

# The Crossroads School

# Student Handbook

*Choose Your Path*

2020-2021

*Revised 06/15/2020*

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## **Vision**

The Crossroads School's vision is to create a joyful space for children to become independent thinkers, explorers, competitive students, and to achieve success.

## **Mission**

The Crossroads School creates the space for children to evolve as individuals and as a community through urgency, rigor, expectations, and kindness.

## **The 5 Promises**

Commitment to Quality

Contribution

Perseverance

Honor and Integrity

No Excuses

Dear Crossroads' Families,

Welcome to Crossroads! We are honored that you've chosen to spend this time of your life with our school community. At Crossroads, you will find that we believe our job is to create a space for your child to become an independent thinker, a competitive student, and a kind human being. We hope your child's time with our community will be filled with joy, love, and unrelenting expectations of excellence.

Our community has been able to remain a special place because of our school and families' understanding of what we expect from each other. This handbook is our method of communicating our expectations for all aspects of life at Crossroads, both on and off campus.

Crossroads is more than a building and a campus. Crossroads is the belief that the children and families who have chosen to attend our school have done so because they believe in themselves and their ability to exceed all expectations.

It is our pleasure to welcome you all to the new school year. We can't wait to see what each of you can do.

Sincerely,

Matthew Ebert  
Principal

**The Crossroads' School + Family Compact**

*By enrolling at Crossroads, we agree to live up to the expectations set forth by Crossroads.*

**Family**

1. I will ensure that a family representative will be present at all Student / Family Conferences.
2. I understand that my child is to attend school each day, unless there is an extenuating circumstance. I understand that if my child misses or is tardy for 5 or more school days, it may result in the loss of privileges, up to and including, field trips, enrichment activities, after school programming, end of the year trips, and the Crossroads' Gateway ceremony. Consistent absences may also result in Truancy Court.
3. I understand that any failure to comply with Crossroads' staff expectations or directions may result in the loss of privileges, up to and including, field trips, enrichment activities, after school programming, end of the year trips and, the Crossroads' Gateway ceremony.

**Student**

1. I understand that I am to attend school each day, unless I am physically unable or have an extenuating circumstance. I understand that if I miss or am tardy for 5 or more school days, it may result in the loss of privileges, up to and including, field trips, enrichment activities, after school programming, end of the year trips, and the Crossroads' Gateway ceremony. Consistent absences may also result in Truancy Court.
2. I understand that any failure to comply with Crossroads' expectations or staff directions may result in the loss of privileges, up to and including, field trips, enrichment activities, after school programming, end of the year trips and, the Crossroads' Gateway ceremony.
3. I understand that I am expected to show Honor and Integrity by telling the truth at all times. I shall be honest in all academic and non-academic situations and am aware that dishonesty may result in the loss of privileges, up to and including, field trips, enrichment activities, after school programming, end of the year trips, and the Crossroads' Gateway ceremony.

## **Our Grading System**

Dear Crossroads' Families,

This year, Crossroads will continue to implement Standards Based Grading. We believe that this system of grading allows both your child, your child's teachers, and you, a clearer understanding of what skills have been mastered and where skills are still being developed.

In transitioning to Standards Based Grading, you will find that grades, progress reports, and even assignments may look different. You may see that your child has mastered many more skills than you ever knew or you may find that your child isn't having the academic success you thought. Regardless of where you find yourself on this spectrum, Crossroads will be there along with you.

We want your children to succeed because they are our children too. We want them to thrive in the most prestigious high schools and beyond. We want them to know that they can master any challenge through perseverance and commitment to quality.

We will message this change consistently and clearly to our children. You will receive a lot of information throughout this year repeating how this system works. We recognize that all change is difficult and that you will most likely have many questions during this transition. We will be available and open to answer all of them. We are in this together.

We are excited by our transition to Standards Based Grading and thank you for trusting us with your children.

Thank you for choosing Crossroads.

Sincerely,  
Your Crossroads Team

## Frequently Asked Questions on Standards Based Grading

### How are grades scored?

Standard Level	Grade	%	GPA	Notes
Exceeding	A+	100	3.9+	student has completed proficient work on all course objectives and advanced work on some objectives.
Exceeding	A	95	3.7+	student has completed proficient work on all course objectives and advanced work on some objectives.
Proficient	B+	87	3.4+	student has completed proficient work on all course objectives.
Proficient	B	85	3+	student has completed proficient work on all course objectives.
Approaching	C+	77	2.7+	student has completed proficient work on the most important objectives, although not on all objectives.
Approaching	C	75	2+	student has completed proficient work on the most important objectives, although not on all objectives.
Developing	D	65	1+	student has completed proficient work on at least one-half of the course objectives but is missing some important objectives.
Does Not Understand	F	55	0	student has completed proficient work on fewer than one-half of the course objectives.

