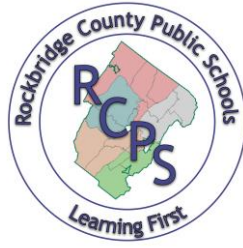


Phillip Thompson, Ed.D.
Division Superintendent



Haywood Hand, M.Ed.
Assistant Superintendent

June 17, 2020

To the Rockbridge County Community,

As you are aware, on June 9, 2020, Rockbridge County Public Schools (RCPS) received guidance from Governor Northam, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and the Virginia Department of Education on how schools will be permitted to open for the 2020-2021 school year. The offered guidance placed a heavy emphasis on social distancing and continuing to take other protective measures against the spread of COVID-19.

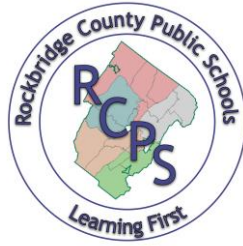
RCPS is currently considering many options for our return to school while adhering to the guidelines set forth last week. In early discussions about the complexity involved in keeping with proper safety protocols, it became apparent that our adopted calendar for the 2020-2021 school year would no longer meet our current educational and safety needs.

At a special called meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board this morning, the Board approved amendments to our calendar for the upcoming school year. With this approval, the largest change is a delay in the first student day from August 12, to August 31, 2020. Realizing the impact this change will have on you and your family, our goal is to give you as much notice as possible regarding when school will open for the new year. The newly adopted calendar for the 2020-2021 school year can be found on our website (www.rockbridge.k12.va.us) as well as our other social media sites.

There is no doubt that this opening of school will be different from any previous first-day experience. There will be extreme challenges to how most students are accustomed to learning, and how most teachers are accustomed to teaching. By delaying the start of the school year we will be extending the preparation time we have to address all of these challenges. As we work to discover and plan how to be successful, administrators will be working with groups of teachers, parents, and others to help shape the plan for what school will look like when students return in the fall.

We expect online learning to continue to be an integral part of the instructional process. This new shift in educational thinking will require more preparation time for all of us, and these extra few weeks to prepare for the return of students will be essential. This extra time will also allow for proper collaboration, the gathering of health supplies, and the deep cleaning of our school buildings. In short, this extended preparation time will help prepare our teachers and students for a successful opening of the school year.

Phillip Thompson, Ed.D.
Division Superintendent



Haywood Hand, M.Ed.
Assistant Superintendent

As we recently completed what was a challenging end of the 2019-2020 school year, we would like to thank all of our students, parents, teachers, support staff, administrators, and community members for their patience and perseverance.

There are many logistics to consider and we will continue to work through the possible scenarios to meet the needs of our students and staff. Please know that any plan we implement will adhere to the VDH guidance and procedures to ensure the safety of our students and staff. Your continued support, flexibility, and dedication are needed now more than ever as we embark on a new and unique 2020-2021 school year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Phillip Thompson'.

Phillip Thompson
Division Superintendent