Dear Brooke Grove Families, Feb. 12. 2021

Thank you for another great week at The Grove! Students and staff enjoyed their Valentine’s Day celebrations yesterday. I know many students did not want to leave the Zoom because they were having such a good time connecting with friends. Also, Monday was the 100th day of school! Our Kindergartners had a wonderful time celebrating with a dance party. Just think, 100 days ago, we were full of fear and anxiety for how distance learning was going to look, sound, and feel! We have come so far together. Students (and parents) can now navigate multiple online platforms, complete work on a touchscreen, and problem-solve camera and chromebook issues and so much more! We know that our students would not have been able to do it without assistance from families at home. Our staff has done an AMAZING job building positive relationships and classroom climates through a computer and learning new ways of teaching and learning! We have all come so far, and I would venture to say in many cases, grown closer together. Like our school t-shirts say, “Brooke Grove Strong, no matter the distance”.

I know that there is an increase in fear and anxiety again as we consider the Board of Education decision to reopen schools. As we plan for the return of students to the building, we are operating with some guiding principles.

* Ensure the safety of our students and staff
* Preserve the strength of our “BGES Online” program for those who remain virtual
* Provide meaningful, interactive, rigorous learning experiences for in-person students
* Maintain our cohesive, collaborative, positive relationships with our students, staff and families

In-person school will look very different from our memories of what school was like in 2019 and the early days of 2020. Students will be required to wear a mask at all times, except for when they eat. Social distancing of six feet will be required. Desks will be spread out, and our classrooms will hold 8-12 students, depending on the room. Staff will be maintaining social distancing as well, from students and from one another.

Students both virtual and in-person may be assigned to different teachers. We value our strong connections and relationships with our students, and will do what we can to maintain those. I know you and your students love your teacher, but your neighbor also loves his teacher. ALL of our teachers are lovable! Your student may get more than one teacher to love this year! If we do need to assign students to different teachers for instruction, we will find ways for students to also connect to their current teacher in order to maintain some stability and that positive relationship.

As you read more information about the instructional models and hear discussion in your neighborhood, social media, etc, I want to emphasize the powerful direct instruction that has been provided by our staff all year. There is a notion out there that direct instruction can not happen virtually, but I think we have all seen that our staff is providing powerful direct instruction online. If students are in-person, they may be accessing direct instruction still through the computer at times. They will also have face-to-face instruction with a teacher and sometimes a paraeducator, just as students would have during pre-COVID. Our models of instruction will vary from subject to subject throughout the day. We will remain flexible as we all work together to provide an excellent school experience for our students, no matter how they are accessing it.

During the week of February 22, all parents will receive a letter reminding them of the choice they made on the return to school survey.  Parents will also be given more specifics about what programming will look like for both students who re-enter the building and those who remain virtual.

There will be a brief window after these letters go out to notify me if you would like to change your choice.  At that time, the change back to virtual learning may be made easily.  Any change to in-person learning will be decided based on classroom capacity and some families may need to be placed on a wait list.

On March 15, students in grades K-3 who elected on the survey to return to in-person learning will be back at Brooke Grove. Third grade students are slated to be on a rotating A week/B week schedule, while K-2 students will report to school four days a week, every week.

On April 6, students in PreK, 4-5 will return to school. PreK students will choose in-person will report four days a week, every week. Our fourth and fifth graders will report on a rotating A week/B week schedule.

All students will remain virtual on Wednesdays.

Thank you for your time, dedication, and support. There will be more information coming next week.

Please read more details and information in the MCPS documents: [Community Message](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.montgomeryschoolsmd.org%2Fdepartments%2Fpublicinfo%2Fcommunity%2Fschool-year-2020-2021%2FCommunity-Update-20210209.html&data=04%7C01%7Ctammy_hertel%40mcpsmd.org%7C41cd5556c55b4eb7960108d8cfacd948%7Cddf755e9bcd64a5ea4727c378a78c6c7%7C1%7C0%7C637487688595996122%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=VnwpZdNG6ldapGNNIMbdmzvopvw%2BX%2BbPFFUTvPaB5vo%3D&reserved=0);  MCPS [Recovery Guide](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.montgomeryschoolsmd.org%2FuploadedFiles%2Freopening%2FSpringRecoveryGuide.pdf&data=04%7C01%7Ctammy_hertel%40mcpsmd.org%7C41cd5556c55b4eb7960108d8cfacd948%7Cddf755e9bcd64a5ea4727c378a78c6c7%7C1%7C0%7C637487688596006115%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=KYH8x1jAZwrI0wtAdX5i7ovRZotYxSrcmrwpGo2Brn4%3D&reserved=0).

Please remember that Monday is the President’s Day holiday and there will be no classes. I miss you and your children! Have a wonderful weekend of snow and Valentines and rest and relaxation.

With love and respect,

Jolynn Tarwater, Principal

Brooke Grove Elementary