

**School Board Members**

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Dr. Terry E. Arbogast, II  
Division Superintendent

## **GILES COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

March 31, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I want to first thank you for your patience and understanding during these recent weeks. I also want to thank our dedicated, innovative and talented staff. I can without reservation, tell you that the staff of Giles County Public Schools care deeply about your children, your families, and our communities.

We are partnering with you as parents to have school in a new way. Our goal is to remind our students that learning can be fun! As we move forward in these challenging times I want to share with you some of our planning strategies as we keep in mind that the safety and health of our students and staff is of primary importance.

- The third quarter report card will not be distributed due to this interruption of schooling. During the coming weeks, your student will have opportunities to participate in learning at home and the final report card will be distributed at the close of the school year, anticipated to remain June 5<sup>th</sup>.
- At this time, it's anticipated that free meals will continue to be available for our students through the end of the school year.
- In the days ahead and when the time is best, we will announce dates and times when you may return items (textbooks for example) and pick up items that your students may have left at school.
- Your student's principal is participating in many virtual meetings to stay up-to-date regarding safety issues, health items, instructional plans at their school, support of teachers and staff, and even more. If have any questions, please contact your school principal and they will direct you to the appropriate source of information that may answer your question.

### **Plan for Continuation of Instruction:**

During this school closure, the GCPS teachers are working to continue to provide instruction for our students throughout the school closures. We want our students to continue to learn and grow during this period of time when they are receiving their instruction at home.

At the Secondary level, since all students have their own Chromebook, teachers will be providing online learning opportunities (i.e. – Google Classroom). Students/parents who aren't able to access the online content will need to notify the school in order to receive paper packets. Please contact your school's principal to ensure appropriate plans are made for your child to receive the paper packets (if needed). Our teachers are working diligently preparing this material and instruction will continue in all courses through June 5<sup>th</sup>, which was our originally planned ending date for the school year. If you have not heard from your student's teacher(s) by April 6<sup>th</sup>, please contact your school's principal.

At the Elementary level, teachers will be providing a blended version of packets of instructional material along with online learning resource opportunities for their students. Students/parents who aren't able to access the online learning resources will need to notify their respective school in order to make arrangements to receive this supplemental information. Our teachers are working diligently preparing this material and instruction will continue in all courses through June 5<sup>th</sup>, which was our originally planned ending date for the school year. If you have not heard from your student's teacher(s) by April 10<sup>th</sup>, please contact your school's principal.

Our expectations are that students will take part in the classroom assignments they receive and complete the work to the best of their ability. Teachers will be reaching out to their students on a regular basis each week (i.e. – at least 2 times a week), to check on their students, as well as following-up to see how the students are progressing on the work provided.

### **Grading:**

In regards to students' grades, ALL students will receive either a "pass" or a "fail" (P/F) grade for the 4<sup>th</sup> nine-weeks grading period.

- At our high schools,
  - final grades for year-long courses will be determined by averaging the first 9-weeks, second 9-weeks, and third 9-weeks (through March 13, 2020) grades.
  - fourth 9-weeks and final grades for semester-long courses will be a P/F grade. However, traditional grades may need to be issued for students who may be seeking NCAA eligibility, unless new guidance is received from the NCAA. These will be handled on a case by case basis.
  - exceptions to this may occur for students enrolled in dual enrollment courses through New River Community College. *Guidance on grade options for these students have been supplied directly to each student from NRCC.*
- Students in Pre-K through 7<sup>th</sup> grade will receive a traditional letter grade for their end of year grades, which will be based on the previous three nine-weeks grades (through March 13, 2020).

As information, pass/fail grades do not impact a student's grade point average (GPA). Again, the expectations are that students will take part in their continued learning and complete the assigned work to the best of their ability. Teachers will assign pass/fail grades for students based on the child's effort, participation, and work that is completed. Teachers will work with their students and will make every effort to communicate with the student and parent, if a child is in danger of receiving a "fail" grade for a course. We strongly feel that every student has the ability and will be provided the opportunity to earn a "pass."

### **Dual Enrolled Credit Grading:**

Students currently in a dual-enrolled credit course have received guidance directly from New River Community College.

### **SOL Assessments:**

The SOL Assessments that were scheduled to occur during the remainder of the school year have been cancelled. Students will not be asked to complete a SOL assessment for the classes they are currently enrolled. Those students who were enrolled in a high school credit-bearing course eligible for a verified credit during the 2019-20 school year will receive a verified credit towards their graduation requirements, if they receive a passing grade from their instructor at the

conclusion of the course. The GCPS local policy will be followed when awarding the verified credits.

### **Secondary Students and Graduation Requirements:**

Students scheduled to graduate at the end of the 2019-20 SY and who were on track to graduate prior to the March 13<sup>th</sup> announcement by the Governor to close schools, will still be able to graduate on-time. The Superintendent of Public Instruction for Virginia has been granted authority to waive several graduation requirements that students would have had to meet had schools not closed. In particular, if a senior is enrolled in a course for which he/she needs a standard credit to graduate, he/she will receive a standard credit upon successfully receiving a passing grade. In addition, if a senior needs a verified credit for a course for which they are enrolled in currently or previously passed, he/she will receive a verified credit upon receiving a passing grade. Again, if a student was on track to graduate prior to the school closure, he/she will be able to graduate on-time as long as they have met the appropriate requirements as outlined here.

### **PreK – 7 grade students:**

Students in these grade levels who were on track to be promoted to the next grade-level prior to the March 13<sup>th</sup> school closure will be able to move forward as intended. The instruction that will be provided moving forward will focus on the gaps in learning that occurred due to the school closure. It is anticipated that all students will continue to participate in their classwork and complete the assignments that they are provided during this school closure. Our goal is to continue to work with our students over the next months to prepare them for the next grade level as best we can.

### **Special Education:**

Our Special Education and Related Services staff are reaching out to families by phone or email about special education services during the continuation of Instruction. If you have not heard from your child's special education teacher or case manager, please call your child's school or Daniel Hill at 540-922-3391. Case managers will be contacting parents regarding options for their child's annual IEP. If your child is in the process of being evaluated or reevaluated for special education, you will be contacted by Amy Wheeler, Shannon Douthat, or Daniel Hill.

These are unprecedented times that we are currently in and we realize the uncertainty this brings. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to your child's principal through email or the school's phone number. Please continue to be safe and we look forward to continuing our partnership with you for your child's education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "T. Arbogast II", written in a cursive style.

Dr. Terry E. Arbogast, II  
Division Superintendent