



## **SAFETY PROTOCOLS & HOUSTON VIRTUAL ~ JULY 6, 2020**

Good evening. This is Richard Rogers, the Assistant Superintendent for School Operations for the Houston County School District. I am calling to inform you about two options for your children for the 2020-2021 school year. Due to COVID-19, we are offering our families either instruction at school or distance learning at home.

Our first option allows students to return to campus with enhanced health and safety protocols. Our schools will review safety protocols with students. The health and safety protocols include:

- coordination with local health officials;
- increased hygiene and sanitation protocols;
- enforcing social distancing where practicable;
- encouraging face coverings or masks for students and staff;
- utilizing directional hallways where possible;
- limiting parent and visitor access to the office area only;
- keeping students with their cohort as much as possible, to include recess and lunch; and
- avoiding large gatherings, such as assemblies.

Our second option is through a new Houston Virtual program. Elementary students will have the opportunity to enroll in distance learning with a teacher Monday through Friday using Google Classroom. Middle and high school students will have the opportunity to participate in distance learning using the Houston County Odysseyware program. All students will have an assigned teacher to offer additional teaching support in certain subject areas.

If you are interested in Houston Virtual for your child, please listen carefully to the following requirements. For distance learning, your child must:

- commit to distance learning for the minimum of a grading period, which is 9 weeks for elementary students and 18 weeks for middle and high school students;
- have a device that will connect to the internet at home;
- have internet access at home;
- be available for instruction during normal school hours;
- log-in and participate in the class to be counted as present for the day;
- meet all normal academic and attendance requirements; and
- take state-mandated standardized tests.

In addition, students in distance learning:

- will have limited options for specials, connections, and electives;
- will not participate in school activities or extracurricular activities; and
- will not be eligible for Valedictorian or Salutatorian unless physically attended high school on campus for 4 semesters.

If you want your child to receive instruction at school, there is no action you need to take. To enroll your child in Houston Virtual, please visit our district website at [www.hcbe.net](http://www.hcbe.net) to complete an online registration by Monday, July 13. You may also complete the online registration at your child's school. Lastly, the district website has a Frequently Asked Questions for more information. We appreciate your support and look forward to our 2020-2021 school year beginning on August 4.