Email regarding: Virtual Learning Preparation for Teachers
Date: January 6, 2022
To: All Unit I Employees

Dear Teachers,

Please let us begin by wishing you a happy and healthy new year.

As you know, we are committed to teaching students in person throughout the 2021-2022 school year. However, as the number of COVID-positive cases continue to climb in the region, we may see classrooms, grade levels, teams, and perhaps even schools needing to move from in-person to virtual learning for set periods of time in the upcoming weeks. While virtual learning is not our desired intention for students, in an effort to be responsible to our students, parents, and community stakeholders, we must all be ready for virtual teaching should it be needed.

The decision for any one group of students to move to virtual learning will be made in concert with the Anne Arundel County Department of Health. Please take time to read the directions below that outline what we need to do *now* to prepare for the possibility of virtual learning for groups of students.

Technology Preparation for Virtual Learning
If we need to move student groups into a fully synchronous virtual learning environment, **Brightspace and Google Meet will be the tools we use**. Basically and simply put, **Brightspace** will be where you, our teachers, place all learning materials, activities, assignments, and resources. **Google Meet** will be the platform you will use to actively teach our students synchronously. Please visit the **www.aacps.org/Fall2021Educator** webpage to see all linked resources to support educators to ready your Brightspace courses and learn how to use Google Meet. Remember, we have some students and teachers who are new to us this year and do not yet have the virtual learning knowledge or experiences that most of us have from the 2020-2021 school year.

The following items are among the resources located on this useful **Fall 2021 Educator webpage**:
   - *Our Why* behind using Brightspace as our Learning Management System
   - Example Brightspace courses (classrooms) at the elementary, middle, and high school level
   - How-to's of Brightspace – building your courses (classrooms)
   - Brightspace Tips and Office Hours
   - How to use Google Meet to conduct live synchronous teaching with students

Virtual Learning Schedules
If we move an entire school to virtual learning, we will adjust the school schedules to include a morning and afternoon break for students and teachers at all levels; breaks will be noted on the schedules. Also, please note that schools will maintain their current start and end times for the school day while engaged in virtual learning. The virtual schedules will be posted on our Fall2021 webpages by Friday, January 7, 2022.

Summary
With grace, patience, and flexibility, each of us must ready ourselves for the possibility of needing to move to virtual teaching in the near future. Time is of the essence to prepare. **Please work with your colleagues to ensure you are able to use your Brightspace course and Google Meet to support student**

success in a virtual learning environment. I encourage you to attend **Brightspace Office Hours** if you need personalized Brightspace support. If you would like to have Brightspace group PD support, please ask your Principal to reach out to the Office of Instructional Technology (410-222-1693) to schedule an OIT professional to provide in-school support.

We do ask that you address this request with urgency, however, we do want to approach this task with grace and patience, understanding that some of you are still acclimating to using Brightspace. Together we will move forward to meet the needs of our students.

Gratefully,

Maureen & Monique

Maureen McMahon and Monique Jackson
AACPS Deputy Superintendents
Website: www.aacps.org
Phone: 410-222-5304