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County schools reopening plan approved by board

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Alabama public school system administrators are faced with the difficult task of preparing reopening plans based on regulations and guidelines that are, to say the least, malleable.

But that's what Franklin County Schools Superintendent of Education Greg Hamilton and his fellow administrators had to do, and their plan was approved by the Franklin County Board of Education at its most recent meeting.

Franklin County Schools will reopen for students on August 20 for traditional instruction at each school. Local and state health guidelines, which are constantly changing, will

be followed, to insure student and employee safety.

One of those changes came with Gov. Kay Ivey's July 29th amended Safer at Home Order, which now requires masks be worn in schools for most grades.

"We put a lot of work into this and doing what we feel is best for our system," Hamilton said. "We will open school August 20 and after Christmas break, not return to classes until January 19, two weeks later than usual, and we hope that will alleviate some of the potential flu problems we might have.

These guidelines are changing constantly. Based on the governor's latest order, our students (2nd-12th grade) and teachers will wear masks

See 'REOPENING,' page 5



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City Council District 2

Pd. Pol. by Darren Woodruff, PO Box 1236, Russellville, AL

A '78 at 80': How a gift shaped Baker's lifetime passion for golf

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

It was more than 40 years ago when Jerry Baker, at the time a University of Montevallo professor in the College of Education, received a gift from the school's golf coach.

The coach gave Baker a set of old golf clubs and he took up the sport for the first time. Turns out, Baker became a natural on a golf course, and his relationship with the sport today is as strong as it's ever been.

Baker turned 80 on July 23rd, and he gave himself an early birthday present by shooting an impressive 78 on 18 holes at Twin Pines Country Club last month. He followed that



COURTESY PHOTO
Jerry and Joyce Baker with Margaret, their great-granddaughter, at Jerry's 80th birthday party.

See 'BAKER,' page 4

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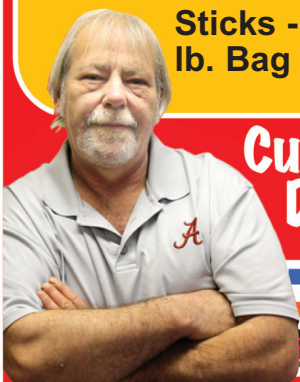
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Olan Clyde Burcham, 86, of Phil Campbell, passed away on Wednesday, July 29th. Interment at Burcham Cemetery.

Susan Kaye Dupree, 64, of Russellville, passed away on Saturday, August 1st. Interment at Belgreen Cemetery.

Glenn Parker Hargett, 75, of Russellville, passed away on Thursday, July 30th. Interment at Franklin Memory Gardens.

Pauline Woodard White, 90, passed away on Sunday, July 26th. Interment at Luke Town Cemetery.



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'BAKER,' from page 1

round with a 79 a week later. It's not easy to post a score lower than your age, but for Baker, it's becoming a habit.

"I got lucky a day or two and that 78 was the best round I've shot," Baker said. "I had back surgery earlier this year and missed two months of playing, but I've done physical therapy and sort of got back in shape.

"I'm playing better than I ever have. There's a bunch of us old retired guys who play almost every day. The social camaraderie really helps, and golf keeps me active, both socially and physically," he added.

Along with friends including Junior George, E.J. Walsh and Don Hand, Baker can be found most days at Twin Pines. And even though his wife Joyce isn't a golfer, Baker said she doesn't mind his playing regimen.

"She likes it because it gets me out of the house every day," Baker said.

With two grandchildren and a brand new great-grandchild, Baker said he's thankful to have his health and a life he still enjoys at 80.

"I really feel blessed. Golf keeps me going, I guess. Those friendships we've developed and that camaraderie is really important, but our great-granddaughter is really our pride and joy right now," Baker said.

After a 35-year career in education, Baker is entitled to enjoy retirement. His teaching career began in 1967 when he started a seven-year run as the drivers education instructor at Russellville High School.

Baker took a job with the Alabama Department of Education and after two years, he moved on to a nine-year tenure at Montevallo.

He would return to Russellville where Baker worked two years in the central office, followed by

15 years as principal of Russellville Middle School.

Though he retired in 2002, the relationships he built with administrators, teachers and especially his students are still special to Baker today.

