

Benton County Schools
Back-To-School Plan
2021-2022 School Year

At their board meeting on April 15th, the Mississippi Department of Education announced that COVID-19 academic policy changes will expire at the end of the current school year. As a result, school districts are in the process of modifying 2021-2022 academic plans in order to meet Mississippi Department of Education requirements.

Points of emphasis in the Benton County Schools 2021-2022 Back-to-School Plan:

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

- For the 2020-2021 school year, the attendance requirement in the Benton County Schools exemption policy was removed. The attendance requirement will be waived again from the Benton County Schools exemption policy for the 2021-2022 school year.
- While the Virtual Instructional Program will not be available for the 2021-2022 school year, an alternate online option will be available for approved families with medical circumstances. The Alternate Online Learning option will be offered to medically fragile students (students with a weakened or compromised immune system) with a medical doctor's written recommendation. Students can also be considered for Alternate Online Learning with a medical doctor's written recommendation if there is an extreme medical condition in the student's documented residence and the affected family members are not provided sufficient support through adult vaccinations. Families pursuing this alternate option must meet with school/district administration and complete an application.
- Interventionists, if approved by the BCS school board, will be employed to aid teachers in performing interventions to help students overcome learning loss.

OPERATIONS

- Due to the Mississippi Department of Education ending the one-year waiver on minimum instructional minutes per day. Schools in Benton County will return to a five-day school week. Additionally, BCS bell schedules for the 2021-2022 school year will be aligned as closely as possible with bell schedules used in 2020, except for the high schools, which will be on a 4 x4 block schedule. The bell schedules will be posted on school websites prior to the 1st day of school.
- Students will return to the cafeteria to eat with their class. Alternative eating areas will be utilized to create appropriate spacing in the cafeteria when possible.
- Bus transportation will continue with students spaced as close to three feet apart as possible.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- Daily health screening steps that families can take prior to sending a student to school will be provided to families at the beginning of school on a document sent home and on the district website.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Communication regarding school safety measures will be provided via the district website, district social media, and through messaging services.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- School districts must follow all guidance issued by the Mississippi Department of Health regarding quarantines. No guidance for the 2021-2022 school year has been issued at this time from the Mississippi Department of Health.
- Both the communities of Ashland and Hickory Flat will have a full-time, on site nurse for the 2021-2022 school year.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles from home. During the 2021-2022 school year, Benton County Schools will be installing water bottle filling stations at all schools.
- Due to a waiver from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), all students will be eligible for free breakfast and lunch during the 2021-2022 school year.
- Masks will not be required in Benton County Schools for the 2021-2022 school year.
- School assemblies, field trips, campus visitors, etc. will return to pre-2020 procedures. Principals will set the parameters for those events.
- BCS will train staff in social/emotional health needs through professional development in August 2021.
- When weather allows, windows on buses will be lowered to provide fresh air. Windows in classrooms will be opened when reasonable to create outside air flow.
- Students will report directly to the cafeteria for breakfast or to the students first instructional class upon arrival. Students eating breakfast in the cafeteria will be spaced 3 feet apart as possible.
- Students riding a bus will be provided an assigned seat with spacing as close to 3 feet as possible. Students riding a bus will not be required to wear masks. Windows on buses will be kept down as weather allows.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be available on buses, in classrooms, and in restrooms.
- Restroom flush valves and sinks will be transitioned to hands free during the 2021-2022 school term.
- Healthy behaviors to prevent virus spread will be promoted via the district website, social media and via posters in hallways and in classrooms.
- Teachers will review periodically, with students, healthy behaviors in the classroom and school environment.
- Replacement of windows to allow for improved natural air flow will be undertaken during the 2021-2022 school year, as they become available through renovation.
- Facility areas and buses will have assignments to be cleaned regularly.
-

TECHNOLOGY

- Needs assessment and an online survey conducted in July 2021 and will be used to identify professional learning needs of staff in use of technology as well as use of online platforms used by the district (canvas, google classroom).
- Each student in the Benton County School District will have a 1:1 ratio of device used to support in person learning and virtual learning if needed due to a catastrophic illness or injury.
- Facilities used for extra-curricular activities will be cleaned before use. At extra-curricular facilities signage will be posted encouraging healthy behavior to stop spread of viruses.
- School nurses will work with school administration to promote healthy behavior and assure adherence to CDC and quarantine guidelines. The assistant superintendent and superintendent will monitor CDC, MSDH and local health guidelines and the following of these guidelines.