



This morning **City Schools decided to delay the start of the hybrid option and open the 2020-21 school year virtually for all students**. This victory is a direct result of the thousands, yes thousands of emails, letters, and videos [sent to the school board](#) and posted on social media, as well as the conversations had with friends, colleagues and family members about our [#SafeNotSilenced campaign](#). BTU leadership is working hard every day, but **our real power comes from 7,000 engaged members taking collective action**. Our ability to protect human life also comes through solidarity and not allowing students, parents, educators, workers, and districts to be pitted against one another. That is why we partnered with the Maryland PTA and Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) to [jointly call for a virtual reopening](#). President Brown remains in communication with CUB, Local 44, and PSASA to ensure that all employees in Baltimore City Public Schools are working together for our common good.

The fight is far from over, the district's announcement included a commitment to moving towards a hybrid model with further announcements as soon as October 16th. While we are eager to return to school, we are not blind to the challenges of doing so during this pandemic. Any return to in-person learning must prioritize and guarantee the highest standards for health and safety. Any return must be guided by science and the expertise of educators. Any return to in-person learning also must have renewed commitments to funding and supports so schools are not just ready to open on a chosen date but are safe places to learn and work for the entire school year. Until the resources, PPE, robust health protocols are in place to protect human life, we will continue our [#SafeNotSilenced](#) campaign through at least the first semester.

District leadership and the school board did not create the challenging circumstances that make reopening so difficult. They are not the ones stalling the [HEROES Act](#) in the Senate that would provide our nation with the resources and protections necessary to avoid having to make lose/lose choices between our jobs and our lives. They are not the ones in state government who have [avoided their constitutional obligation to fully fund our public schools for decades](#), nor are they making budgetary decisions at the city level, like [investing only 14.4% of our operating budget into K-12 education compared to the state average of 36%](#). Yet **they are** the ones tasked with making decisions given this hard reality and the cumulative effects of underfunding and structural racism.

A perfect solution does not exist. A safe one does, and we appreciate the district's willingness to reevaluate their decisions based on feedback from the directly impacted.

We believe that it will take significantly more time to ensure a safe transition into a hybrid model, so we will continue calling for virtual instruction through at least the first semester. Here are some ways you can take action through the [#SafeNotSilent](#) campaign:

1. Plan to attend the July 28th school board meeting. Recruit students and parents [to give public testimony. Email your ideas and concerns to the school board.](#)
2. Attend the district's [town halls, focus groups, and apply to be interviewed 1-1.](#) Each member needs to be as educated as possible and we need as many member voices as possible amplified in these spaces.
3. Email Patrice Pilgrim-Wright, the chair of the [member organized COVID-19 Task Force](#) at bioprac19@yahoo.com to take part in their work.

Congratulations, and onward in solidarity,

-President Brown