



# Petal School District

Office of the Superintendent  
115 East Central Avenue  
P. O. Drawer 523  
Petal, MS 39465

August 5, 2020

Dear Petal Panthers:

Yesterday, August 4, 2020, Governor Tate Reeves issued Executive Order #1517 regarding the start of school for several counties adversely affected by the rise in COVID-19 cases. Per Governor Reeves, "The start of the 2020-2021 academic school year for public schools in Forrest County for grades seven through twelve shall be delayed until Monday, August 17, 2020". Therefore, a delay to the start of school for students enrolled at Petal High School and Petal Middle School was mandated until August 17th, 2020. In addition, part of the executive order included a mask mandate statewide including schools. While this was not the planned start we anticipated for our staff and students, this is the course we will take due to the mandate issued by Governor Reeves.

During the course of discussing Executive Order #1517, Governor Reeves and Dr. Dobbs referenced their recommendation for delaying the opening of the 2020-2021 academic year for all students until August 17, 2020. In consideration of the families of our community, we will extend the mandates within Executive Order #1517 to apply to all students enrolled within the Petal School District. Students at all Petal School District campuses will return to school at the expiration of Executive Order #1517 on August 17th, 2020. All campuses will begin the 2020-2021 academic year with a staggered start for students on August 17th and August 18th.

Since we have released our Return to School Plan, our goal all along is to have students and staff return to our campuses. We understand that students learn best when physically present inside our classrooms. However, we created this plan with the realization that many circumstances regarding COVID-19 are beyond our control. Our goal is to be flexible and respond in a manner that best benefits the staff, students, and community of Petal.

If you have any further questions, please utilize [info@petalschools.com](mailto:info@petalschools.com) or contact your child's school. Please continue to check our district website and Petal School District Social Media Outlets for further information and updates. Thank you for your understanding and continued support!

Thanks,

Matt Dillon, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools