

### BOE Questions for 8/17/2020

1. The HVAC systems in our schools are very old, and some are piece-mealed together; some classes do not have adequate heating or cooling, and they use recycled air which is a known factor for spreading COVID-19. What are your specific plans to upgrade our systems to ensure that recycled air will not be used in any school?

Every building's HVAC systems are being evaluated with our energy management vendor to ensure optimum outside air infiltration and proper ventilation to mitigate the spread of any airborne particulates. Based on those evaluations, if adjustment to the systems are needed, they will be initiated.

2. In order to maintain safety for possible active shooters, teachers are encouraged to keep their classroom doors closed. In the classrooms that do have windows, many only open 4-6 inches, if they open at all. This results in little to no fresh air circulation; circulation that is integral to prevent airborne viruses such as COVID 19 from spreading quickly. What are your specific plans to ensure clean air and circulation in every classroom at Berkeley County Schools?

See answer above.

3. What are your specific plans to ensure that all students are being monitored in the hallway during class changes while teachers are sanitizing their classrooms?

Teachers are not required to sanitize between every class, a schedule should be set up so that when some classrooms are being sanitized, other teachers can be in the hallways monitoring during passing time.

4. What are your specific plans to ensure that every restroom is sanitized properly after every student uses it?

The plan is to continuously check the restrooms to make sure they are clean if needed, and to regularly clean and disinfect the restrooms hourly.

5. Since water fountains are off, what are your specific plans to ensure that students have the ability to safely stay hydrated throughout the day?

Students will be permitted to bring water bottles to school to stay hydrated.

6. Local businesses such as vet clinics, dentist offices, banks, and the DMV are limiting the number of patients and patrons entering into the building in order to protect their staff

members. Right now, teacher rosters have between 20 and 35 students per class in a classroom that would support 8-10 students with proper social distancing. What are your specific plans to limit class sizes and maintain 6 feet of social distancing in order to ensure that every single student and staff member at Berkeley County Schools is as safe as the staff and patrons of banks, vet clinics, and dentists' offices?

CDC recommends modified layouts when 6 feet of social distancing is not feasible.

**Modified Layouts**

- Space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible.
  - Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
  - Modify learning stations and activities as applicable so there are fewer students per group, placed at least 6 feet apart if possible.
7. Schools in Berkeley County share nurses with other schools. What are your specific plans to ensure that every school has a nurse in it for the entire day, all of the days that the schools are open?

We are working with EPIC to hire six additional school nurses so that every school will have a nurse. We are also in the process of hiring a nurse liaison to assist with COVID-19 surveillance and communication with the Nursing Services Coordinator and school nurses.

8. Parents are expected to fill out a health survey before school. What are your specific plans to ensure that these are being filled out each day? When they aren't filled out, what are your specific plans to ensure that those students do not come into contact with other students or staff until their health has been checked by a nurse?

The homeroom or 1<sup>st</sup> period teacher will be responsible for monitoring his/her class list for student/caregiver completion of the self-health screenings. If a symptom is noted, the school nurse will be notified. School nurse or school personnel will contact caregiver and report to Nursing Services Coordinator, as needed. Nursing Services Coordinator will contact Berkeley/Morgan County Board of Health (BMCBH), as needed.

9. Each school year, after the first semester, we run out of funds in the county for supplies such as paper. During this pandemic the supplies we need are for sanitation purposes. Currently there is a country-wide shortage of disinfectant wipes and other cleaning agents. What are your specific plans to ensure that all students and staff throughout Berkeley County have access to the sizeable amount of disinfectants that it will take to ensure compliant sanitation of desks, chairs, floors, etc. for the duration of the entire year?

Currently there are adequate cleaning supplies and PPE at each school and in the County warehouse. Additional stock has been ordered and par levels are being created to be certain the required supplies are available throughout the year. Currently there is no shortage of proper cleaning, disinfecting, or PPE supplies. The BOE has consistently made available supplies required for the school district to operate efficiently and effectively.

