

To the members of the BASIS Charter School community – teachers, leaders, and staff,

We have spent many months preparing for what is already an unprecedented academic year, and we are proud of the measures and groundwork we have put in place. Most of our schools are already open with full distance learning education online, and more BASIS Charter Schools will open in the next two weeks.

As we have previously communicated, we have three key principles that guide our COVID-related decision making:

- First, the safety of our students, teachers and families, remains a top priority to which we are applying a great deal of effort and energy.
- Second, we will educate our students at the same high level we all desire and expect, whether in-person in our school buildings or via distance learning at home.
- And, third, families will still get to choose for 2020-21 whether to utilize distance learning or send students to campus **once it is safe to do so**.

Like many of you, we look forward to when we can begin to implement the 'Families Choose in 2020-21' program, guided by intentional and thoughtful parameters and protocols for safe return to campus. Indeed, for months, we have been assessing the safest way to do so.

As you know, all BASIS Charter Schools are closed for in-person instruction through Labor Day. To assess when we open campuses after Labor Day, this is our approach:

**We will follow health expert and health agency guidelines as necessary conditions**

We will continue to abide by all local, state, and federal health department recommendations and mandates, and we will treat the guidance and recommendations as necessary conditions for opening. In other words, if a state or county health agency says that the positivity rate must be below a certain threshold for schools to safely reopen, then we will treat that as a baseline minimum condition to consider reopening. Re-Opening of BASIS Charter School campuses will be on a county by county basis, based on local progress. We will only be influenced by science, and our eyes are on what public health experts and the associated health departments say. We are not playing politics.

**Our three key metrics for reopening schools**

Because we operate schools in various locales, we want to continually evaluate some overall metrics for our decision making. These are certainly consistent with metrics used by the various state and local agencies, but in some cases may be in addition to their metrics or exceed their benchmarks. We have developed these benchmarks in consultation with public health experts and discussed them with other school systems.

**1. 14-day rolling average of the positivity rate**

*Two full prior weeks of less than 5% positivity; this may be less than 7% in certain areas, in consultation with county health officials.*

**2. 14-day rolling average of the incident rate**

*A rate of new cases that falls below 100 per 100,000 persons for two full, consecutive weeks. This may also be attained through two consecutive weeks of decline in the rate, if the rate is very close to 100 per 100,000, in consultation with county health officials.*

**3. Test return rate**

*An average test return rate of less than 72 hours, which is necessary in order for us to maintain operations effectively and to allow for contact tracing.*

In summary, and as a guide for you to monitor the timing for your BASIS Charter School to open, you should:

A. Check the status of your local and state health agency recommendations. Do the health officials in your state, county, or district recommend that schools open? Many state/county/district agencies have set up dashboards for you to monitor such developments and data.

B. When (A) is satisfied, then check to see whether the key metrics above have also been met.

C. When (B) is satisfied, then your BASIS Charter School will begin the process of opening, likely opening for on-campus instruction two weeks after both (A) and (B) have been met.

At this time, in all locations where BASIS Charter Schools operate, re-opening benchmarks have not been met. We are committed to the 'Families Choose in 2020-21' program for the whole year (once it is able to start), but it will not begin until it is safe for our faculty and staff to manage classrooms of students. We are not there yet.

The fact that “we are not there yet” is hard on all of us. It is hard on our staff and teachers who want to be delivering in-person instruction. It is hard on our school leaders who are navigating running an online school while preparing for in-person instruction. It is hard on our parents, especially those with primary school children. And, it is hard on our students; we hear them saying “I want to go to school,” We desperately need to get back to in-person instruction, but we are committed to doing so in a thoughtful manner and on a safe timeline. Once our campuses begin to re-open, it is our goal that they are able to remain open.

Let's continue to work together to do the things in our personal lives that will allow us to open our schools soon and safely.

Sincerely yours,

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