"Just about every time we go anywhere, one of (my former students) will come up and say 'hello, Mr. Baker,'" Baker said. "I really appreciate that and it's great to see how they're doing with their lives."

During Baker's time in Montgomery with the Department of Education, his office was across the street from the Alabama State Capitol.

And Baker was regularly greeted by then-Gov. George Wallace.

"He got to where he recognized me and he'd say 'hey, number one,'" Baker said.

The reference to 'number one' resulted from Baker becoming the first graduate of Northwest Alabama State Community College in Phil Campbell.

The school was Alabama's first community college and the fulfillment of a promise from Wallace to make a post-secondary education available to children of rural Alabama families.

Wallace was the keynote speaker at the school's first commencement ceremony in 1965, and since there weren't any graduates whose last names started with 'A,' Baker was the first to walk across the stage and receive his diploma.

"Charlie Britnell, who served as President of Northwest and as a state representative, used to call me 'one in a million' because I was the first of more than a million students from state-supported junior colleges," Baker said.

While the designation as the first graduate brought Baker some notoriety, he knows it was all

'REOPENING,' from page 1

at least through August 31. We'll try to keep the school setting as close to the same it can be, although there will be some changes," he added.

One significant change will be smaller class sizes. Students will eat lunch in the cafeteria, but scheduling, social distancing and enhanced sanitizing protocol will all be in effect to minimize any health risks.

Athletics will continue pursuant to guidelines from the Alabama High School Athletic Association. Hamilton said social distancing guidelines and safety protocols were already in place for athletic practices this summer.

Guidance for fans attending events will be announced prior to the start of the school year.

COVID-19 concerns mean the end, at least for the immediate future, of non-school personnel entering school buildings and interacting with students. Parents and guardians are encouraged to conduct school business over the phone or through e-mail. Franklin County Schools will restrict visitors for lunch, class parties, teacher meetings, festivals or plays, until further notice.

"We hope these restrictions are short-lived, but they are necessary for the health and safety of our students," Hamilton said.

The system's Health and Wellness guidelines provide that students and staff who have been exposed to someone positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days, or who have received a positive diagnosis themselves in the last 14 days, will be sent home.

A clearance note from a health care provider will be required for students and employees with COVID-19 symptoms, exposures or positive diagnoses in order to return to school, and those persons must be fever free for at least 48 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning to school.

Students who are sent home due to becoming sick or being exposed to someone positive for COVID-19 will be given remote learning packets that will contain the same lesson plans followed by classroom students.

As required by Alabama Department of Education guidelines, there will be a remote learning plan option for students whose parents or guardians have concerns about sending their child back to school.

Franklin County Schools' remote learning option requires the student to register for this option through his or her local school. The plan includes virtual components, as well as paper/pencil assignments. It is a nine-week commitment and once students begin the remote learning option, they may not change to traditional classroom learning until after the nine-week term.

Each school will have a remote learning facilitator, who is a certified instructor, available by telephone for questions or assistance needed by remote learning students or parents. There will be a direct number for parents to call their child's school's remote learning facilitator, Hamilton said.

Remote learning plan students without internet-capable computers at home can be issued a Chromebook or other tablet device to use during remote learning.

Parents will be responsible for damage or loss of these devices and will have to sign an agreement saying the same.

A number of remote learning WiFi locations will be available for students to use in vehicles to complete assignments if they do not have internet at home. Parking will be available at each of these 13 sites across the county.

Ultimately, it is the parents' and student's responsibility to find internet service in order to complete remote learning virtual assignments.

"They are signing up for remote learning knowing the technology portion is part of this plan," Hamilton said. "We will provide high-speed internet locations across the county and students can check out a device to use.

"There's going to be some trial and error in all of this, but I promise everyone the best interests of your children have been put into every aspect of this plan," Hamilton said.

'BAKER,' from page 4

in fun. What was far more important, though, was the impact that the college had on young men and women similarly situated to him.

"I was the janitor at the Franklin County Courthouse," Baker said. "If that school hadn't opened, I'm not sure what would have happened to me. It gave me an opportunity to succeed and so many other people would say the same thing.