10. It seems that many teachers will be required to teach both online and in person, even though your own website says otherwise. Teaching online and teaching in person are two separate jobs. What are your specific plans to ensure that those teachers that are being required to perform two jobs are being adequately compensated to do both of those jobs?

Generally, teachers are not being required to teach both online and in person at the same time. There are a few exceptions where teachers in highly specialized content areas may need to teach in both environments simultaneously to accommodate all students enrolled in that course. Some teachers may have a schedule that has both 'BRICK' classes and 'CLICK' classes included in their daily schedule.

11. Our re-entry survey shows increased monitoring responsibilities for bus drivers, such as ensuring that all students face forward on the bus and keep masks on. What are your specific plans to support drivers whose eyes need to be on the road, and not monitoring individual students' faces while they drive?

Our bus operators are trained to monitor the inside and outside of the bus at all times. Our bus operators will follow the steps outlined in the Student Handbook section labeled "*STUDENT CONDUCT ON BUSES*" for any violation of bus rules.

12. During instructional time, many emergencies come up in the classroom, (examples: student has an asthma attack, student has a seizure, etc.). Fire drills and active shooter drills also happen at random during instructional times. Actual fires and active shooter situations can also happen during instructional times. In regards to teachers filming their classrooms in order to record and livestream those classrooms into the homes of "click" students, what are your specific plans to ensure that these sorts of situations are not live streamed into homes as this would be a potential violation of FERPA?

Lessons will be recorded and played later during asynchronous learning so if situations arise that violate FERPA, it can be deleted.

13. What are your specific plans to explain to parents that their child's classroom and any classroom management techniques involving their children or any emergencies that their children may be involved in will be livestreamed and recorded for viewing by other students and potentially those students' families?

Anything included as part of a lesson that may violate FERPA will be deleted prior to any other students watching the video. In this instance, we can only adjust the recorded video.

14. In schools, we teach students that the internet, while wildly useful, can be a scary and unforgiving space. What are your specific plans to ensure that students who are tuning in from home do not screenshot (or otherwise record) any portion of the live stream and upload it to any social media platform for the public to see?

We will continue to emphasize the need of responsible behavior with the use of technology. This is an ever present issue given the fact that technology has become interwoven into our lives. If there are occasions where students are not acting appropriately, Administration will follow-up with the parents and students.

15. What is your specific timeline for installing safety shields in every classroom, in addition to having them in every office?

At this time, it is not the intent to install shields/barriers in every classroom and/or office. Barriers/shields will be installed in primary school classroom tables and high interaction/transaction locations, such as main offices and cafeteria. Social distancing along with the proper use of a face covering will be used at all other locations.

16. What are your specific plans to distinguish students who have a medical reason to not wear masks versus those who do not want to wear masks so that staff can adequately enforce mask wearing?

School staff will be notified regarding students who are waived from wearing a facial covering due to medical or other reasons. School officials may choose to issue a card to such students for students to display, if staff member questions said students. Confidentiality must be maintained.

17. In regards to masks the BCS re-entry plan states, "Students, unless medically waived in grades 4-12, are required to wear face coverings when outside of their core classroom group or in congregant areas." This indicates that students are not required to wear masks in the classroom. Classroom rosters have already been circulated and there are clearly too many students per classroom to properly socially distance. What are your

specific plans to ensure that students and staff are safe in the classrooms where masks are not required and social distancing cannot be followed?

- a. All students in intermediate, middle, and high schools will be required to wear a facial covering, unless medically (or otherwise) waived.
  - a. From the BCS FAQ: "Results from our family pathway survey indicate that 47% of students have selected the Click pathway reducing the number of students in each school. Individual classrooms will be evaluated for the appropriate occupancy with desks arranged for social distancing and safe practices."
  - b. From BCS FAQ: "Core groups are the smaller groups or pods that students may be divided into within a classroom or learning environment for the purpose of limiting interaction and/or contact. Intermediate, middle and high school students will wear a face covering, unless medically waived, when they cannot be socially distanced. Elementary, kindergarten and PreK students may choose and will be encouraged to wear a face covering if preferred, and will receive classroom instruction in small groups or pods."
  - c. BCS, BMCBH, and CDC continue to recommend wearing facial coverings when social distancing is not possible.

