



PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT

Barbara J. Warren, Superintendent

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Outstanding Academic Achievement for ALL Scholars

February 19, 2021

Good evening Pine Bluff School District Community,

Thank you for your continued support and patience. Between our ongoing COVID-19 response this entire year and the recent closures due to inclement weather, we have all had to make many adjustments. I truly appreciate how flexible and understanding you have been as we make the best decisions we can to ensure the safety of our scholars. I am writing to you today to notify you of a shift we will make that will impact the time for instructional delivery to our scholars. Please see additional details and rationale for this decision below.

Beginning March 1, 2021, all Pine Bluff School District campuses will return to traditional school hours. The earliest that students can arrive on campus will still be 7:30 am.

➤ *Pre-K: 7:30 am - 2:30 pm* ➤ *Elementary: 8:30 am - 3:30 pm* ➤ *Secondary: 8:00 am - 3:00 pm*

Virtual and Face-to-Face Options:

At this time, there will be no mandated placement change for students regarding virtual or face-to-face instruction. For example, if a student is a virtual student, they may continue to be a virtual student on March 1, 2021.

Purpose:

The purpose of this shift in the instructional schedule is twofold:

1. **The abbreviated instructional schedule that we have used to start the school year was always meant to be temporary.** We are proud of our district's efforts to keep students and staff safe during these uncertain times. Now, as we look toward increased safety measures, expansion of vaccines, and the decrease of COVID-19 cases, we are poised to return to a "normal school day."
2. **The time on task and the instructional time for our students must increase if we are to decrease any potential learning loss.** In short, the less time we engage students in direct instruction, the higher the likelihood of students falling behind. This is not just a PBSO issue.

Districts across the US have confronted the same concern. As we return to a longer instructional day, we know that more time on task for students will equate to better outcomes for our scholars.

Continued Safety Measures:

PBSD will continue to adhere to all of the precautions we have utilized up to this point. We will still screen temperatures of staff and students, require face coverings, practice social distancing, and provide sanitization of our buildings.

Changes to Instruction:

Because the instructional day will be extended to "normal hours," shifts in the time allotted for direct instruction will change. Parents and students, please work with your teachers and principals to better understand the time requirements for direct instruction starting March 1, 2021. This will mean that our students will receive more direct instruction from their teachers. We are really excited about that!

Changes to Transportation:

We will still provide transportation for students. *The only difference will be the departure time in the afternoon from each school.* Buses will now return students to their homes later in the day due to the change in the instructional schedule. Please work with your student's building principal to better understand the changes in bus route times for your campuses.

I want to assure you that principals, teachers, and staff are ready to support our scholars and families during this change. Thank you for again partnering with us during these changing times as we expand opportunities and access for scholars.

Sincerely,



Barbara J. Warren,
Superintendent