### What Matters and What Counts?

Children will still be expected to complete “Non-Graded” assignments. Children will still get feedback on “Non-Graded” assignments. The best analogies that we’ve heard to describe this new system is that, “You can’t succeed in the game if you don’t go to practice” and “You can’t perform well at your recital if you don’t practice your instrument.” Our children are expected to work hard because it will make them smarter human beings and create more opportunities for their respective futures.

Things That Matter	Things That Count
Classwork	Demonstrating Proficiency of Standards on Assessments (Quizzes, Exams, Projects, Presentations, Etc...)
Homework	
Organization	
Time Management	
Communication	
Participation	

### What if my child doesn’t do homework?

There is a good chance that they will fail. However, maybe your child has truly mastered the material in class and won’t be hurt on assessments if they don’t study. It’s unlikely, but it could happen. The real question is why isn’t your child prioritizing school work and what can we do to help them understand its importance.

### Can my child retake assessments to improve their grade?

Yes, to a point and with some rules. There is a retake form that children are to fill out and you are to sign to show that your child has worked hard to improve their previous score and deserves another try. Our goal is not for children to fail, it’s to push them to take their studies into their own hands.



### **What was wrong with the grading system that I had in school?**

Nothing. You're great! We've decided that we can do better for our children than we've done previously. We believe that Standards Based Grading will be the way to improve. In our view, school is supposed to teach children academics and important life skills that can translate into their lives in the future. To be a successful artist, politician, CEO, physician, athlete or any other profession, results count but preparation matters. Some of the kids who have entered Crossroads, come in having the highest grades but the lowest mastery of the material. Sure, they have organized notebooks, are well behaved in class, and quietly complete all their assignments -- but they don't know the material. We must prepare our children to be academically competitive.

### **Other Academic Expectations**

Crossroads will not accept any work late (except for students who have provisions within their IEP / 504 and who advocate for the need in advance)

Many assignments will be expected to be typed. Children will be notified about these assignments and will have access to the computer lab daily. These assignments will not be accepted if they are hand written.

Children will have phone numbers for staff members. Children are expected to call or text if they need assistance outside of school hours (up to a reasonable hour). Children may also schedule an appointment with staff members outside of school hours.

## Daily Operations (In Person)

School Phone: 410 276 4924

Matthew Ebert's Phone: 516 510 2521

### School Year, 2019-2020

- We follow the Baltimore City Public Schools Calendar (Attached).

### Bell Schedule

- 8:30 AM to 3:10 PM
- Gates open at 8AM for children to get breakfast or participate in morning activities.
- If you're going to be late to pick up your child at dismissal, contact the school.

### Afterschool Programming

- Children enrolled in after school activities are expected to be present from 3:10 PM to 4:10 PM.
- Sporting events may end later than 4:10 PM. You will have each coaches' contact information to ensure smooth communication.

### Transitions

- Children transition themselves freely to classes, recess, lunch, and the nurse.
- If a child is found to repeatedly fail to meet expectations during transitions, they will be given an individual transition plan.

### Lockers

- All children will be assigned a locker.
- Children are expected to stow their outerwear and school supplies in their locker.
- Lockers without a lock on them will be emptied and items placed in the lost and found.

### Uniform

*Stores that carry uniforms are attached on a separate flyer*

- Crossroads' Uniform Shirt
- Khaki pants, shorts, or skirt
- All outerwear should be emblazoned with the Crossroads' logo (sweatshirts, blazers, fleeces, etc...)

**Phones, Tablets, Laptops, and All Future Digital Devices**

- Children are allowed (and often expected) to use mobile devices in school for academic purposes.
- Children are expected and permitted to use websites and apps that pertain to academic purposes.
- If a staff member notes that a child is not meeting expectations with their mobile device, they will be told to turn it in and retrieve it at the end of the day.
- If a child is found to repeatedly fail to meet expectations with their mobile device, they will be told to turn it in to the administration at the beginning of each day and retrieve it at the end of the day.

**Nurse**

- The Nurse is located in the first building on our campus (The Mikulski Building).
- Children tell a staff member that they need to see the nurse. The student then transitions to the main office. The staff member then communicates to the main office who notifies the nurse that the child is coming over.

**Bathrooms / Water**

- Children are permitted to use the restrooms throughout the day.
- From 2:10 PM to 3:10 PM, the building restrooms are closed and children are able to access the restroom in the Nurses' Suite.
- If a child is found to repeatedly fail to meet expectations inside or outside of the building, they will be prescribed an individual transition plan.

**Independent Reading**

- Children are expected to complete 15 books independently each year (success is determined by the number of book journals that students complete).
- Children are expected to have an independent reading book with them at all times.