18. While the Berkeley County Schools re-entry plan does state that masks are required when students are not in the classroom, according to Governor Justice's color coded safety graphic, it is not necessary for counties in green to enforce face masks in the school. What are your specific plans to address this discrepancy to the parents and students at Berkeley County Schools?

See answer above. BCS, BMCBH, and CDC continue to recommend wearing facial coverings when social distancing is not possible.

19. Teachers are to report to the school buildings on August 24 and students are to report to the school buildings on September 8. These expectations imply that it is safe for many people to be in one building, and in one classroom. With that in mind, what are your specific plans to schedule in-person board meetings, open to the public, instead of holding them virtually?

The school board has asked the superintendent to provide a plan for holding in-person board meetings that will be open to the public as well as broadcast virtually. Technology staff is currently working on developing a solution to address in-person and virtual board meetings in a larger group setting such as a high school auditorium where larger groups of individuals may attend while practicing social distancing and other safety protocols. The plan is that once the technology issues are resolved, board meetings will resume

with the opportunity for a limited number of individuals to attend based on the size of the auditorium selected.

20. Some staff take care of people at home that are immune compromised or that are at higher risk for COVID morbidity. Staff members with these concerns have been told that accommodations cannot be made because it is a family member, not the staff member who is at a higher risk. What are your specific plans to ensure that the families of staff members continue to be safe even though accommodations cannot be made for them?

Under FFCRA, employees that are caring for individuals who have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related COVID-19, are eligible for up to 2 weeks (80 hours) of leave. After the emergency leave has been exhausted, employees may use personnel leave or unpaid leave of absence for remainder of expanded Emergency FMLA.

21. Some students are taken care of by family members at home that are immune compromised or that are at higher risk for COVID morbidity. If that family member is exposed, what are your specific plans to help care for those students?

The family may choose the "CLICK" option for their student. School nurses and school counselors will reach out to families to offer support and community services.

22. Since students will be eating in the classroom 2 times per day, each time followed by direct instruction time, what are your specific plans to ensure that classrooms are properly cleaned and sanitized before the next group of students come in?

School administrators are working with custodial staff and will address this on a school by school basis.

23. Other than a cloth mask, what specific PPE does Berkeley County Schools plan to give to all staff members?

Face shields, isolation gowns, and gloves, will be available for staff who must work in a closer contact with students, e.g., provide assistance with hygiene.

24. Cleaning staffs are already very busy with the amount of cleaning that they do to maintain BCS buildings, and it does not seem possible that the same number of staff can perform the extra cleaning as laid out by the re-entry plan. What are your specific plans to hire more staff to ensure that the entire school is properly sanitized throughout the day, and then deep cleaned each evening?

The custodial staff are purchasing additional tools, such as sprayers and misters, which will assist them in expediting the cleaning and sanitation of classroom and common area spaces.

25. Results for COVID testing can take up to 3 weeks to get back, and there is fear that the testing will not be covered by our PEIA insurance, especially if it is repeated testing. What are your specific plans to ensure that all staff and students exposed to COVID will receive a test that is quick and affordable?

Please seek information from Human Resources and PEIA. At this point, our Nursing Services Coordinator and school nurses will assist caregivers and staff with locating a facility that conducts testing, and attempt to expedite the return of results.

It is important that people who are sick get tested for COVID-19. People who are not sick, but were a close contact of someone with COVID-19 should get tested for COVID-19 about five days after they were in contact with a sick person. Students and staff should work with their health care provider to get tested. Public health can help with testing if a person does not have a health care provider.

