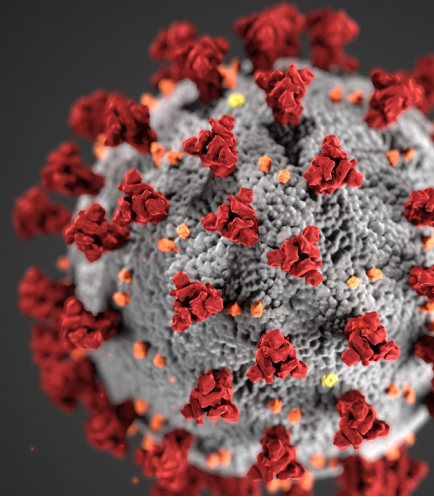




CORONAVIRUS COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

News to keep our school community up to date during the Coronavirus crisis



**Message from
Superintendent
Dr. Sharon I.
Byrdsong**



Welcome to the new school year unlike any other! Even during the midst of a pandemic, the excitement for teaching and learning still permeates throughout Norfolk Public Schools. During the last four weeks, we have already learned so much about our virtual learning format. And our teachers have truly been the heroes throughout this process, as they work tirelessly to ensure an engaging and supportive learning environment for our students.

Additionally, the involvement and support of our parents and guardians with their children's education is perhaps the most important factor in children's success. No doubt, this new school year will bring many challenges to overcome, but I assure you that we are here to help in any way we can!

We are staying connected with you by asking you to share your thoughts regarding your children's virtual learning experiences. Please see page 4 for the survey link that you can use to provide valuable insight to improve your children's experience. You will have more opportunities to provide feedback during the school year.

We are truly grateful for your partnership, patience, and flexibility to ensure a successful year for all students. Thank you!

NPS TO UPDATE SCHOOL BOARD ON PLAN FOR STUDENTS TO RETURN

On September 8, the students, teachers, and families of Norfolk Public Schools made history by beginning their school year in front of their laptops, iPads, and Chromebooks. The School Board voted to begin the school year virtually for the first nine weeks to ensure the health and safety of students and staff.

Since that first day, families, teachers, and students have been adjusting well to the new normal of virtual learning during a pandemic.

"I believe that our reopening of schools shows the magnitude of our talents, skills, knowledge, and abilities to do whatever it takes to succeed," said Superintendent Dr. Sharon I. Byrdsong. "The administration, teachers, and staff spent countless hours planning and implementing our school reopening. It is to their credit that our school reopening went so smoothly."

At the same time senior leaders were preparing for the virtual reopening, they were also discussing and planning for the

eventual return of students to in-person instruction.

This comprehensive plan will be presented, as scheduled, to the School Board on October 7th for the Board's discussion and possible decision regarding the return of students.

The logistics are extremely complicated for returning students and staff safely to buildings during a pandemic. And logistics for returning students represents just one piece of the decision-making puzzle.

Another big piece of the puzzle are the health metrics of the Norfolk community and surrounding areas. At the School Board Workshop on September 30th, Dr. Demetria Lindsay, Public Health Director (Norfolk and Virginia Beach), reviewed a variety of health metrics as well as discussed the trends of COVID-19 in the Norfolk community and in the region.

Families can watch a video of her detailed presentation by [clicking on this link](#).

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Plan to Return

Con't from page 1

Families are also encouraged to watch the School Board Meeting on October 7th in which the administration's plan will be presented and discussed.

To ensure that our families are quickly informed of any decisions, a special issue of the *Coronavirus Communications Update* newsletter will be published following the Board meeting that will report on any decisions and timeframe of the return of students to in-person instruction.



New Pandemic-EBT Benefits Now Available

All current students who have been learning virtually for at least five consecutive days are eligible to receive a P-EBT benefit this fall. Those who received P-EBT benefits this past spring or summer will be automatically receiving these new benefits. Names of newly eligible students have been submitted by NPS to receive benefits.

The Virginia P-EBT card has food assistance benefits loaded on it for use by families anywhere SNAP benefits are accepted. Participation in the program is voluntary.