**Field Trips / Field Work**

- Children will have field trips / field work at least once per month.
- All children are expected to attend field trips / field work.
- If a child is found to repeatedly fail to meet expectations inside or outside of the building, they may not be eligible to attend field trips / field work and will have an alternative assignment provided.
- Financial Dues information will be provided at Orientation or in the Summer. We will collect dues on assigned dates. Families will be provided with receipts.

**Progress Reports**

- Progress Reports will come out every 3 weeks. Progress Report dates will be provided at the start of the year.
- Progress Reports will communicate a child's most current standards based grades.
- Families can also access their child's current grade through Baltimore City Schools' Parent Portal.

**Representing Crossroads Outside of Our Campus**

- Crossroads' kids are to adhere to Crossroads' expectations and the Baltimore City Public School's code of conduct on our campus, outside of our campus, and on the Internet.
- If a child is found to repeatedly fail to meet expectations inside or outside of the building, they may not be afforded all of the opportunities and privileges that Crossroads offers.

**Computer Lab / Study Hall**

- One class period of each day is devoted to Computer Lab / Study Hall. Children will be expected to complete computer based program assignments or to independently work on other assignments that will be due in the future.
- Teachers are available in the computer lab to reteach concepts and skills that students need.

**Enrichment and After School Programming**

- Enrichment programs are both during and after-school and are managed by our Turning the Corner Achievement Program.
- Programs will occur both during Computer Lab / Study Hall and After School.
- All children are encouraged to participate in these enrichment offerings.
- If children miss more than one session of their program, they may be unenrolled by the school administration.
- If children fail to meet expectations while participating in their program, they may be unenrolled by the school administration.

### The Crossroads Team

<b>Team Member</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Email</b>
Mr. Sweat	7th / 8th Math Teacher	msweat@thecrossroadsschool.org
Mrs. Mitchell	7th / 8th Humanities Teacher	lmitchell@thecrossroadsschool.org
Ms. Boone	One on One Specialist	mboone@thecrossroadsschool.org
Ms. Marshall	Special Educator	kmarshall@thecrossroadsschool.org
Mrs. Santiago	7th / 8th Science Teacher	gsantiago@thecrossroadsschool.org
Mr. Rhodes	Special Educator	trhodes@thecrossroadsschool.org
Mr. Carroll	6th / 7th Science Teacher	scarroll@thecrossroadsschool.org
Mrs. Kraft	6th / 7th Math Teacher	lkraft@thecrossroadsschool.org
Ms. Nevin	6th / 7th Humanities Teacher	mnevin@thecrossroadsschool.org
Mrs. Crispino	Special Educator	jcrispino@thecrossroadsschool.org
Ms. Hollinger	ESOL	jhollinger@thecrossroadsschool.org
Mr. Espinoza	Spanish Teacher	aespinoza@thecrossroadsschool.org
Mrs. Hunt	Art Teacher	jhunt@thecrossroadsschool.org
Ms. Fleming	Meditation and Mindfulness Teacher	efleming@thecrossroadsschool.org
Ms. Vick	Dean	nshipman-vick@thecrossroadsschool.org
Mrs. Cochol	Counselor	bcochol@thecrossroadsschool.org
Mr. Ebert	Principal	mebert@thecrossroadsschool.org
Ms. Davenport	Office Team	ddavenport@thecrossroadsschool.org
Ms. Bowen	Office Team	cbowen@thecrossroadsschool.org
Ms. Hammond	Life Coach	shammond@thecrossroadsschool.org
Ms. Faulkner	Food Services	Bfaulkner@bcps.k12.md.us

### Following Us

Twitter: [@xroadsschool](https://twitter.com/xroadsschool)

Facebook: [The Crossroads School](https://www.facebook.com/TheCrossroadsSchool)

Website: <https://thecrossroadsschool.wixsite.com/thecrossroadsschool>

## **Mentoring**

The Crossroads School is lucky enough to be working with The Living Classrooms Foundation (LCF), M&T Bank, Morgan Stanley, Constellation, Brown Advisory and other local businesses to provide a mentoring program for ALL of our students. This is a school wide program. Students will be partnered with adults from these companies as mentors. Our mentoring program has grown as to allow all students at the Crossroads School to be involved in the mentoring program.

The mentors and the students meet twice a month here at school. Mentors are screened and trained by their hiring company and LCF. Mentoring programs help kids to learn to express their feelings and to relate and develop relationships with their peers and other adults. Mentoring programs focus on helping youth improve scholastically, gain valuable workplace skills, and build competence and character. Research has shown that mentored youth often have better attitudes toward school and a reduction in substance abuse and other negative behaviors.

