

Dear Parents,

We are writing to explain the extraordinary action that the Teachers Association of Baltimore County (TABCO) took last week to ensure all students have access to learning whether they are in schools or learning online.

These past two weeks have been the final straw. After more than one year of virtual education, BCPS has not prepared enough to make sure that we could deliver hybrid education effectively, efficiently, and equitably. Many, if not all students in the buildings and at home, experienced the internet failures of the last two weeks.

Beginning April 22, we will continue to give 110% during the school day by teaching both virtually and in-person, by grading work, by meeting with students and parents, by completing paperwork, and by planning lessons that meet the needs of our diverse learners. We will NOT, however, continue to work the extensive unpaid overtime to attempt to fix the problems created by BCPS or left unaddressed by them.

Like you, we are fed up with the disrespectful way in which students, parents, teachers, and staff have been treated by BCPS during this pandemic. While BCPS says “we are all in it together,” the school system's continued failure to plan has forced teachers to both do our jobs and fill the gaps these failures created.

We recognize the incredible strain that parents and students are under during the pandemic. We understand it, because we are living it too-many of us have children who attend BCPS schools as well. We can't wait until it is safe to be back in the classroom in a real way with ALL of our students. Until then, we will continue to do our best to provide a quality education and any support we can to you and your children.

We have been working behind the scenes to do everything we can during this tumultuous time. We have met with kids before and after school-sometimes scheduling meetings with students late in the evening and on weekends. We have transformed our lesson plans over and over as the district has changed their plans again and again. We have had to learn to provide IT support and troubleshoot technical and logistical problems to help our students--as we know you have, too. We have worked late into the evenings, on weekends and holidays because of our dedication to our BCPS children—often at the cost of neglecting our own families.

Educators and staff can no longer continue to be the glue that holds the broken pieces in place. Last Tuesday, educators from schools across Baltimore County voted to end our unpaid volunteer hours until BCPS fixes its wireless internet, which is what allows all students to access learning. We are also asking that BCPS rescind letters exessing teachers, fix its problems with data breaches, and take other steps to protect employee information security.

Please know that we do not take this action lightly. We know that it will impact students, including our own children. We do it because we no longer have faith that the administration will act in the best interest of students and staff without our action. We do this because we cannot effectively teach our BCPS children in the current situation. Under state law, we are prohibited from striking. The strongest stand we can take is being there for your children during the school day, while refusing to go above and beyond any longer. We are taking a stand to advocate for the rights of all students to an excellent, equitable public education.

We ask that you call the BCPS administration at 443-809-4554 and demand that they do what is best for our children by working with educators to address the need for improvements in system-wide infrastructure to support the new hybrid learning model for all students, as well as provide immediate resources to alleviate their current technological failures, so that educators can get back to teaching and caring for all of our BCPS children. We will be demonstrating and taking further actions to pressure BCPS to start respecting families and staff. If you would like to find out more about that, email Cindy Sexton, TABCO President, at csexton@mseanea.org or TABCO Executive Director Glen Galante at ggalante@mseanea.org or call him at 410-703-3173 x225.

Sincerely,

TABCO