Benefits will be issued by Virginia's Department of Social Services between September 30th and October 15th. The NPS Department of School Nutrition Services will not be issuing P-EBT cards.

Questions? Need more information? Please visit the [NPS School Nutrition Services webpage](#).

News for Families of Students with Disabilities

Families of students with disabilities are invited to participate in virtual workshops designed to provide parents/guardians with useful information and assistance in navigating your child's virtual instruction. All sessions will take place virtually via Zoom and be led by NPS staff. Registration for all sessions closes at 12 noon on the day prior to the scheduled event.



District-Wide Program Series

September 28th - October 28th; Mondays from 12 p.m. until 1 p.m. and Wednesdays from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m.

These workshops are designed for parents/guardians of children whose IEP team has determined that a majority of their needs are best met in a special education setting/classroom as their least restrictive environment. The district-wide program is composed of more restrictive classrooms for students of varying disability categories for which IEP teams have determined that the student requires more support in the special education setting. If your child is served primarily in the general education inclusion setting, then participating in parent workshops in the Inclusion Series (see below) may be more appropriate. Sessions will be led by NPS senior coordinators and teacher specialists. [See list of workshops, times, and registration details.](#)

Telepractice Series

September 22nd - October 29th; Tuesdays from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m. and Thursdays from 12 p.m. until 1 p.m.

These workshops are designed for parents/guardians of children who receive Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, and/or Physical Therapy, and are participating in telepractice during virtual learning. This series of telepractice workshops will provide useful information and will assist in navigating your child's virtual delivery of Speech, OT, and PT services. Sessions will be led by Candace Delpino, CCC-SLP, teacher specialist, and Kelly Orvin, PT, MHS, lead therapist for the OT and PT Department. [See list of workshops, times, and registration details.](#)

Inclusion Series

September 30th - October 29th; Wednesdays from 12 p.m. until 1 p.m. and Thursdays from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m.

These workshops are designed for parents/guardians of children who receive the majority of their special education services in the general education classrooms as a collaboration between the general and special education teachers. The Inclusion Series workshops are for parents of children of any disability category who participate in the general education setting and receive a majority of their special education support as a collaboration with the general education teachers/classrooms (inclusion). Sessions will be led by senior coordinators and teacher specialists. [See list of workshops, times, and registration details.](#)

For more news and information, please visit the [Learning Support-Special Education Services webpage](#).

Meal Program Expands to All Students at 34 Sites

Norfolk Public Schools is currently serving meals at no charge to children 18 and under. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has approved waivers for local school divisions and other federal meal program sponsors to extend the Summer Food Service Program to provide breakfast and lunch to children in the community free of charge through December 31, 2020. The waivers support access to nutritious meals while minimizing exposure to COVID-19. Snack and supper are also provided at no charge, using the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program. When the Summer Foodservice Program expires, NPS will continue offering free breakfast and free lunch to all students under the Community Eligibility Provision of the National School Lunch Program. Meal applications are no longer required.



Free meals for children 18 years old and under are distributed Monday through Friday from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m. at 34 meal distribution sites (see column on the right). This includes a hot meal for dinner, plus breakfast, lunch, and snack for the next day. Meals can be picked up by children or adults at any open site. To request a different pick-up time, please contact the School Nutrition Manager at your preferred site location. For those who cannot come every day, multiple days of food may be provided upon request.

Weekend meals have resumed and will be offered at all sites on Fridays when three days of food will be available for pick up. In addition, beginning on October 5th, a choice of entrees will be offered for lunch and dinner.

Pick-Up Locations for Meals

Elementary School Sites:

Bay View, Richard Bowling, Camp Allen, Chesterfield, Coleman Place, Crossroads, Fairlawn, Ingleside, Jacox, Larchmont, Larrymore, Lindenwood, Little Creek, Monroe, Ocean View, Oceanair, P.B. Young Sr., Sewells Point, Sherwood Forest, Southside STEM Academy at Campostella, St. Helena, Suburban Park, Tanners Creek, Tarrallton, W.H. Taylor, Tidewater Park, Willard

Middle School Sites:

Azalea Gardens
Lake Taylor School
Northside

High School Sites:

Booker T. Washington
Granby
Maury
Norview

Full-Day Child-Care Program Slots Still Available

Norfolk Public Schools is collaborating with child-care providers throughout the city to ensure parents/guardians have access to affordable child care during the virtual start of the 2020-2021 school year.

