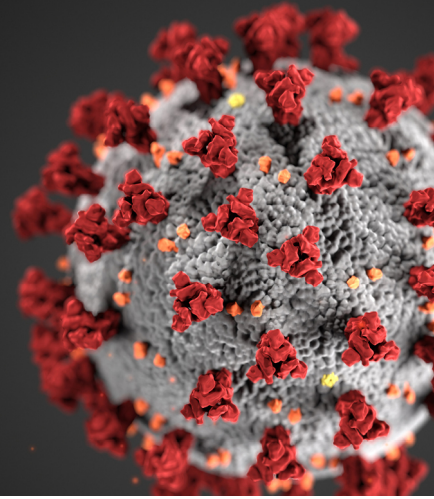




CORONAVIRUS COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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



Message from Superintendent Dr. Sharon I. Byrdsong



As weeks of school closure stretch ahead of us, nothing is more evident than the fact that we are all in this together! I'm heartened by our dedicated staff, committed parents, and inspiring students to face what I believe is one of the biggest challenges of our lifetime.

Like other school divisions around the state, Norfolk Public Schools is receiving guidance from the Virginia Department of Education regarding many academic decisions. As you will read here in our new newsletter devoted to covering the coronavirus issue, some decisions still need to be made.

Our school leaders are working tirelessly to sort these issues out, and we will communicate to families and students regarding our decisions as quickly as possible. I deeply appreciate your continued patience and support as we navigate these uncharted waters together!

GUIDANCE ANNOUNCED FOR EXTENDED SCHOOL CLOSURE

Norfolk Public Schools is committed to keeping families and staff informed promptly when decisions are made that impact teaching, learning, and school operations during the extended school closure. This newsletter covers many important topics for families and staff, so we encourage you to read it closely.

Schools' Office Hours

Beginning Tuesday, April 7, principals will be holding office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. to assist parents/guardians with enrolling new students, and picking up learning packets, medication or valuables. You will need to make an appointment with your child's principal via e-mail before reporting to the school. Principals' e-mail addresses are located on each school's website.

Teachers' Virtual Office Hours

Teachers are still required to hold virtual office hours from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., Monday through Friday for communicating with parents and students regarding learning activities.

We encourage parents/guardians and students to stay in touch with their teachers.

NPS' Learning in Place Plan

Learning in Place plans have been available both online and in paper form at the food distribution sites since March 18. We are working to develop the next phase of lessons for the weeks of April 6 through April 24. These plans will be available both online and in paper form by April 6. Parents/guardians should ensure that their children complete the activities outlined in the first set of Learning in Place plans and then continue with the next phase of plans.

It is imperative that students complete the Learning in Place plans. Guidance from the Virginia Department of Education, and our conscience as educators, tell us that learning must continue. As much as possible, our Learning in Place plans will provide the same level of pacing as if schools were in session.

When students return to school, there inevitably will be some review to ensure that all content is covered. However, teachers will structure their

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NPS' Learning in Place Plan, *con't*

lessons based on the belief that most students did their work during the closure, including the pacing of their review and introduction of new subject matter.

Parents/guardians should be committed to making sure that their children will not be behind academically when they resume next school year. The students who complete their Learning in Place assignments will be better positioned for progress during the next school year. Of course, teachers will provide remediation for students who need it; however, our goal is for students to move forward and recover from this closure as quickly as possible.

Serving Students with Disabilities

Student with disabilities will be provided with learning opportunities in the same manner as general education students through the NPS Learning in Place Plan and with the introduction of new instruction. In addition, case managers and related service providers will be contacting parents/guardians to discuss each child's individualized needs and to develop a temporary learning plan.

Case managers of students will be the primary point of contact with students and families. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to communicate with case managers and classroom teachers via e-mail. If your contact information has changed, please make sure that you reach out to your school's principal via e-mail or the Department of Learning Support (Special Education Services) at jrichardson1@nps.k12.va.us to provide updated information.

