

Dickenson County Public Schools

*P.O. Box 1127, 309 Volunteer Avenue
Clintwood, Virginia 24228
Phone (276) 926-4643 Fax (276) 926-6374*

Haydee L. Robinson, Superintendent



Oct. 1, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Community Members,

We would like to take this opportunity to inform you of what the next steps may be for the Dickenson County Schools in regards to extending the instructional week from 2 to 4 days per week for students. At the September 23, 2020 School Board Meeting, the Board received an update on the Hybrid/100% Remote Instructional Plan currently in place in our schools, and discussed tentative plans and timelines to increase face-to-face instruction.

During the update, the School Board was informed that

- It appears that we have had a good beginning of school under the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, but each day has brought new challenges and questions, and hurdles to overcome. The health and safety of our students and staff while providing a quality instructional program remained the two main priorities.
- Teachers, staff, students and families were all working diligently during this difficult time to provide a quality instruction to all students under a Hybrid and 100% Remote environment. It was and will remain a learning process for all of us. The School Board recognized the work and dedication of all involved.
- It was also discussed that one of the most significant challenges is providing instruction to both our Hybrid and 100% Remote students and families who have little to no internet access. While we continued to work through possible solutions and easier ways to provide instruction on flash drives and Chromebooks, this has been a “work in progress” and often a frustrating one for our teachers and for our families with equity in instruction remaining as a high concern.
- With all the mitigation procedures in place, it was reported to the School Board that as of Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2020, five staff members and two students had reported positive for COVID-19. Since that time, we have had an additional staff member and another student to test positive. Since COVID-19 numbers are fluid, the School Board was also informed that we could see a significant increase in positive cases in a short amount of time,

In their discussions, the School Board agreed to maintain the Hybrid/100% Remote for the remainder of the first Nine Weeks which ends on Oct. 26, 2020. During this time, we will continue to evaluate the data of COVID-19 cases in our community and in our schools, consult with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and keep our School Board and community informed.

At the Oct. 28th School Board Meeting, the Board decided to hold further discussion and review data to see if the data supported Cohort A and B students returning to school four (4) days per week beginning in either late October or early November. It was agreed that with this scenario, it will be challenging to maintain the 6' foot social distance in the classrooms, on the bus, etc. and that students and staff would have to wear a mask most of the day or possibly all day. The challenge of maintaining other recommended mitigation strategies was also discussed.

The School Board concluded that if the data of COVID-19 cases, the science, and VDH guidance supported a four day face-to-face instructional week for students, the School Board agreed to consider a planned return of students to a 4-day per week in stages. The discussed planned stages are:

Stage 1: PK – 5th grade Cohort A and Cohort B students return to a 4-day per week; Grades 6 – 12th grades remain Hybrid and 100% Remote.

Stage 2: Grades 6 – 8th grade Cohort A and Cohort B return to a 4- day per week; 9th – 12th grade remain Hybrid and 100% Remote.

Stage 3: Grade 9th – 12th Cohort A and Cohort B return to a 4-day per week.

We must caution that these proposed plans may or may not change and are dependent on the COVID-19 data and guidance from our local and state VDH office. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to either myself, our central office staff or building principals.

My deepest gratitude for all your help and support! We recognize that it has been a difficult journey for all, and we sincerely thank you for all you are doing to help your child learn.

Sincerely,

Haydee L. Robinson,
Division Superintendent