As part of the mentoring program, some of our mentors meet with their mentees outside of Crossroads for lunch or other community activities. If this is the case the mentor will contact you. Our mentors are very interested in keeping in contact with the students and their families along with attending some school functions such as Student Conferences.

## High School Choice

Baltimore City is a school choice district. There are no “Neighborhood” or “Zone” schools. All children must apply to high school (Public or Independent). Students are ranked by composite score for entrance into the top schools.

### Tier 1 Public Schools

- Baltimore Polytechnic (Poly)
- Baltimore City College (City)
- Western
- Dunbar

Composite Scores determine children’s high school choices. Composite Scores are comprised of 7th grade grades and the first quarter of 8th grade. Additionally, 7th Grade State Test Scores play a significant role.

### Composite Score Grade Equivalency Cut Scores

*The scores below reflect the last few years and do not necessarily reflect the current year.*

- Baltimore Polytechnic (Poly)
  - 91 average or above in 7th grade
- Baltimore City College (City)
  - 89 average or above in 7th grade
- Western
  - 84 average or above in 7th grade
- Dunbar
  - 85 average or above in 7th grade

### Charter Schools

Charter School acceptance is determined by lottery. All charter schools have a separate application outside of the Baltimore City School Choice Application.

### Independent or Faith Based Schools

Each year, a number of our families will apply to Independent or Faith Based Schools. Each of these schools require their own application process. If interested in pursuing an Independent School or Faith Based Institution, families should notify our team so that we may assist in the process.

## **Expectations**

If you ask a child at Crossroads what our “Discipline Policy” is, it’s most likely that you will get a blank stare in lieu of an answer. While Crossroads adheres to the Baltimore City Schools’ Code of Conduct, our community prides itself on meeting and exceeding expectations rather than consequences. Crossroads expects children to live up to the independence, freedom, and privilege that they are given at our school.

Crossroads works to protect the safety and atmosphere of our learning community above all else. We consider the disruption of our learning community to be a serious offense as it jeopardizes our children’s academic success. If a child fails to meet the expectations of the community, Crossroads in collaboration with our families, works to provide meaningful next steps as a restorative learning opportunity. While we work to avoid punitive acts like suspension, administrative transfer, and expulsion -- we will avail ourselves of these if an action is serious enough to warrant it. Crossroads is a school for children who choose to be with us. If a child or family is unable to agree to the expectations set forth by Crossroads, then they should engage with Baltimore City Public School’s Office of Enrollment and Choice.

Providing our young people with independence, freedom, and privilege means that they will make mistakes. Our job is to ensure that our children have a chance to learn from these mistakes and make better choices in the future. The job of a child at Crossroads is to ensure that they do not continue to repeat their mistakes.

At Crossroads, we can create a path for your children, it is up to them to choose it.



## Attendance

Children are expected to be in school, on time, each day. We will call the families of children who are absent each morning to check in. Children who are late are expected to call their families from the office upon arrival.

### *Bridging the Transportation Gap*

If transportation is an issue in getting to school and your family can notify Crossroads in a timely manner, we will work to bring your child to school that day.

### *Illness and Virtual Class*

If your child has a contagious illness, then they should not attend school. However, they are responsible for procuring their missed assignments and returning them to their teacher in a timely manner. Your family can notify Crossroads if your child is home ill and is well enough to video chat -- we will have your child be virtually present.

### *Medical Appointments*

We ask that you schedule your medical appointments in the early morning or afternoon so that your child may still attend part of the day.

### *Extenuating Circumstances*

We understand that there are times (weddings, funerals, graduations, medical leave, etc...) when families need to have their children out of school. We ask that you notify the school in a timely manner so that we can prepare assignments for your child to complete so that they remain competitive with our community.

### *Consequences for Absenteeism*

Children who are absent or tardy 5 or more days may become ineligible to participate in ongoing and end of the year activities. This decision is left to the discretion of the school administration. (See School + Family Compact for more details)

## **Ridiculous Excuses We Have Heard That We Think Are Ridiculous**

*Didn't come to school because his legs were sore...*

*Didn't have a uniform...*

*Was tired....*

*Woke up late and didn't think it was worth it to come in for part of the day...*

**Schedules (In Person)**

Daily Schedule	
Gates Open	8 AM
School Begins	8:30 AM
School Ends	3:10 PM
After School Programs End	4:10

2 Hour Delay Schedule	
<i>Breakfast is not provided on 2 Hour Delay Days</i>	
Gates Open	10:30 AM
School Begins	10:30 AM
School Ends	3:10 PM
After School Programs End	4:10

Early Release Schedule	
Gates Open	8 AM
School Begins	8:30 AM
School Ends	12:10 PM
<i>Lunch is "To-Go" and provided upon dismissal on Early Release Days</i>	