

October 14, 2020

Powhatan Community,

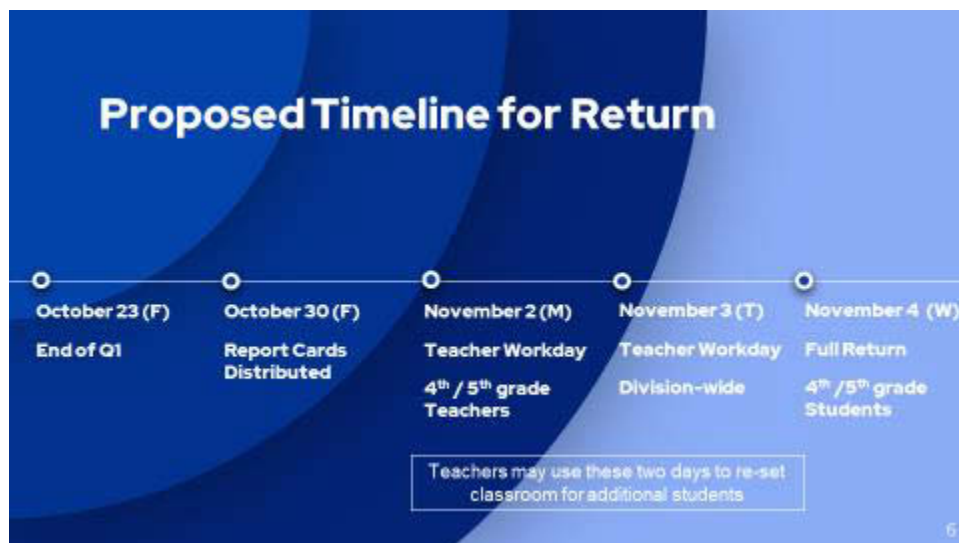
Last night, the School Board approved changes to our Return to Learning Plan 2020. Beginning November 4th, fourth and fifth grade hybrid students will be returning to school five days per week. Students who chose the Pathway I – Powhatan Virtual Classroom will remain in that pathway through at least December 18th.

Our Return to Learning 2020 Plan states that movement along our Pathway II - Face to Face Continuum “is likely throughout the school year based on local health data and guidance from the Powhatan/Chesterfield Health Department, as well as feedback we receive from students, parents, and staff. Our goal is to reach a Full Return to Learning when it is safe for students and staff.”

After the successful movement of PK-3rd grade students to a five day in person week on September 14th, we began exploring the possible return of 4th and 5th graders. This analysis including reviewing safety measures, examining facilities, and talking to teachers and staff. Local representatives from the Virginia Department Health have also reviewed the data we collected and signed off on our return.

We will be following our state reviewed health plan which states that 3 feet of social distancing is allowable with a face covering. Our goal continues to be as close to 6 feet of social distancing as possible, however, with larger class sizes at the 4th and 5th grade level we will not be able to maintain the 6 feet standard in some of our classrooms.

We are excited to take another step towards our goal of having students who participate in face to face learning in school full time. Below is a slide from the School Board presentation which shows important dates in this timeline. Please note that 4th and 5th grade students will have a student holiday on November 2nd to allow teachers to reconfigure classrooms and plan for students’ return on November 4th after Election Day.



The School Board also approved other changes to the School Calendar last night. They are summarized below:

1. November 3 was initially designated a student holiday / parent-teacher conference day. Due to the request of the Board of Elections to use two schools for voting, as well as our current visitor policy, we are amending the calendar to accommodate those needs. Families may schedule a virtual parent-teacher conference on that day or on a mutually agreed upon time.
2. Exam week was scheduled as TBD for the week of December 14. Schools will be conducting benchmark testing during December and January. The high school will publish those dates internally to their students and parents.
3. The half-days on October 23 and December 18 are now full Teacher Workdays/Student Holidays.
4. PHS Graduation has been set for Friday, May 28th at 10 a.m.

If you would like more information about either of these items you may review the School Board agenda at this link:

<http://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/powhatan/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=BTGNWU5E0655>

If you have questions or concerns about your 4th or 5th grader returning to school full time, please contact your child's principal who will be able to answer your questions on the transition and our plans for doing so safely.

At the November 10th School Board meeting we will be presenting information about the possible expansion of face to face learning for our middle and high school students as well as next steps for Pathway I- Powhatan Virtual Classroom students being given the option of changing pathways after the first semester.

Be safe and stay well,

Dr. Eric L. Jones
Superintendent