

# THE TUES. NEWS

1-5-2021

## BRENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### Coming Up!

**Monday, December 14 -  
March 1, 2021**

Myschooldc Lottery  
visit [myschooldc.org](https://myschooldc.org) to apply

**Monday, January 4 -  
Friday, January 8, 2021**

All students in virtual learning setting.

**Wednesday, January 6**

Jefferson Academy Open House  
6 - 7 p.m.

Meetings will be hosted via Teams  
[tinyurl.com/JAfamily20](https://tinyurl.com/JAfamily20)

**Monday, January 18 -  
Wednesday, January 20**

No school for students and teachers

**Wednesday, January 27**

Community Meeting  
6 - 7:30 p.m.

Login information in the Tuesday,  
January 26 Tues News.

**Friday, January 29**

No school for students (virtual and in-person)

Term 3 Supply Distribution 2 - 5 p.m.

**Saturday, January 30**

Term 3 Supply Distribution  
9 - noon



### Brent Facilities Update

Over Winter Break, the new learning cottage was installed on Brent's parking lot. The contractors will finish the project in the next couple of weeks. This new classroom will provide Brent with much needed space. See picture.

### Virtual Multicultural Night Postponed

Please note that Multicultural Night, previously scheduled for Tuesday, January 12, will be postponed. Further information about this event will be posted in TuesNews at a later date.

In the meantime, we are still collecting favorite traditional recipes, so please share yours here: <https://tinyurl.com/yymrcjz>

**Announcement from Our Jefferson Family Remembering Mr. Julius Moore & Helping a JA Family in Need**

Good morning JA family,

I hope you and your families have enjoyed a peaceful, joyous holiday season.

As we prepare to resume classes on Monday, I am writing to share some sad news. Shortly before Christmas, Mr. Julius Moore - the father of JA 7th grader Demetrius C. - passed away from COVID-19 complications following an extended hospitalization.

We are absolutely heartbroken for Demetrius and his family. Demetrius and his younger brother (a student at Van Ness ES) are now residing with their aunt. Mr. Moore was a loving, responsive, and diligent father, and his warmth and humor always left you smiling.

As we look for ways to support Demetrius and his family during this impossible time, the Van Ness community has set up this GoFundMe - [https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-the-family-of-julius-moore?utm\\_medium=copy\\_link&utm\\_source=customer&utm\\_campaign=p\\_lico+share-sheet](https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-the-family-of-julius-moore?utm_medium=copy_link&utm_source=customer&utm_campaign=p_lico+share-sheet) - to assist with funeral expenses and anything else the family may need. Please consider donating what you can.

Thank you.  
Greg Dohmann

Principal

**Serve Your City Requests Supplies**

Serve Your City, in collaboration with other partners in the Ward 6 Mutual Aid Network, has been doing a lot of work to provide essentials for our unhoused neighbors here in Washington, DC, but our supplies are running low. You can help support your neighbors during the pandemic by making a purchase today from our wishlist: [https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3E4U1UCILJ3QJ?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3E4U1UCILJ3QJ?ref_=wl_share)

Everything on this list is super helpful. Right now, the snack foods, wipes and socks especially are in low supply.

In-kind donations can also be dropped off at CHAW (545 7th St SE, DC 20003). Anything small (eg toiletries) can be received contactless by dropping off in the vestibule at CHAW M-F 9am-9pm. To drop off anything large (eg sleeping bags or winter coats), you need to make arrangements by emailing: [m.houck808@gmail.com](mailto:m.houck808@gmail.com).



**Winter Reading Celebration**

Start the new year by participating in the Winter Reading Program - <https://dcps.instructure.com/courses/211378/files/folder/Winter%20Read?preview=16630984> created by DCPS School Librarians. Over four weeks elementary school students are encouraged to read one suggested title per week and complete an accompanying activity. The Winter Reading Activities Challenge - <https://dcps.instructure.com/courses/211378/files/folder/Winter%20Read?preview=16572425> provides even more fun ways to celebrate reading.

For additional information and resources please visit the public DCPS School Libraries Canvas Course - <https://dcps.instructure.com/courses/211378>.

