



NEWS RELEASE

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BCPS to require all staff to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination or undergo weekly COVID-19 testing

Towson, MD. – Baltimore County Public Schools announced today that all school system employees will be required to provide proof of completing their primary series of COVID-19 vaccines. Those who have not been vaccinated or who opt out of sharing their vaccine records with BCPS will be required to complete weekly COVID-19 testing.

“We are creating this requirement to protect the health, safety, and well-being of our students and staff during this continuing pandemic,” said BCPS Superintendent Dr. Darryl L. Williams. “The move is aligned with our commitment to provide in-person instruction throughout the 2021-2022 school year. Vaccination remains the most effective means of preventing COVID-19 transmission. I encourage everyone eligible to get vaccinated.”

Additional details will be shared with employees in a letter from the Office of Health Services.

The decision to require proof of vaccination or weekly testing was made with guidance from Johns Hopkins University and University of Maryland medical experts as well as Baltimore County Health Officer Dr. Gregory Wm. Branch.

Leaders of BCPS bargaining units have been a part of ongoing conversations regarding mitigation strategies and signaled their support for this decision.

“TABCO’s position continues to be a safe reopening based on the science,” said Cindy Sexton, TABCO (Teachers Association of Baltimore County) president. “We support a vaccine mandate, and we can’t wait to see our students in our classrooms.”

“Our collective stance,” said Nick Argyros of BCPSOPE, “is that we feel vaccinations provide a safe and healthy work environment. Mandatory vaccinations would help our staff stay healthy so we can succeed in our business of educating children.”

Jeannette Young, president of Education Support Professionals of Baltimore County (ESPBC), said, “For the past 18 months, ESPBC has based its recommendations and positions on the science and advice of the experts. It is believed that the best way to minimize the spread of COVID-19 is through vaccinations, testing, and masking. This three-pronged approach will allow staff to safely and effectively do their jobs of supporting the students, staff and the community of Baltimore County Public Schools.”

“AFSCME members have been on the front line since day one,” said Bryan Epps, president of AFSCME Local 434. “We are in support of mandating the vaccine and/or the weekly testing. We believe and support following the CDC recommendations and guidance and hope it will curtail the spread of the COVID-19 virus.”

“The Council of Administrative and Supervisory Employees (CASE) supports mandatory vaccinations for staff and weekly testing for staff who are unable to vaccinate,” said William Burke, CASE executive director. “Data confirms that the vaccine is safe and effective and is an important mitigation strategy that will ensure schools will remain open.”

The effort to provide vaccinations to BCPS staff began in March with clinics at the state fairgrounds that were offered throughout the spring. The effort continues with weekly school-located clinics in August. Employees can find the schedule of upcoming clinics at the Baltimore County Department of Health’s [Vaccine Hub](#). In addition, locations throughout the community are providing COVID-19 vaccines.

In addition to required vaccines or testing for staff and universal masking in all BCPS schools, offices, and buildings, BCPS leaders say that the following additional COVID-19 mitigation strategies will be employed for the 2021-2022 school year:

- Maintaining physical distancing to the greatest extent possible.
- Conducting screening testing to promptly identify cases, clusters, and outbreaks.

- Maintaining ventilation settings for maximal outdoor air intake and maximal filtration.
- Reinforcing handwashing and respiratory etiquette.
- Reinforcing that children and staff should stay home when sick and seek COVID-19 testing if necessary.
- Conducting contact tracing for all cases among students and staff, including enforcing quarantine and isolation to limit spread.
- Cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces daily.

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