



Dulles Schools Newsletter

Dulles Schools Newsletter 22nd Edition
November 2020



Jeff Morse
Dulles District Representative
Loudoun County School Board

Welcome to the Dulles Schools Newsletter. In this edition, we discuss the departure of our Superintendent; arrival of new school administrators; approval of the Hybrid/Concurrent Teaching Plan; upcoming parent survey, ongoing elementary school attendance zone changes, LCPS accolades, and special events.

To be added to the electronic distribution list, please contact me via email:

Jeff.Morse@lcps.org

Important Dates:

November 16 th	Virtual Town Hall Discussions on Boundary Zone Changes (Cohost with School Board Representative Ian Serotkin) –Virtual - Please see link below
November 17 th	School Board Attendance Zone Work Session- Admin Building
November 20 th	Parent Preference Questionnaires Due to LCPS by 8:00 pm
December 1 st	School Board General Meeting & Review of Attendance Zone Recommendations- Admin Building
December 1 st	Hybrid Learning Model starts for grades 3-5
December 7 th	Staff Briefing & School Board Attendance Zone Public Hearing Admin Building
December 15 th	School Board General Meeting & Adoption of Elementary School Attendance Zones- Admin Building
January 21 st 2021	Hybrid/concurrent Learning Model starts for grades 6-12

Superintendent Named Sole Finalist for Texas Division Superintendent Vacancy

On November 9, 2020, Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) Superintendent Dr. Eric Williams was named as the sole finalist for Superintendent of the Clear Creek Independent School District (CCISD), a district serving 42,000 students in the Houston, Texas, metropolitan

area. The live announcement capped a nationwide search. In compliance with Texas law, the CCISD Board of Trustees must wait a minimum of 21 days from making the sole finalist announcement to making the appointment official. No start date for Dr. Williams in CCISD has been announced. The School Board has already begun the effort to identify an Interim Superintendent, to be followed by a national search for a permanent replacement.

More details are available at:

<https://www.lcps.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=319391&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=397689&PageID=234892>

A letter from the School Board to the Loudoun Community

The School Board penned a letter to the community following the announcement of Dr. Williams intention resign as Superintendent of LCPS and to accept a position in Clear Creek ISD. In it, we reassured the community that LCPS will continue to focus on delivering equitable, caring, and engaging learning experiences to each of our students. The letter can be found at:

<https://www.lcps.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=319391&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=397713&PageID=234892>

Second Semester Return to Learning Questionnaire Released

This week, LCPS released a questionnaire to all parents regarding their preferred method of delivery for their children. The choices are hybrid (2 days per week in the classrooms, 2 days remote) or Remote delivery (either in the current remote delivery model or concurrent teaching model). Both models hold Monday as a planning day with minimal synchronous engagement. Concurrent teaching involves simultaneous delivery of both in-classroom and remote delivery (remote delivery in this case differs from current remote delivery in that teachers are typically in a classroom engaging both sets of students). The survey is due back to LCPS no later than 20 November.

Mrs. Mathurin Joins Mercer Leadership

Mrs. Laura Mathurin, a Mercer teacher, is an established leader within our school community, previously serving as an English instructor and school-based PBIS coach. Her instructional knowledge and dedication to Mercer students has allowed her to settle into her new role as a Dean. She is an exceptional addition to our leadership team, and we are looking forward to seeing all that she will accomplish as a new leader.



Mercer's Mrs. Mathurin

LCPS COVID-19 CASE DATA Dashboard Created

To help track the cases of COVID 19 and its impacts on our School Division, LCPS has created a Case Data Dashboard. The dashboard, found on the LCPS website front page, contains data related to both students and staff members, and includes two measurements provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Although not proscriptive, the data helps the community better understand trends in the spread of COVID. These trends provide data that will also help the Division make decisions on school closures, whether it be within a classroom, a school, or the entire division. Here is a link to the page:

<https://www.lcps.org/Page/234565>

School Board Approves Hybrid/Concurrent Teaching Return to School Plan

Tuesday night, the School Board voted unanimously to approve a hybrid/concurrent learning plan for all students. The plan adds to current hybrid classes offered to K-2 students, includes hybrid teaching for grades 3-5 beginning December 1st, and hybrid/concurrent teaching for grades 6-12 starting January 21st. Elementary school students who selected hybrid last summer will be attending live instruction in class twice a week. All K-12 students who request hybrid on the newly released survey will be offered two day, in-class instruction beginning January 21st. Families who chose distance learning will receive distance learning or concurrent learning for the remainder of the academic year. The plans will be continuously updated to incorporate lessons learned from the Loudoun classroom simulations and pilots currently being held in several of our schools.

A link to the current plan, continuously updated, can be found at:

<https://www.lcps.org/ReturnToSchool2020>

Freedom High School one of 16 schools in Virginia to Offer African American History Course

Governor Ralph Northam announced that students in 16 Virginia school divisions will be able to increase their understanding of African American history by participating in a new high school-level elective course this academic year. Freedom High School was one of the 16 selected statewide.

The full-credit course surveys African American history from precolonial Africa through today. It introduces students to key concepts in African American history, from early beginnings in Africa through the transatlantic slave trade, the Civil War, Emancipation, Reconstruction, the Civil Rights era and to the present. Students will learn about African American voices, including many not traditionally highlighted, and their contributions to the story of Virginia and America.