Testing everyone in a school (either before school starts or during school) is not recommended. Testing everyone has not been well-studied. Social distancing and wearing masks are more important ways to prevent COVID-19. A negative test means that the person did not have COVID-19 when they were tested. A negative test does not mean they are “safe” or “cleared” to be at school. <https://wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/COVID-Outbreak-in-Schools-v7.pdf>

26. In regards to students eating in the classroom, the re-entry plan states, “Hand washing with soap and water will be enforced prior to and following meals and surfaces disinfected regularly.” Our grade level numbers can be in the hundreds, with access to only one grade level bathroom with one handwashing station that has three fountains in the same station. What are your specific plans to ensure that all grade level students will be able to wash their hands individually, in a timely manner, before and after lunch?

Schools will develop schedules to ensure that students are practicing appropriate hand washing while providing the time during the school day.

27. In regards to students riding the bus. What are your specific plans to ensure that students are maintaining the 6 feet of social distancing for the duration of the bus ride,

especially in the mornings before the homeroom teacher has had the opportunity to review the screening survey that their guardian is required to fill out each morning?

The Berkeley County School's Transportation Department is following the guidelines from the WV Reentry Toolkit regarding transportation protocol and recommendations.

28. In regards to our lunches being at the end of the day after all students have left the building and our day with the students beginning at 8:00AM, what are your specific plans to ensure that staff get bathroom breaks and breaks to appropriately hydrate themselves?

Schools can develop schedules that will allow for staff bathroom breaks; hydrating will be permitted during class time.

29. Many staff are wary of taking their masks off to eat in a room with 25 plus kids who are not socially distanced. Many staff also have medical conditions such as diabetes, hypo and hyperglycemia and severe anemia which requires them to take frequent meals to avoid medical disasters. What are your specific plans to ensure that staff will not have to go from 8:00AM until their lunch at 2:30PM in order to eat in an environment that is safe for them?

Please speak with your school administrator, as the administrator has developed individual school plans to provide necessary coverage that will allow staff to step away.

30. According to the FFCRA staff can receive up to 2 weeks of pay if they are quarantined. If a staff member or their children are exposed more than twice, and staff must quarantine more than twice, what are your specific plans to ensure that staff members do not have their pay docked for exposure and subsequent quarantine which was outside of their control?

Under FFCRA, employees are eligible for up to 2 weeks (80 hours) of emergency paid sick leave from April 1 to December 31, 2020. Based upon medical documentation and testing results, the two weeks are not required to be taken in a block. After a total of two weeks of emergency leave, employees would need to use the personal leave that is provided annually under WV Code.

31. According to the FFCRA, staff are able to have an accommodation made for them, or up to 12 weeks of paid sick leave if he or she, "is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons." Yet, staff are being told by HR to bring their children to their place of employment and have them sit in a classroom with the parent while the parent teaches

in an already full classroom. What are your specific plans to address the issue of staff being told to bring their children into harm's way when their children's school made the call to keep that student safe at home?

Berkeley County Schools are not closed to students. Staff are only permitted to bring their own child into the classroom when in-person learning has been suspended and all students are being instructed in a remote environment. For those staff members that are residents of other counties/states that are providing instruction full-time virtual learning and schools are closed, under FFCRA, employees who are assigned to 'BRICK' learning can take 12 weeks of expanded Emergency FMLA must take 2 weeks unpaid (but may substitute personal day). The following 10 weeks would be paid at 2/3 of employee's pay rate, but capped at \$200 per day through December 31, 2020.

32. In secondary schools, if one student tests positive for covid, that student could have exposed anywhere from 4 to 7 teachers to covid and they may all be forced to quarantine simultaneously. What are your specific plans to ensure that there will be enough substitutes to cover those teachers' classes?

a. Information about ANY potential exposure to students or staff will be shared with BMCBH. We follow their guidance in all cases. Each situation is unique, i.e., it may not be necessary for a teacher to quarantine if the teacher and student were both wearing facial coverings and social distancing was maintained.

Contact Process:

- School officials will notify Department of Pupil Services (including Nursing Services Coordinator, maintaining confidentiality)
- Initial interview with family will be completed and will be communicated per protocol. (Board of Health)
- The directives from our local Board of Health received will be followed.
- Berkeley/Morgan County Board of Health notification letter will be distributed to the families/individuals as deemed appropriate per directives.
- The Board of Health will provide documentation when the person meets requirements to be off isolation (if they were infected) or quarantine (if they were an exposed person).

