



An Important Message Regarding U. City Schools

1 message

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Health of a Lion

**THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
UNIVERSITY CITY**
Transform the Life of Every Student Every Day!

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Dear University City Schools Community:

Yesterday was a very busy day for the District as we presented our initial plans for the 2020-21 school year during three separate Town Hall meetings. If you weren't able to attend one of them, the end of this letter has various resources for you, including links to recordings of all three of the Town Hall meetings. It also has a link to a [time-sensitive form](#) regarding enrollment in Click Academy, one of our learning options to be explained in this letter. Please make sure to take a look at it.

The Town Halls yesterday gave us a chance to hear your questions, and honestly, enabled us to think through and hone the plan even further. I want to give you an overview of the plan and how things are playing out in context of the rising number of COVID-19 cases in our region.

First, I am proud of this plan and the months of work that our staff and our community put into building it.

- It is fully based in our vision of Learning Reimagined and stands on our three pillars of Humanizing, Personalizing and Problematizing learning.
- It is woven with wellness and addresses racial equity.
- It takes into account parent, teacher and community voices.
- This is not a cookie-cutter plan.
- It is uniquely U. City, and it operates under the motto of Health of a Lion, where health, wellness and safety come first.

It is very likely that the District will not have students in any of its school buildings during the first weeks of the school year which starts on August 24. This means all students will likely start the school year online. Our board of education will make its final decision at its July 30 meeting. Fortunately, our plan was designed to adapt to this situation.

It is important to know that regardless of whether we start fully online or not, the plan has two options that parents must choose from for each of their children by August 1.

The first is a virtual-only option called Click Academy. The second option is called Brick Academy, a slow, safe and kind model that gradually transitions students back into their regular school buildings for in-person instruction with their U. City teachers and it is also blended with distance learning (with SDUC teachers and staff).

Option 1: Click Academy (PreK-12)

- An entirely virtual learning program that requires a full-semester commitment from families.
- Younger children will need support from parents or caregivers to succeed.
- Families must enroll by August 1.
 - Families can begin enrollment into Click Academy by filling out this [form](#).
- Full-time students commit to an entirely online distance learning program with the majority of classes delivered through Launch instructors teaching Launch curriculum.
- There are a few exceptions to the Launch curriculum.
 - PreK children enrolled in Click Academy will have all-virtual instruction through Julia Goldstein Early Childhood Center staff.
 - Middle School students will take most of their classes via Launch, but will also take virtual classes taught by Brittany Woods teachers for band, choir, orchestra and Latin electives.

Option 2: Brick Academy (PreK-12)

- Students in all grades take courses that are taught by SDUC teachers and staff.
- Brick Academy will likely begin the school year with students doing full distance learning with their SDUC teachers mostly through Google Classroom.
- When safe to come back into buildings, many students will be placed in separate cohorts or groups who will attend in-person school on some days of the week and do distance learning on other days, and vice versa.
 - This is called a blended model of instruction.
 - This reduces in-person class sizes by about half to sustain safe physical distancing.
 - This creates classroom student-teacher ratios of about 12:1.
 - Siblings and students living in the same household will be grouped together so they come to school on the same days.
- Blended instruction schedules are different depending on grade level.
 - PreK-5: Students come to school buildings on either Mondays and Tuesdays or Thursdays and Fridays and do distance learning on the days they are not in school buildings.
 - Middle School: Students come to Brittany Woods on either Mondays and Tuesdays or Thursdays and Fridays and do distance learning on the days that they are not in school. BWMS students also have access to safe, monitored Distance Learning Centers (Hubs) at the school to do their distance learning when they are not scheduled for in-person classes.
 - High School: Ninth grade has in-person school at UCHS five days a week unless we must close the building due to COVID-19 - then they do fully distance learning; Tenth-

12th grade students do distance learning five days a week but also have access to safe, monitored Distance Learning Centers at the school. Some 10-12th grade students identified as needing support to succeed (Group 3) will attend UCHS in-person classes 5 days a week.

- Distance learning will include live, scheduled online instruction with SDUC teachers (synchronous learning) and student-driven online work (asynchronous learning).
- Brick Academy is designed for students to eventually transition back into school buildings when it is safe, but allows the District to quickly pivot to all distance learning at any time due to health and safety concerns.
- Students will be automatically placed in Brick Academy if they do not enroll in Click Academy (fully virtual option).

This is just an overview of the plan. I encourage you to explore the plan further in the following ways:

- To find the full 29-page Health of the Lion plan, go to www.ucityschools.org/ReEntry2020FullReport.
- To view a brief animated video about the general plan, go to www.ucityschools.org/BrickandClickAcademies.
- To review the recordings of yesterday's Town Halls (each about 90 minutes), go to www.ucityschools.org/TownHall2020.
- To find a full schedule and to register for the next Zoom with the Superintendent sessions at 9 a.m. or 5 p.m. on Tuesday, July 28, go to www.ucityschools.org/Zoom2020.
- To further connect with the district, register for a variety of [Parent Cafes](#) that will deal with specific aspects of the plan as well as wellness for our students and families. The first parent cafe is next Monday at 9 a.m. or 5 p.m. and is entitled It's Not Your Fault! Supporting the Emotional and Learning Needs of Your Child During a Global Pandemic.
- *Coming next week:* A question and answer document based on questions asked at the Town Hall meetings.
- *Coming in early August:* District website updated with all back-to-school and safety information.
- *Coming in August:* Newest edition of PRIDE, our District newsmagazine, mailed to all U. City residents.

Finally, if you plan to enroll your child in Click Academy (commit to virtual learning-only for the entire first semester via Launch), you must enroll by August 1 so we are able to plan for the start of the school year. When you have made your decision (before August 1), you should fill out this [form to start the enrollment process](#). Please know, families with multiple children in the District may choose to enroll some of their children in Click Academy and some of their children in Brick Academy if they choose.

This has been challenging work, and we've had to make very hard decisions. I know as a parent how difficult the situation is for all of you. Your decisions should be made with care and thoughtfulness regarding your child's and your family's needs. Please feel free to contact me at shardin@ucityschools.org or on my cell at 314-290-4006.

In Service of Our Children

Sharonica Hardin-Bartley, PHD, PHR
Superintendent



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