF MY CHILD?

Bessemer City Schools expects that all students log on to Schoology daily and be prepared for instruction.

- **Log in** to Schoology every school day so your attendance is counted.
- **Complete** all of assignments through Schoology on time and to the best of your ability.
- **Participate** in Digital Citizenship lessons as assigned by your teachers.
- **Take responsibility** for your devices, which are being assigned for school use.
- **Follow** teachers' instructions and assigned schedule. Focus during instructional time, making the most of all learning opportunities.
- **Ask** for help from a teacher if needed. Students can chat, email, or video conference with their teachers.
- **Participate** in intervention via LIVE videoconference help sessions as needed.
- **Be engaged** in your learning.
- **Check** to make sure that your child is logging into Schoology every day as the BCSS Attendance Policy will be in effect.
- **Ensure** that your children take responsibility for the device assigned to them for school use.
- **Cooperate with and support** teachers, your school, and school district policies.
- **Communicate** with teachers regularly and as needed.
- **Work with your children** to comply with all district requests regarding instruction and submission of assignments.
- **Understand** that this is a very crucial time in your child's educational journey. Stay positive and remain flexible as situations occur.
- **Remember that we are better and stronger TOGETHER** and our students deserve all of us working together during this time. The quality of their education depends on it.

WHAT WILL A SCHOOL DAY LOOK LIKE?

Remote learning will be different from the at-home learning offered by BCSS last spring. The BCS Attendance Policy will be recorded daily as students log into the Schoology platform. We encourage students to follow their normal class schedule - which will be provided the week of September 3rd - as their instruction will occur in the same manner it would be during traditional on-campus instruction. Families can expect to have their students log on during the same hours that school was in session last year. Students who are unable to follow that regular school schedule, screencasts and video recordings will be available. Remember attendance will be taken daily, students need to plan to log on, view their teacher's lessons, and complete their assignments in a timely manner. If a student does not log in sometime that day, the teacher will mark them as absent for that day on the following day. If you have concerns about your child not being able to submit work in the allotted time, please reach out to your teacher.

Daily schedules will include the following:

- Elementary school: Instruction in reading and language arts, math, science, and social studies; a lunch break; several brain breaks; time for physical education; and a designated time for small-group instruction and/or intervention.
- Middle school: Instruction in language arts, math, science, and social studies, as well as electives; a lunch break; several brain breaks; time for physical education; and a designated time for small-group instruction and/or intervention.
- High school: Instruction divided into seven blocks and based on a student's chosen core and elective courses; a lunch break; and small breaks between classes. Time will be devoted to ACT preparation. The blocks will include time for explicit, direct instruction; guided/independent practice; and small-group intervention.

Grading

As a district, we will utilize "category average" grading. Students may receive 1 or 2 grades per week. Teachers may also add a "notebook grade," which would be a combination homework and other assignments. Grades will be entered and maintained weekly by teachers. Parents and students will be able to access grades daily.



What About Sports, Extracurricular Activities, the Arts, and Other Programs?

Bessemer City Schools officials understand the importance of sports, extracurricular activities, and the arts to our students and their educational experience. We will do the best we can to provide opportunities for our students in these areas so long as we can do so safely as the health and safety of our students and staff is our top priority.

We will continue to monitor COVID-19 numbers and will remain flexible to adjust our activities and recommendations, as needed.

Sports

Our middle school sports have been cancelled, for the fall. High school sports are continuing to practice with social distancing and other precautions in place as outlined by each school's COVID-19 plan. If an athlete or coach tests positive, the other players, families, and coaches are notified, and the team sits out for 14 days. Athletes are encouraged to social distance and wear masks even when not on campus to avoid contracting the virus as much as possible. We will continue to be in communication with the Alabama High School Athletic Association, the Jefferson County Health Department, the Alabama Department of Education, and other agencies about how and whether to proceed with sports in these unprecedented times.

Extracurricular Activities

Your child's school has information on the various extracurricular activities offered and on how and whether they will be available during the first quarter and when we return to school. Music and Fine Arts Grade-specific customized lessons will be recorded and shared via Schoology for elementary art and music classes. Middle and high school fine arts classes will be available through remote instruction and Schoology. Your school will have more information about the specific courses offered.

Driver's Education

(As this information is subject to change, each school has a backup course available.) BCS will offer a virtual course as well as actual driving instruction. Instructors will provide six hours of driving time for each student. There will be a maximum of three people in a car, and each person will be required to wear a mask. The car will be sanitized before and after each use. Students must complete two weeks of coursework before driving. Students and parents will be notified of the scheduled driving dates for each student. A road test will be provided with precautions in place for students to earn their driver's license.

