

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY

191 South East Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Brad W. Young
President

Telephone 301-696-6850
Fax 301-696-6950

STATEMENT FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY

MARCH 23, 2020

During this unprecedented health crisis, the values and mission of Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) remain focused on the wellbeing of our students, their families, our teachers and our staff. Uncertainty and changes in routine are doubly hard for our children and those Frederick County families who are vulnerable because of economic circumstance.

The Board of Education of Frederick County has been focused on two key priorities since the emergence of COVID-19 as a crisis in our region:

First, we directed the Superintendent and her staff to design and deploy safe and flexible feeding options available to as many communities in Frederick County as possible. FCPS staff are tracking data and adjusting locations based on participation and community feedback, but we are pleased that we have served over 4,000 meals in the first week.

Second, as the largest single employer in Frederick County, the Board is committed to safeguarding the economic wellbeing of both salaried and non-salaried personnel during these difficult times. FCPS teachers, bus drivers, instructional assistants, interpreters, community liaisons, and food service workers are vital members of our school system—and they are our friends and neighbors. The Board directed the Superintendent to define options to ensure that benefitted 10 or 11 month staff would be paid during a temporary or extended school closure period.

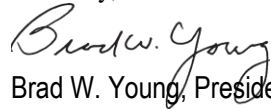
Over the last week, the Board has partnered with union leadership for support employees to finalize an agreement to ensure continuation of compensation and to outline expectations for modified job duties. Agreements for teachers and administrators will follow, as details are determined regarding responsibilities in serving students and the change to the student school year.

Via Find Out First, email, and social media, the FCPS community received preliminary details regarding FCPS' plans for continuity of learning using distance learning tools. The Board is proud that the Superintendent and staff have been building capacity for virtual learning options for years prior to the COVID-19 emergency. Ongoing investments in technology, professional development, software and other tools have made FCPS well positioned to begin rolling out distance learning to ensure continuity of learning in our county. Additionally, the Board is pleased that the Superintendent and her staff have approached these distance learning plans with an equity focus, procuring WIFI hotspots and devices to be deployed to families who need them along with tailored planning and staffing for students who receive special education services or who are English language learners.

Should schools remain closed past March 27, 2020, FCPS is ready to rapidly implement distance learning for our students, but we need State approval. The Board of Education of Frederick County is advocating for State Superintendent of Schools Karen Salmon and the State Board of Education to approve remote learning as approved school days for Frederick County and to make any adjustments to the calendar year to assist us in finalizing of agreements with our labor associations. Once these determinations are made, FCPS leaders will quickly finalize professional development, equipment and technology needs and then implement distance learning to ensure continuity of learning for our students.

The Board is tremendously grateful for the work of FCPS staff during these difficult times. From food service personnel to curriculum leaders who are adapting materials for virtual environments, FCPS is staffed by caring professionals who are also affected by this emergency but still delivering their best ideas and work for our children. We are also so appreciative for our partnerships and individuals in the wider community who have volunteered, shared ideas, and demonstrated their commitment to our students and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brad W. Young".

Brad W. Young, President

Jay Mason, Vice President

Liz Barrett, Member

Michael Bunitsky, Member

Rae Gallagher, Member

Dr. Lois Jarman, Member

Karen Yoho, Member

Malachi Macon, Student Member