If you have any questions, please contact Bettina Schewe ([bettina.schewe@k12.dc.gov](mailto:bettina.schewe@k12.dc.gov)).

## **Update - Brent Elementary ReOpening Plan**

All public elementary schools in DC have been asked to convene a Reopening Community Corps (RCC) to support and advise DCPS principals on in-person reopening in Term 3. At Brent, the RCC includes LSAT members, the chairs of the PTA, DWG, and SIT, two faculty representatives from the Strategic Planning Group, and one general faculty representative. This group first convened on December 14th, 2020 and has been working to gather community perspectives as we assess the feasibility of options to serve additional students in person while complying with safety guidelines within the building's space constraints.

In this message, we aim to provide Brent-specific information on our current planning, as well as specific notes around space constraints and other decision guiding priorities as we evaluate options for reopening the school to a limited number of students for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

### **Our Reopening Design Principles**

The RCC reopening recommendations have been guided by several principles, namely, that we should:

- Comply with health guidelines and other requirements designed to prioritize the safety of our students, teachers, and community.
- Meet the in-person learning needs for those furthest from opportunity.
- Prioritize a lack of disruption to classroom community cohorts in order to maximize instructional time/opportunities.
- Build plans around teachers who are able to return to the classroom.
- Ensure that the return of some students to in-person learning

doesn't undermine the quality of the remote learning experience for those who remain virtual.

### **Our Reopening Design Constraints**

As we determine what reopening looks like this school year, we also have the following constraints:

- DCPS requires fewer than 12 total occupants in a single classroom in K-5 and 11 total occupants in ECE. Due to Brent's below-average classroom size, 10 students can occupy a single classroom in K-5 and 9 students in ECE.
- Public spaces must be scheduled so that classes are isolated from one another.
- Families have the right to all-virtual instruction, which requires at least one virtual class per grade. Any hybrid models require a teacher to support the virtual portion of the week.
- In-person classrooms require a dedicated support/coverage person, in addition to the teacher.
- All adults, including teachers and the dedicated support person may not be in contact with more than two classrooms.
- ECE classrooms require two teachers (teacher + partner teacher).
- All specials teachers and service providers must remain in a virtual stance.

### **Current Status of In-Person Learning in DCPS**

- Currently, for Term 2, DCPS requires all elementary schools to have open at least 1 CARE classroom per school.
- For Term 3, DCPS requires all elementary schools to work towards community demand. For Cluster IV, Brent's network, and a set of schools with generally high demand, DCPS requires at least one in-person class at every grade

level.

- Brent was one of the first DCPS schools to offer in-person instruction, going significantly above and beyond DCPS requirements.

- Of DCPS' 63 elementary schools, only three schools, including Brent, have brought back children for in-person education in Term 2. Brent has opened more in-person classes than any other DCPS elementary school.

### **Current Status of In-Person Learning at Brent**

- Brent is currently serving 39 students in person and plans to serve 111 students total by end of Term 2, instructed by 19 classroom teachers, partner teachers, coverage teachers, and operations personnel who have stepped forward to fulfill the requirements of the district to open one classroom at each grade level by the start of Term 3.
- Brent students who most need in-person learning, according to criteria set out by DCPS, have been or will be offered a spot in Term 2.
- The majority of Brent students will remain virtual this school year unless health and safety, space, capacity, and/or staffing guidelines change.

### **Updates on In-Person Learning for Term 2**

Brent was one of the first DCPS schools to offer in-person instruction going significantly above and beyond DCPS requirements. As of the December break, Brent is serving 39 students in person and has one in-person classroom for 5th, 4th, kindergarten, and ECE, with plans to open additional in-person classrooms for 1st and 2nd grades on January 11, and by the end of Term 2 for 3rd grade. As per DCPS guidelines, priority has been given to those children

furthest from opportunity. We recognize that even for students invited to return in-person, logistical constraints may make this option difficult for some families.

Our teachers and administrators have put enormous thought and effort to ramp up in-person instruction while minimizing any impact on distance learning. We'd like to recognize and thank all of Brent's faculty and teachers for their amazing and innovative work with in-person learning and their commitment to providing high-quality virtual instruction as well.