Online Credits

Students will be able to participate in online programs, such as Credit Recovery, the BCS of Virtual Learning, please contact your school for more information.



WHAT SUPPORT WILL BCSS PROVIDE?

Academic Assistance

Parents of children who are struggling should reach out to their child's teacher(s) at their school first with any issues they are having accessing the remote learning platform or any issues their children are having academically or emotionally. Our teachers and counselors will be available to provide support. For students in need of academic intervention, math and reading intervention groups will be provided. Students with IEPs, special-education teachers will be available for second delivery and intervention, utilizing groups and conferencing tools for break-out sessions.

Technical Assistance

Bessemer City Schools will again offer a technical assistance hotline at (205)432-3098. The hotline will be answered Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. We also have email support available, bcsparents@bessk12.org. Students will also have access to academic tutoring and homework help at HomeworkAlabama.org. Students can log on to that site for instructions on how to get the assistance they need. Tutors will be available daily from 10 a.m. until 11 p.m. This service is available free of charge.

Special Education

Bessemer City Schools will give our best effort to continue educating all students, including students with special needs. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and 504 requirements has not been waived.

All IEP goals will be addressed through

the Schoology platform, and accommodations will be made through Schoology. Special-education resource teachers will support classroom teachers in any way needed and will assist with IEP and other meetings. All IEP meetings will be virtual until we can return to face-to-face instruction, unless requested in person. Psychological services will compile a list of evaluations that are overdue and will test students in a timely manner. The Psychometrist assigned to your school will coordinate testing for students with special needs. The testing will be conducted at a designated school.



Technical Support

If you need help, our HELP DESK is available for support. Please call **(205)432-3098**, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday–Friday. You may email us anytime at bcsparents@bessk12.org.

Feeding Program

Students will be served breakfast and lunch free-of-charge through Bessemer City Schools' Child Nutrition Program.

BEGINNING: September 8, 2020

Meals provided for Only Bessemer City School District Enrolled Students.

All students must show student ID, student enrollment form or some form of identification to show their enrollment.

All meals have to be referenced to the student presenting the name and school on the student ID.

They will be allowed to pick up at designated sites Jonesboro Elementary, Hard Elementary and Abrams Elementary. Additional sites will be determined for delivery due to households not having transportation.



Alabama Broadband Connectivity for students

Internet

The ABC for Students program will help households throughout Alabama access inter-

net this fall. The Corona-Virus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides \$100 million in funding to deliver free internet access to eligible K-12 students in their homes this fall. The State of Alabama will use the funds to purchase internet service for low-income households with K-12 students so the children can participate in distance learning. We are working to make the process as easy as possible for students who choose to participate.

If your student is enrolled in the National School Lunch Program through their school, you are already enrolled in the Alabama Broadband Connectivity for Students program. You will receive a prepaid voucher by U.S. mail by the end of August. Then all you'll have to do is call the internet service provider of your choice, give them your voucher code, and sign up for service (30 days to sign up).

Please visit: <https://abcstudents.org>, for more information.

In Conclusion...

This plan was developed with input and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Alabama Department of Education, the Alabama Department of Public Health, the Jefferson County Health Department, and the Alabama High School Athletic Association. We would like to thank you, as a Bessemer City Schools parent or guardian, for your help in implementing this plan to educate our students in the safest way possible. Thank you for your patience and flexibility as we work through this together. We look forward to welcoming all of our students back to school whenever it is safe to do so. When we announce plans to return to in-school learning, we will share information with you about how we will continue to work hard to protect our students and employees.



2020 -2021 Parent Engagement Meetings



August

- **August 25th** Hard OSR Pre-K Meeting 5:30
- **August 26th** Jonesboro OSR PreK 5:30
- **August 27th** Town Hall Meeting
- **August 31st** Meet the Principals of Bessemer City Schools

September

- **September 8th** Hands on Math Lesson for Elementary Students
- **September 16th** -Meet the Mental Health Counselor & Social Worker
- **September 17th** Miles College & Lawson State Community College
- **September 22nd** Judson College & Jefferson State Community College
- **September *** Hands on Math for Elementary Teacher
- **September 3-30** Title I Meeting of Parents
- **September**—BHA Additional Resources available to our parents & students

October

- **October 1st** Jacksonville State University & Shelton State Community College
- **October 8th** October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month Det. Walter (Bessemer PD) & Rep from Once Place Domestic Violence Help Resource Center
- **October 13th** Internet Safety with Bessemer Police Department
- **October ?** How to complete the FAFSA ? Lawson State Community College

November

- **November 9-13** College Application Week
- Will post on our social media & send school cast to parents