



**Mohammed Choudhury**  
State Superintendent of Schools

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Maryland Students Return to Full, In-Person Learning for 2021-2022 School Year**

### ***Local School Systems Urged to Follow Maryland Department of Health and Maryland State Department of Education Covid-19 Guidance; MSDE Launches Social Media Campaign with Hashtags #MDBack2School #ForwardTogether***

**BALTIMORE, MD (September 9, 2021)** – With the opening of the four local school systems in Anne Arundel, Carroll, Harford and Prince George’s counties yesterday, all Maryland schools are now open for full-time, in-person learning. As Maryland public school systems open for the 2021-2022 school year, the majority of the State’s more than 882,500 students are returning to full-time, in-person instruction for the first time in 18 months.

Emphasizing the safe opening of schools with layered public health strategies in place, State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury greeted students, teachers and staff at Port Towns Elementary School in Prince George’s County yesterday. There he joined Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford, Bladensburg Mayor Takisha James, Prince George’s County CEO Dr. Monica Goldson, Principal Michelle Marek, State Board Member Lori Morrow, Student State Board Member Kevin Bokoum and additional state and local officials. Last week, Mr. Choudhury visited Loch Raven High School in Baltimore County and Armistead Gardens Elementary/ Middle in Baltimore City as part of school opening tours.

“It is great to see teachers and students back in the classroom and hard at work after a year of virtual and hybrid learning,” said Lt. Governor Rutherford. “I have witnessed students excited and ready to learn in the schools I have visited across the state. It is time for children, families, and teachers to reconnect in an environment designed for learning, and get on track for a successful school year.”

“Our goal at MSDE is to ensure schools are safe and remain open,” said State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury. “As we overcome the challenges of the pandemic, we will return stronger, better – delivering every child an excellent education, especially those who have been traditionally underserved.”

As Maryland schools open and move forward, the Maryland State Department of Education will be focusing on: accelerating student learning, supporting mental/social-emotional health and addressing

disrupted education. Through three rounds of federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds, MSDE will distribute a total of nearly \$2.7 billion to local school systems to support schools and students.

Last month, MSDE in partnership with the Maryland Department Health released updated [K-12 School and Child Care COVID-19 Guidance](#). The guidance focuses on taking layered public health strategies in alignment with the CDC to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and its variants. Strategies include indoor mask usage in schools for everyone age 2 and over, regardless of vaccination status and physical distancing. By providing this guidance, MSDE urges local school systems to do everything they can to keep schools safe for every student and staff member.

To ensure a safe learning environment for all Maryland students and prevent school closures, the Maryland State Board of Education passed a proposed emergency regulation to require masks inside public schools on August 26.

As part of continued COVID-19 recovery efforts, MSDE is conducting an early fall student assessment – the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) - as one of several strategies to identify how students are performing academically. The results will help educators better understand student needs, address disrupted education and accelerate learning opportunities for all students. While these results never stand alone, they will be used in combination with other assessments and class work to gauge overall student learning. More information can be found at: [www.marylandpublicschools.org/Pages/2021-Fall-Assessments.aspx](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Pages/2021-Fall-Assessments.aspx)

MSDE will highlight school openings and successes throughout the fall by launching a social media campaign with hashtag #MDBack2School. MSDE asks Maryland public school parents, educators and stakeholders to share their back to school stories by tagging @MdPublicSchools and using the #MDBack2School and #ForwardTogether hashtags.

School systems opening this week include: Anne Arundel, Carroll, Garrett, Harford, Kent, Prince George's, Wicomico and Worcester counties.

Maryland's local school systems opened on the following dates:

- August 18 – Frederick County
- August 25 – Allegany County
- August 30 – Baltimore City and County, Charles County, Dorchester County, Howard County, Montgomery County, Somerset County, St. Mary's County, Talbot County, Washington County, Queen Anne's County
- August 31 – Calvert County
- September 1- Caroline County, Cecil County
- September 7 – Garrett County, Kent County, Wicomico County, Worcester County
- September 8 – Anne Arundel County, Carroll County, Harford County, Prince George's County

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