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/all-releases/2020/august/headline-860129-en.html>

State Superintendent Waives School Accreditation for 2021-2022

Superintendent of Public Instruction James Lane exercised emergency authority granted to him by the 2020 General Assembly to waive annual school accreditation for the 2021-2022 academic year. Schools will be assigned a rating of “Accreditation Waived,” the same rating assigned schools for 2020-2021 under a waiver issued in April.

Accreditation ratings are based on performance during the previous school year. The statewide closure of schools in March in response to the coronavirus pandemic resulted in the cancellation of spring Standards of Learning testing. Student performance on SOL tests in English, mathematics and science are key metrics under the state Board of Education’s school accreditation standards.

Without spring 2020 SOL results, there is insufficient data for the Virginia Department of Education to calculate accreditation ratings for the 2020-2021 school year. And because year-to-year growth in English and growth in mathematics are also accreditation metrics, VDOE won’t have sufficient data to calculate ratings for 2021-2022 either, because even if students are able to take tests next spring, the department won’t have baseline data from 2019-2020 for measuring growth.

All LCPS School have received State Accreditation for the last 3 years.

Freedom Sets Up Virtual Thanksgiving Day Eagle Trot to Benefit Ryan Bartel Foundation and Freedom Athletics

Freedom High School is teaming up with the Ryan Bartel Foundation to host a virtual 5k race, the Thanksgiving Day Eagle Trot. Funds raised will go to the FEABC and The Ryan Bartel Foundation. Sign up is located at:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/SouthRiding/FEABCThanksgivingEagleTrot>

VHSL receives Governor's Approval to Begin Sports Season

With winter sports season imminent, several amendments were made to Governor Northam's Executive Order, including:

- Indoor and outdoor recreational sports are permitted as long as the total number of attendees doesn't exceed the lesser of 250 people or 50% of the venue's occupancy load.
- Races or marathons can have up to 1,000 participants, provided that staggered starts separate runners into groups of 250 or less.
- Screenings of coaches, officials, staff and players for COVID-19 are required before admission to a venue.
- Earlier guidance said participants in any sport should maintain 10 feet of physical distance where practicable. That is not in the amended order, although the state's Phase Three guidelines recommend that at least 6 feet of distance should be maintained for most settings.

Among the guidelines, there "should be no hugging, high-fives, handshakes or fist bumps," and pregame and postgame handshakes are eliminated. LCPS must follow VHSL guidelines, but at the next General School Board meeting in December, a proposal to address allowing parents/family members to be live spectators is anticipated.

Full details can be found at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cp1f3t2upN4yd4ahtfTyM29yYkiovcHj/view>

Dulles South Elementary School Attendance Zone Changes In Progress

With the fall 2021 opening of Hovatter Elementary adjacent to Lightridge High School on Braddock Rd, attendance areas for Elementary Schools in the Dulles South Area are being updated. This process includes several work sessions and public hearings before the final boundary plan is adopted. Schools that could be affected:

Aldie
Arcola
Buffalo Trail
Cardinal Ridge
Creighton's Corner
Goshen Post
Hutchison Farm
Legacy
Liberty
Little River
Madison's Trust
Pinebrook
Rosa Lee Carter
Sycolin.

Review and Hearings include:

Monday November 16th Virtual Town Hall on School Attendance Zones with Blue Ridge Representative Ian Serotkin (see link below)

Tuesday November 17th Work Session

Tuesday December 1st School Board Review of Attendance Zone Recommendations

Monday December 7th Staff Briefing and School Board Attendance Zone Public Hearing

Tuesday December 15th school Board Adoption of Elementary School Attendance Zones

Here's the link to the Virtual Dulles South Elementary Schools Attendance Zone town hall meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83044313010?pwd=cTR4aGtteTQyTWJZUEU2L1A0eitoUT09>

Originally, the Attendance Zone Changes were to include another new Elementary School opening. However, it was determined that Elaine E. Thompson Elementary located in Arcola will not open until Fall of 2022, so the attendance zone process for that school has been delayed to next fall. For this reason, it is unlikely that attendance zones for Sycolin, Rosa Lee Carter, Legacy and Creighton's Corner will change this year.

These past nine months have been incredibly stressful on every member of our community. Although opinions differ in how best to support our public schools, I have no doubt that each Board Member, Senior Administrator, School Administrator, and especially teacher/assistant are doing their best to respond to our children's needs. Never have our educators been more valued, nor have we ever expected more from them. And they are delivering with dedication, commitment, and concern for each child. Hiring an Interim Superintendent and beginning a nation-wide search for Dr. Williams' permanent replacement will be minimally disruptive: we are focused on delivery of quality education.

I need to address social media. For many, it has become a sickness, where we seek echo chambers to affirm our own philosophy and disparage those with whom we don't agree. We are creating "echo chambers" where the only facts we hear are those that support our case. Step back from social media, and search for information on official sites, such as LCPS.org.

When struggling with school based decisions, it is always best to reach out to the teachers/counselors first. If you are faced with a District Issue, reach out to staff through our LCPS website. And if you are not receiving a timely or acceptable response, reach out to the School Board.

Finally, above all, treat our employees with respect and compassion. They could not be working any harder to serve our families. Many parents are experiencing first-hand how difficult a teacher's job is. I will be supporting salary adjustments, including the pay adjustments approved last year but frozen due to COVID concerns, to ensure they are appropriately compensated and retained.

I can be reached at Jeff.Morse@lcps.org, and the full board can be reached at lcsb@lcps.org

Yours in Public Service,

Jeff Morse

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Loudoun County School Board
Jeff.Morse@lcps.org