It is important to note that teachers leading in-person instruction at Brent have volunteered. Brent leadership and the RCC agree that an all-volunteer model is the cornerstone of reopening. We are incredibly appreciative of the staff who have chosen to return. Additionally, we respectfully understand that not everyone is in a position to be able to teach in-person right now and want to honor faculty choices and are obligated to recognize federal accommodations during these unprecedented and challenging times. Forcing faculty to return against their will is fundamentally in opposition of how we define ourselves as a school and negates potential long-term impact, not to mention forcing teachers to return against their will is unlikely to be successful.

### **Plans for in-person learning during Term 3**

It is possible that additional in-person classrooms could open during Term 3 depending on teacher volunteer availability, space in the building, and social distancing requirements. While it is possible that DCPS will revise their safety and social distancing protocols as

the COVID emergency evolves, the RCC is working within current guidelines that cap the number of students in a given classroom at 10.

DCPS tasked the RCC with developing expanded school-specific criteria for allocating any additional Term 3 in-person instruction seats. With great consideration, the RCC has chosen to add to the existing priority criteria:

- Children of DCPS school-based staff
- Children of a single parent essential worker, or two essential worker parents (essential workers are defined as groups 1a or 1b in DC's vaccination plan)

In addition, the RCC recognizes that Brent's youngest grade's learning and social-emotional needs are some of the most challenging to support in the distance learning format. The RCC has formed a Kindergarten subcommittee to hold listening sessions with parents in these grades to explore options for increasing Term 3 in-person experiences for those students given current health and safety, space, capacity and staffing constraints.

### **Virtual Learning Updates**

Although the RCC mandate is to focus on in-person learning, we recognize that the majority of Brent students will continue to be remote for the foreseeable future, and therefore it is important to look at opportunities to improve the virtual learning experience as well. Areas that have been identified for further work in recent listening sessions include: increasing the amount of feedback parents receive on their children's work and maximizing small group learning opportunities.

\* \* \*

We recognize the significant impact of COVID-19 on families in the District and throughout the nation. We are keenly aware that COVID-19 has impacted families in a disparate manner. Some Brent students and teachers are mourning the loss of family members, and across the District, many are dealing with significant losses. The RCC is doing our best to carry out our assignment in a very difficult situation. We welcome input, our group email address is [brent-rcc@googlegroups.com](mailto:brent-rcc@googlegroups.com) or you can reach out directly to any member to share your thoughts.

Signed,

The Brent Reopen Community Corps

Ann Heilman-Dahl (LSAT Co-Chair, Parent of 2nd and 4th grader)

Sarah Werstuik (Fifth Grade Teacher & LSAT Co-Chair)

La'Quontinesha Atchison (AFSCME Rep and K Teaching Partner)

Emma Bailey (ECE Teacher)

Jennifer Belair (LSAT community representative)

Cati Bisanz (WTU Building Representative and LSAT Member)

Leda K. Bloomfield (DWG Chair and 1st Grade Parent)

Justin Brindger (SIT Co-chair, Parent of ECE, K and 3rd grader)

Melinda Copeland (K teacher)

Sara Ewbank (Brent Assistant Principal)

Sarah Goldsmith (Parent of ECE student and 1st grader)

Emily Kadash (Second Grade Focus Teacher)

Norah Lycknell (Brent Principal)

Josie Malone (Parent of Brent K student and a future Brent Bear)

Abby Maslin (Third Grade Teach-

er & Parent of ECE & 4th Grader)  
Kiana Moore (PTA President, Parent of 3rd grader)  
Chloe Patterson (First Grade Teacher)  
Greta Peisch (Kindergarten parent)  
Gretchen Phillips (Parent of 1st and 3rd graders)  
Jean Blackerby Strich (Parent of 1st and 2nd graders)  
Sarah Werstuik (5th grade teacher)

#### Definitions

CARE classrooms - students experience virtual learning in a Brent classroom that meets social distancing expectations supervised by an adult who is not providing in-person instruction

In-person instruction/learning – students engage in learning experiences led by a Brent teacher in a Brent classroom that meets social distancing expectations

Term 2 – November 9, 2020 - January 29, 2021

Term 3 - February 1, 2021 - April 12, 2021

Essential Worker – Groups 1a and 1b in DC's COVID Vaccination Plan