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Henry County Schools to Delay Start, Begin School Year Virtually

HENRY COUNTY, GA – Henry County Schools leaders have made the decision to delay the start of the school year until Monday, August 17, at which point all students will begin the year utilizing the district’s Remote Learning plan.

After extensive community engagement through town halls, focus groups, and a dedicated email channel, along with regular guidance from public health and government officials, board members made the formal decision to begin the year utilizing the previously announced Scenario 2 option that was developed and shared back in June. Under Scenario 2, all students will begin the year in a remote learning environment for an indefinite period of time until it is deemed safe for students and staff to return using appropriate preventive measures and safety protocols.

“We had been planning all along for two different scenarios to start the school year,” stated Superintendent Mary Elizabeth Davis. “We want to thank everyone for their completion of the learning option selection from July 8 through today, because it was our sincere hope to be able to provide an option under our Scenario 1 that allowed families the choice of returning to our campuses if they felt comfortable doing so. We know that kids learn best inside a traditional classroom. However, after extensive preparations, conversations, and reviewing the data and feedback from families and employees, we will be utilizing our Scenario 2 that articulated a virtual start to the school year for all families.”

Part of the planning that has been underway for remote learning involves enhancement of the experience that students, staff, and families participated in to conclude the 2019-20 school year. Grading, attendance, and participation with expectations for regular learning and participation, as well as growth, understanding, and mastery of content standards will be the model for all students.

District officials will begin to release information necessary for all families and employees to make proper plans for the delayed start to the school year. The delayed start by two weeks will allow for operational plans to be adjusted, including computing device distribution for Pre-K through 3rd-grade students needing technology for the new year. Additionally, there will be updates on virtual open house and transitional meetings for each of the district’s 53 schools and programs.

“We know this is not the ideal solution for everyone, and we did not make this decision lightly, but the health and wellbeing of all of our students, staff, and families are vitally important,” said Davis. “We are eager to get back to traditional learning in all of our buildings as that is where the majority of our students and staff thrive. With all the planning we have been doing over the past several months, we will be ready for that opportunity when it returns.”

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Families are encouraged to continue to use the district's Back-to-School webpage for the latest updates to our Frequently Asked Questions and additional information. Answers to key questions will be regularly updated and more information will be distributed from the district and schools to families around the remote start to the year.

Superintendent Davis urged the community to have confidence in the decisions that are being made by school officials, as they are done in collaboration with health experts and government officials.

"Our community should take comfort and feel confident in knowing that the greatest of care and concern goes into every decision we make to support our students, staff, and their families. These are the groups we work on behalf of each and every day."

For more information on Henry County Schools, visit www.henry.k12.ga.us.

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