<https://www.berkeleycountyschools.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=6534&ModuleInstanceID=22032&ViewID=6446EE88-D30C-497E-9316-3F8874B3E108&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=47168&PageID=15293>

b. Before, the pandemic, due to supply and demand issues within the labor force, the district was already facing substitute teaching and service personnel shortages. The Department of Human Resources is constantly posting and hiring qualified individuals to assist in filling these roles. You may have notice yard signs and feather banner

encouraging people to apply for opening within Berkeley County Schools. School administrators are working with their staff to develop plan for coverage of both brick and click classrooms.

The best advocates for finding qualified substitutes is through our staff and community. Please assist us as you know of individual interested in working with children and making a difference in our community to join the BCS Team. We are the largest employer in Berkeley County and with a work force of over 2600 professionals we all can contribute and play a role as recruiters and talent agents – thank you for taking on that role.

33. In regards to the previous question, what are your specific plans to handle any situation in BCS where there are not enough substitutes to cover teacher absences?

This plan is still being developed with assistance of school administrators as each sites will vary. Please speak with your school administrator.

34. Plans and protocols released by this BOE and the state BOE, along with suggestions made by the governor, suggest a potentially “relaxed” view of safety needs for teachers and students in the classroom. What is this Board’s stance toward school principals who take a more proactive approach to protecting staff and students? Will those principals be supported in their actions?

We recognize that we are faced with many new challenges for the first time. We need to be flexible, reasonable, and take cautionary steps to keep ourselves and others safe.

35. If teachers decide to spend their own money on PPE or other safety material not provided by the county, can that be reimbursed through our Faculty Senate money that is normally allotted for “school supplies”?

The school district will be providing all staff and students with face covering, hand sanitizer, and in some cases, if needed, PPE. In addition, POLICY 1224.1 Accounting Procedures Manual Section 1-37 Faculty Senate Funds states, "Of the total allocation received by each faculty senate, \$300 is to be allocated to each classroom teacher, counselor and librarian based on an FTE basis for expenditure during the instructional year for academic materials, supplies or equipment which in the judgment of the teacher, counselor or librarian will assist him or her in providing instruction in his or her assigned academic subjects. Nothing contained in W. Va. Code 18-5A-5 prohibits the funds from being used for programs and materials that, in the opinion of the teacher, enhance student behavior, increase academic achievement, improve self-esteem and address the problems of students-at-risk.

36. The availability of hand sanitizer is necessary to ensure a hygienic environment. Are there plans in place to install touch-free dispensers outside of every classroom to ensure students and teachers have adequate access?

Due to WV Fire Marshal direction, alcohol-based hand sanitizers must be in the classrooms not in the corridors due to fire hazard. All classrooms will have pump hand sanitizers available for student and staff use.

37. With stories of re-openings gone awry across the country, including increased numbers of cases and requirements for quarantining because of exposure to the virus, why hasn't the decision been made to go online for at least the first nine weeks (or the first semester) as so many neighboring counties and districts have done? What is it that makes Berkeley County immune to the same problems we're seeing develop across the nation?

The emergency powers for the chief executive, Governor, are then defined in W. Va. Code, 15-5-6. The Governor has authority to act to protect "the safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the state." The Governor can, during a state of emergency, order evacuations, control ingress and egress to and from a disaster area, suspend provisions of regulatory statutes, and, most broadly, "Perform and exercise other functions, powers and duties that are necessary to promote and secure the safety and protection of the civilian population." At this time, the Governor has enacted metrics to guide the re-opening of all West Virginia School district. Additionally, as a district, we must ensure that all children have a right to a free and appropriate education. Many states across the country see in-person learning as the solution to avoid equity issues of remote learning. Not all students have equal access to technology/stable internet and therefore, their education was and would continue to be greatly impacted. In addition, special education services must be maintained as written by the IEP teams.

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