Summer School Option

NPS is currently working on a plan to award standard credits for students who were not able to receive the necessary instruction during the closure. Therefore, this may, for example, include summer school instruction. Additionally, please note that the plan will take into account how to best serve our students with disabilities and English language learners. Details regarding this plan will be provided when finalized.

Update on Graduation Requirements and Waivers

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has announced that some graduation requirements can be waived at the discretion of the local superintendent. Consequently, Superintendent Byrdsong will either waive these requirements or provide new instruction or pathways for meeting the 140-hour clock-hour requirement for those that can't be waived. These include:

- Students currently enrolled in a course for which they need a verified credit in order to graduate;
- Students who have previously been awarded standard credit but have not earned the associated verified credit;
- Students who have not completed the student-selected test; and
- Students who are currently enrolled in or have previously completed a course leading to a CTE credential necessary for a Standard Diploma but have not yet earned the credential;

Some credit-based graduation requirements are still provided for in the Code of Virginia. While these cannot be waived outright, these can be addressed by providing new instruction or pursuing alternative pathways to the 140-clock-hour requirement based on revised Board of Education's Emergency Guidelines for Local Alternatives for Awarding Standard Units of Credit (pending approval on April 2, 2020). These include:

- Students who have not completed a United States and Virginia history course;*
- Students who have not completed a fine or performing arts or career and technical education course;*
- Students in the second of sequential courses;* and
- Students who have not completed an economics and personal finance course.*

There are some requirements that will require General Assembly action to be waived. These are:

- Students who have not completed training in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and use of defibrillators, including hands-on practice of the skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation; and
- Students who have not completed a virtual course.

Students currently enrolled in a course for which standard credit is required should be awarded that credit if they were successfully completing the course as of March 13, 2020. For students who were not passing a class at the time of the school closure, the VDOE recommends that these students be provided with opportunities to demonstrate competency so that a standard credit may be awarded for graduation. Nothing in this guidance prevents a school division from requiring new instruction for these students, especially if a majority of the standards in any given course had not been completed.

Some students may not have been enrolled in all of the standard credits required for graduation. In these cases, school divisions may offer distance or remote course opportunities to help them graduate on time, so long as the student completes these extra courses.

Students may not have completed some of the graduation requirements listed with asterisks by March 13, 2020. Schools should make efforts to complete those requirements with students during the closure before using the waiver for the student.

Students enrolled in CTE courses that may have state licensing requirements established by regulatory boards have been provided with flexibility that will be included in the [COVID-19 FAQ](#) listed on the VDOE website and updated as additional information becomes available. This would include certain courses in trade and industrial education and health and medical sciences.

Secondary Education Updates



Advanced Placement (AP) Courses

The College Board is providing flexibility for the 2019-20 AP exam administration so that students will be able to take a 45-minute online exam at home. The topics and skills covered will be confined to what was taught in class in early March. Students will be able to choose between two different testing dates, which will be announced on April 3. NPS will communicate those dates once they are established.

Students will be able to take the exam on a computer, tablet, or smartphone, even submitting a photo of handwritten work. Students now have access to free, live, daily online AP review classes, delivered by AP teachers from across the country. The lessons will focus on reviewing the skills and concepts from the first 75 percent of the course. These classes are designed to be used alongside work provided by teachers. The classes will also be recorded and available on demand. Check the [College Board website](#) for the schedule of AP review classes.

If you need a mobile device or connectivity to the Internet, log in to your AP account and let the College Board know. Any student already registered for an exam can choose to cancel at no charge.

Dual Enrollment

Our dual enrollment program is a collaboration between Norfolk Public Schools and Tidewater Community College (TCC). Throughout the school year, these courses are taught by NPS and TCC instructors. During these unprecedented times, both institutions are working closely together to implement a continuity in learning plan in support of our NPS students. All related information will be communicated directly with our dual enrollment students, their families, and stakeholders.

