



## **Frequently Asked Questions about Independence High School**

As we have been meeting with students and parents, understandably we have been asked a myriad of questions. Below I have compiled some of the more frequently occurring ones in order to help prospective families who might be visiting our website. I will publish updated versions of this document as needed.—John Gabriel, Principal

### **Will Independence students be issued Chromebooks?**

*Yes, Independence High School is slated to open as a 1:1 school, which means that every student will be issued a Chromebook.*

### **Will Independence field varsity teams?**

*Absolutely! There is nothing precluding us from fielding varsity teams in every sport. In fact, if you look at the schools that have opened around the county over the past 10 years, the overwhelming majority of them had varsity sports. Some people might be confused because we likely won't open with a senior class; however, that does not mean we won't have varsity sports. A school does not need seniors to field varsity teams.*

### **What is the athletic classification for Independence High School?**

*Independence is opening as a 3A school. Virginia has six classifications which are based on a school's size. For example, Rock Ridge is 5A because of its student enrollment (2,188). Because of our projected enrollment (about 1,000 students) we will be 3A. What that means is for the most part, we will play schools of a similar size in order to have a level playing field.*

### **Will Independence have a theater program? If so, who will be the teacher/director?**

*Brambleton has a history of having strong theater talent, so we are excited for our theater program! We will have theater, so students just need to select those classes when they do course registration in the winter. Unfortunately, we are unable to say who our theater teacher is at this time as positions such as that can't be advertised until mid-year. Once we have someone in place, we will be sure to offer an opportunity for students and parents to meet the candidate.*

### **Will Independence have a marching band?**

*Similar to the above, we are aware of the fine arts talent and interest in our attendance zone. So we will have a band (and chorus, etc.), but we cannot advertise and hire for these positions until mid-year. Once we do have a teacher/director in place, we will be sure to announce him/her and provide an opportunity for students and parents to meet him/her.*

**Will students be able allowed to carry backpacks?**

*Yes, students can carry backpacks in between classes.*

**Will the school have lockers?**

*Yes, the school will have lockers available for students. This also includes ADA lockers for students who have unique needs.*

**What sports will Independence have?**

*Independence will have every sport: cross country, cheer, volleyball, football, gymnastics, golf, field hockey, wrestling, basketball, swim, indoor track (tier 2 sport), softball, baseball, lacrosse, track, soccer, and tennis. We have also been asked about crew, and it is possible to have it but it functions differently than the other sports (it is a tier 3 sport)*

**When will coaches be hired?**

*We intend to have our fall coaches announced in December with an opportunity to meet them at that time. Typically, interviews for this season are done at the conclusion of said season. We will be posting winter and spring positions around February and depending on the status of the season, we will announce them as soon as possible.*

**When will teams practice?**

*It is difficult to say at this time. Practice schedules are created based on space and coach availability.*

**For students who will have the choice to attend Independence (rising juniors) is there an advantage in choosing to attend?**

*Yes, there is! Having already opened a new high school, I recall that many of Freedom's rising juniors came over to John Champe because there were more opportunities for them: with a smaller student body, there are more chances for leadership positions, opportunities to start on a varsity sport, and so on. We sometimes take opening a new school for granted, but it really is a unique opportunity that a student could put on their college application if they became school leaders and had a hand in shaping the traditions and culture of a school. Many seniors have used this as an opportunity for their college application essay or personal statement, which sets them apart from students in other high schools. Lastly, the rising juniors would be the upper class for two years in a row. They would also be the first graduating class, which from my experience is something very special.*

**Can students attend Independence on special permission?**

*Yes, students are able to attend on special permission. The window to apply for special permission opens in April. However, students who come on special permission would not be able to participate in athletics for 365 days. Also, special permission students do not have access to LCPS transportation, so they would need to provide their own. To learn more about special permission, you can visit*

*<https://www.lcps.org/Page/76705>*

**What classes will Independence offer?**

*We will offer everything that is in the Loudoun County Program of Studies. The ability to actually run a class is always dependent on having students sign up for classes. So even in a large high school, some classes don't run because of low interest, even with a high population. If we have a situation where a student needs a particular class credit for graduation but cannot offer the class, there are ways to still enroll the student in the class: it could be taken virtually or the student could take a shuttle to a nearby school. These situations are rare, though.*

**What clubs will Independence have?**

*We will have the regular clubs and activities that other schools have. Additionally, students can request to start a club, which can be done by completing a form and having a sponsor. In the fall of 2019, we will also have a club fair for students to learn about clubs that might interest them.*

**Will students be able to apply to the Academies of Loudoun?**

*The fall application admissions window for 2019 has closed.*

**If students attend the Academies of Loudoun, will they be able to participate in athletics?**

*Yes. We are very sensitive to students' commitment to their academics, so to accommodate those students at the Academies, there will be an advertised shuttle departure time for athletes in the morning if they have practice.*