

In accordance with the State of Maryland's directives, all school buildings in Baltimore City Public Schools ("City Schools") are closed for students. City Schools has already taken drastic actions to combat the effects of the coronavirus and protect our students, families, and employees during this unprecedented time, such as cancelling all district- and school-sponsored out-of-state and international travel through June 15, 2020, and operating emergency food service programs at multiple sites where students can receive grab-and-go free breakfast and lunch meals. Also, City Schools is exploring a variety of distance-learning methods for students, with the goal of continuing their education and keeping them connected personally to their school communities during the period when school buildings are closed.

For the safety of students and staff during this closure period, any research activities involving in-person student or staff contact, or school-based visits are not permitted. Modifications to studies can be submitted through our IRB Manager platform in the event a researcher would like to amend a study to utilize virtual or telephone contact in place of the previous research plan. Such modifications must include:

1. Revised parental consent and student assent procedures and forms that detail the new data collection.
2. Protocol revisions that include details on any software used to host virtual meetings or recordings. Conditions for any virtual data collection should be set to avoid capturing details of participants' home or family life (off screen conversations, family members in background, etc.).
3. Details of any revisions to data collection instruments such as surveys or assessments.
4. Revised principal letter that communicates the changes being made to the study.
5. Protocol revisions to include information on how any virtual modifications will ensure equitable access to participation given some students have challenges with access to technology and the Internet.

In addition, City Schools IRB will remain operational during this period. The IRB members are working remotely, and IRB meetings are being held virtually in accordance to the IRB meeting calendar posted on the City Schools website. All OAA research email addresses and phones will continue to be monitored with the same frequency. This website will remain the best source of information during this time. Please plan to check back often for updates.

If you have any questions about this message, please reach out to oaaresearch@bcps.k12.md.us. Thank you for your continuing partnership with City Schools, and we appreciate your understanding and patience during this difficult time.