

# PRESS RELEASE

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## KCPS Announces Reopening Plans for the 2020-2021 School Year *Students to start with distance or virtual learning, while in-person classes will be phased in when it's safe*

**Kansas City, July 29, 2020:** Kansas City Public Schools released back-to-school plans today that carefully balance community health and public education needs by delaying classes for about two weeks and starting the academic year with all students taking distance or virtual classes.

The KCPS Board of Directors approved Superintendent Mark Bedell's recommendation that we delay the start of school from Aug. 24 to Tuesday, Sept. 8. This change gives the Kansas City Health Department more opportunity to track the pandemic and provide valuable guidance to KCPS. The school system will use the additional time to continue to gather district-issued laptop computers from families so that they can be prepared for the new school year. This delay will also help KCPS prepare staff, students and parents for the instructional models that they will be using this year.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a national crisis that poses a serious health risk for everyone. With this in mind, KCPS developed a phased back-to-school plan for the 2020-2021 year. In-person classes will start for students in pre-K through grade 3 only after the number of COVID-19 cases in the community decreases for 14 days in a row. This process will be repeated in phases for upper elementary, middle school and high school students. The goal is to be back to 100 percent in-person learning when it is safe to do so.

"The decision to reopen our school buildings for in-person classes will be based on data and science," Dr. Bedell said. "We will work closely with public health officials before re-opening any of our school buildings. This process will not follow any predetermined timeline but will rather evolve based on the status of the pandemic in our community. Our response will balance the need to protect public health and provide a public education."

Teaching and learning in KCPS this year will involve four different models. Students and teachers will use these models based on the status of the pandemic and their grade levels:

*Distance Learning* – Teachers and students engage in classwork online using a variety of digital tools and applications, including Zoom and Google Classrooms. All classes will start with this model when classes begin on Sept. 8, 2020. Students will participate in distance learning with their school and grade level teachers in an online classroom setting with regular class check-ins, individual student support, class collaboration and regular assignments and grades.

*Blended Learning* – Students have an "A/B" schedule, attending classes on campus for part of the week and doing distance learning for the other days.



*In-Person Learning* – Students and teachers engage in learning on campus every day that class is in session.

*Virtual Learning* – Students use digital tools and virtual platforms for self-paced teaching and learning through the Kansas City Virtual Academy. Students and staff will be spread across the district, essentially meaning that students will not necessarily have a “home school” or “homeroom,” but will be part of the Kansas City Virtual Academy online. Students and parents will be asked to commit to this option for the entire semester if they choose to enroll in this academy.

Families who choose our Kansas City Virtual Academy option will need to login to the KCPS parent portal and select the virtual learning platform: <https://bit.ly/KCPSVirtualSignup>. If they need help logging into the KCPS parent portal, parents/guardians can call the KCPS Help Desk at 816-418-HELP (4357). Families choosing the Kansas City Virtual Academy should sign up by Aug. 5.

Please visit [www.KCPublicSchools.org/Reopening-KCPS](http://www.KCPublicSchools.org/Reopening-KCPS) for complete and updated details about the KCPS back-to-school plans for the 2020-2021 academic year. This information includes policies and procedures that will guide teaching and learning, health and wellness, and nutritional services. There are also FAQs for families. Families can also call the KCPS Enrollment Hotline at 816-418-KCPS (5277) if they have questions about learning models, phased re-entry or enrollment.