"I hope people realize the importance of Alabama's junior colleges. Most of that first class was like me—just scrounging to get by and that school really helped shape our lives,"

Baker added.

The 49 students in Northwest's first graduating class laid the groundwork for the state's community college system to grow into a network of 26 schools.

Now 10 years away from his 90th birthday, Baker's goal for that milestone is bigger than just shooting a round lower than his age.

"I just want to live to be 90, then maybe I'll be able to shoot my age," Baker said.

And thanks to a gift of an old set of rusty golf clubs, chances seem good he'll get there.

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 Everyone is welcome to worship services at Duncan Creek Baptist Church, 3925 Duncan Creek Road, Russellville. Service times are Sunday School at 10 a.m., Worship Service at 11 a.m. and Bible Study at 5 p.m. Pastor is Bro. Joe Thornton.

 You are cordially invited to new service time at Pleasant Ridge Missionary Baptist Church on Highway 48 in Russellville, at 11 a.m., Sunday mornings. Social distancing practiced, mask optional. Pastor Roger Bond.

 New Life Ministries invites you to join them for Sunday School at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings and for worship services on Sundays at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. and Wednesday nights at 7 p.m. On the first Sunday of each month, there will be a fellowship lunch after morning services. You and your family are invited to come worship and fellowship with the Lord of Hosts and his children. New Life Ministries is located on Hwy. 24 west toward Red Bay, behind Tompkins Feed.

 The McLemore and Kinder Family Reunion will be held Saturday, September 5th at the Spruce Pine Community Center, beginning at 10 a.m. Please bring a covered dish. If you need additional information, call (256)-324-5288.

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Dale seeking Russellville City Council District Four seat

Submitted

My name is Charles A. Dale and I am running for Russellville City Council District Four.

I can get the job done and all that I ask is the people of District Four allow me the chance to prove it.

I have experience working in city government. I spent 34 years with the City of Russellville, including one year with the Russellville Fire Department and the rest as the City of Russellville Revenue Officer, Compliance Officer, Building Inspector and Lieutenant in the Fire Department.

I worked to make sure the old Reedtown School was preserved in the community and we were able to get a historical marker placed on the grounds. I have worked with the Northwest Alabama RC&D Council to get new computers for the community to use and train on, along with new tables and chairs.

I want to be the VOICE for District Four.

Please vote Charles A. Dale on August 25, 2020. Thank You!



Charles Dale

Hawkins announces candidacy for Phil Campbell mayor position

Submitted to the FFP

My name is Victor H. Hawkins and I am a candidate for Mayor of Phil Campbell.

I am asking for your vote in the August 25, 2020, Phil Campbell Municipal Election.

I am a returned resident to the Town of Phil Campbell. I have been in the construction business from homes to the Nuclear Naval Weapon Station in Charleston, S.C.

I went into the music industry in 2000 as a singer and a night club owner on the Mississippi Gulf Coast until I was forced to retire on disability after 11 spinal surgeries.

I returned to Phil Campbell more than four years ago and ran in the last election.

I have plans to bring new responsibility to the office of mayor—not a part-time mayor but a full-time man of the people who will work for grants to rebuild our community. I will work for new industry to come to our town and will operate in a way that makes us accountable to the citizens for the business of our town and public works system.

We also need to work to restore lost revenue to the town's budget.

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Victor Hawkins

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Harbin seeking election to Russellville City Council District One seat

Submitted to the FFP

Aaron Harbin is excited to announce his intent to run for Councilman for Russellville City Council District 1 in the August 25, 2020 municipal election.

Born and raised in Russellville, Aaron is a 2005 graduate of Russellville High School and received a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from Auburn University in 2009.

Harbin is fortunate to have grown up in a hardworking family committed to the betterment of the Russellville community.

As a young man, Aaron worked on his family's farm as well as for their manufacturing business. These experiences, along with his engineering degree, led him to his career with G & G Steel Inc., and now as a Manager for Franklin Manufacturing, Inc.

Harbin is a graduate of the 2019 Alabama Leadership Initiative and currently serves as the President of the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. In his work with the Chamber, Aaron has had the opportunity to not only work with businesses and business owners in Russellville but also with those throughout the county. This experience fueled his desire to strengthen his focus and community commitment to his own district and run for Councilman of District 1.