Changes in International Baccalaureate Requirements

The International Baccalaureate Organization has made the following determinations:

- All IB examinations in May have been canceled;
- Students will still receive scores based on other IB assessments completed in each subject;
- The grades for each subject will depend on the internal assessment, the predicted grade from the teacher and an analysis of the history of exam scores and final scores from each subject from the past;
- NPS will provide all documents to the IBO for assessment at the end of April;
- French and Spanish students will need to complete their IB assessment through Zoom. Staff at Granby High are working on a schedule for this now and will communicate to students and families accordingly; and
- Any student unable to complete any final component will be able to retest in November.

Virtual Virginia Courses

Virtual Virginia will provide NPS students with updates regarding course work, assignments, and testing. Students should be prepared to continue with their AP courses as directed by their online teachers.

Students in Class of 2021 and Beyond Enrolled in HS Credit-Bearing Courses

The State Superintendent is requiring school divisions to award standard credit for high school credit-bearing courses only after ensuring that students have completed a majority of required standards, competencies, and objectives, including those that are essential for success in subsequent coursework. This process will be based on revised guidelines that will be issued by the Board of Education on the alternatives to the 140-clock-hour requirement.

However, please note that the Virginia Department of Education is requiring that NPS focus on required content that had not been taught as of March 13. Norfolk Public Schools will be developing learning modules that address the content that was missed prior to awarding standard credit.

Grading and Grade Point Averages

The Virginia Department of Education has given local school divisions the authority to determine grades and grade point averages. NPS will be working on a methodology to fairly calculate grades based on work previously completed and options for remediation and recovery. This plan will be communicated as soon as possible.

Proms and Graduation Ceremonies To Be Determined

NPS will make every effort to reschedule proms and graduation ceremonies, if at all possible, whenever the restrictions on large public gatherings are lifted. We hope these can take place during the summer months.

Spring Break Offers Opportunity for Families to Take a Breather

Norfolk Public Schools encourages families to spend time together over the scheduled Spring Break (April 13-17) to take a much needed breather from the daily stress of dealing with the impact of the coronavirus.

The Centers for Disease Control offers these helpful tips to reduce stress:

- Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and [share facts](#) about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- Limit your family’s exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- Try to keep up with regular routines. Create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well.

Food Distribution Will Continue Over Spring Break

NPS will continue to operate and distribute food at our food distribution sites located at designated schools during the Spring Break. The hours will remain Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the 12 school sites and the three additional school bus delivery sites through at least the end of the school year. The locations of sites are listed on the [NPS website](#).

Retrieving Medications and Valuable Personal Possessions

Students may have left personal possessions behind at school or medications may still be stored in the schools’ clinics. Many of our school staffs have worked with parents/guardians to help retrieve those items. However, some families may not have been able to do so.

Thus, beginning the week of April 6, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, all school buildings will be open from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. to retrieve items. Parents/guardians will need to e-mail their children’s building principals to make an appointment for picking up items.

Need to Enroll Your Child this School Year?

There may be some families who want to enroll their children in Norfolk Public Schools this year even during the closure because their children need to have access to Learning in Place plans, teachers, and the food distribution sites. Families can enroll their children by visiting the school their child is zoned to attend between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Tuesdays or Thursdays beginning April 7. Parents/Guardians must schedule an appointment through an e-mail communication with the building principal.

Parents/Guardians must complete a registration packet and submit it to the school. All required documentation must be provided at the time of enrollment: birth certificate, school entrance physical and immunization certificate, and expulsion statement, if applicable. Once these documents are submitted, staff will complete registration by the following week.

HELPFUL RESOURCES TO INFORM AND SUPPORT

Many Hampton Roads organizations are providing support and assistance to families during this challenging time:

Childcare

Essential employees can call 1-866-543-7852 to identify childcare options open to them thanks to EVMS Minus 9 to 5.

Non-Medical Assistance

Need assistance due to the coronavirus crisis? Contact United Way of South Hampton Roads. The United Way is coordinating an expansive network of nonprofit agencies to connect people to resources. Call the hotline at 757-858-7777 or online at unitedwayshr.org/coronavirus.

Keep Up with Information on the Coronavirus

Check out these trusted resources for keeping the public updated:

- Centers for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov>
- The World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int>
- Virginia Department of Health: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov>
- Virginia Department of Education: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/office/COVID-19.shtml