These low-cost, full-day programs are hosted in various school buildings throughout the city for essential workers and other parents/guardians who work during the day. Students are required to bring their mobile devices to ensure their learning continues during the day, and providers have been trained to assist students in logging on and accessing their work.

Please contact providers at the telephone number listed to find out where slots are still available. For more details, including cost of the program, visit the NPS [child-care program webpage](#).

Champions (804-931-9488)

Hours: Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Located at:

- Camp Allen Elementary (4-year-olds through 5th grade)
- Coleman Place Elementary (3-year-olds through 5th grade)
- Little Creek Elementary (4-year-olds through 5th grade)
- Richard Bowling Elementary (3-year-olds through 5th grade)

YMCA (757-622-9622 or www.ymcashr.org)

Hours: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. Located at:

- Granby Elementary
 - Ingleside Elementary
 - Larchmont Elementary
 - Larrymore Elementary
 - W.H. Taylor Elementary
 - Willard Elementary
- Ages: pre-k through 8th grade



[Watch our video on the child-care programs](#)

Boys and Girls Club of Southeast Virginia (757-472-3189)

Hours: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. Located at:

- Ruffner Academy
Ages: kindergarten through 12th grade

Southside Boys and Girls Club (757-389-6337)

Hours: Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Located at:

- Southside STEM Academy at Campostella
Ages: pre-k - 8th grade



Keep Up All the Great Virtual Learning!

Norfolk Public Schools' students and families are doing an amazing job with their virtual learning. While there are challenges with this pandemic-style learning, our teachers and principals stand ready to help! Here are a few tips and resources gathered from the Centers for Disease Control that may be helpful to your family.

Stay in touch with your child's school

- Review assignments from the school and help your child establish a reasonable pace for completing the work. You may need to assist your child with turning on devices, reading instructions, and typing answers.
- Communicate challenges to your child's teacher or principal. If you face technology or connectivity issues, or if your child is having a hard time completing assignments, let your child's teacher know right away.

Create a flexible schedule and routine for learning at home

- Have consistent bedtimes and get up at the same time, Monday through Friday.
- Structure the day for learning, free time, healthy meals and snacks, and physical activity.

Keep communication lines open

- Virtual learning at home is different for preschoolers, K-5, middle school students, and high school students. Talk to your child about expectations and how they are adjusting to being at home versus at school.
- Consider ways your child can stay connected with their friends without spending time in person.

Want more ideas for fun learning?

- Enjoy hands-on activities, like puzzles, painting, and drawing.
- Encourage children to build a fort from sheets or practice alphabetizing using kitchen spices.
- Practice handwriting and grammar by writing letters to family members. This is a great way to connect and limit face-to-face contact.
- Start a journal with your child to document this time and discuss the shared experience.
- Use audiobooks or see if your local library is hosting virtual or live-streamed reading events.

Help your child cope with stress

The COVID-19 pandemic can be stressful for both adults and children. [Learn more](#) about signs of stress in children, ways to support your child, and how to take care of your own mental health. The CDC has also developed several tools to help you care for your child's mental health and well-being. [COVID-19 Parental Resource Kit](#) offers tools to help you understand your child's social, emotional, and mental health challenges according to their age group and promote their well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. The [Essentials for Parenting Toddlers and preschoolers page](#) provides guidance on how to address common parenting challenges, and information on things you can do to build a positive, healthy relationship with your young children.

What Has Been Your Child's Virtual Learning Experience So Far? Tell Us!

Norfolk Public Schools is surveying parents/guardians to find out how their children's virtual learning experience is going so far. By taking this survey, parents/guardians will be able to share: how online learning is progressing; whether children are receiving the right amount of support and instruction needed to complete their assignments; how many hours a day children are actively participating in live class sessions; and other experiences.

Please access the [survey here](#) (choose English or Spanish) and complete it by October 7th. Thank you for providing this valuable feedback!