"Russellville has and will always be my home. My wife and I, through our careers and our volunteer work have been committed to Russellville, it's citizens, and making this community one that our children will also want to call home for their lifetimes. I'm enthusiastic about the potential for economic growth and city development and improvement that I know is possible if we all work together with a common goal. Working alongside the fellow Council members, the Mayor, and the residents of District 1 would be a great honor."

Harbin, his wife Addie, and their extended families have always been committed to the Russellville City Schools.

He has a firm belief that an energetic, well-funded, and community-centric school system leads to a healthy, productive, and vibrant city as a whole. Supporting the administration, faculty, and students of Russellville City Schools is of utmost important to Aaron and he looks forward to being able to play a bigger role in the success of the schools through his work on the Council.

Harbin is married to Addie Pickett Harbin and they have two children, Ruby (8), who will be in 3rd Grade at Russellville Elementary School and Willis (2). Addie is the owner of Addie's Flip Tip and Tap Dance Studio located on St. Clair Street in Russellville. Aaron and his family attend North Highlands Church of Christ.

"I'd be honored to have your vote on August 25 for Councilman of District 1. If elected, I will use my knowledge, skills, and experiences to serve the people of my district and the City of Russellville with respect and fairness."



Aaron Harbin

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County commission votes to change Quinn's polling location

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Commission voted to change the polling place for residents in the Quinn's Garage precinct at a special called meeting held July 31.

Probate Judge Barry Moore and the commission held a public hearing earlier last week to gauge input from the community about the proposed change, which will now see voters casting ballots at Tharptown Baptist Church.

Commissioner Chris Wallace said the only citizen input at the public meeting was in support of the change, and no resident attended Friday's meeting to oppose the move.

The commission's action means Tharptown Baptist Church will now be a voting center for both the former Quinn's Garage precinct and the Tharptown precinct.

The change begins with the Tuesday, November 3, 2020, general election.

A 2017 local law authorizes the Franklin County Commission to establish voting centers for multiple precincts. Before that can be approved, though, a public hearing must be held where voters in that precinct can be heard regarding the proposed change.

Tharptown Baptist Church officials agreed to host both precincts for future elections.

Moore expressed his appreciation to the McDonald family (which owns Quinn's Garage on Hwy. 48) for allowing their building to be used for voting. At Tharptown Baptist, voters will have air conditioning and paved parking, so there are more accommodations for voters, Moore said.

Voting in the eastern Franklin County precinct was previously held at Myrick's Grocery on Hwy. 48 in Saints Crossroads before it was moved to Quinn's Garage several years ago.

All voters affected by the relocation will receive cards from the Franklin County Board of Registrars notifying them of the new location.

For updates on news throughout the week, visit www.franklinfreepress.net!



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Large multi-family yard sale! 2011 North Jackson Avenue, Russellville. Friday,

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Some familiar faces: Examining the Golden Tigers region opponents

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - Last week the announcement came down that the Golden Tigers will not be opening up their season with their annual game against the Deshler Tigers for the first time since 1987 due to Deshler pushing their season back due in part to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

While the move forced Russellville head coach John Ritter and his staff to begin searching for a new game for week one, the region games for the Golden Tigers remain untouched at the moment.

As the Golden Tigers enter a new region (5A Region 8), there are some familiar foes that will be lining up opposite of Russellville ready to make some noise in the region.

So with kickoff just over a month away, we are going to begin taking a look at the Golden Tigers region opponents for the upcoming year and their history with each respective region opponent.

Mae Jemison - week 2/September 4th

Opening up the region schedule for the Golden Tigers is Mae Jemison who makes the return to 5A after a brief stint in 6A. The Jaguars finished at 5-6 last season and finished second in 6A region 8 behind Fort Payne before losing in the first round of the playoffs to Cullman.

The last time the Golden Tigers matched up against Mae Jemison was in the Jaguars dominant 2017 season in which their only regular season loss was an overtime loss to Buckhorn. In 2017, the Jaguars handed the Golden Tigers a loss by a final score of 56-10.

However, in 2016 the Golden Tigers held on to beat the Jaguars by a final of 21-20.

The all-time series between Russellville and

See 'PREVIEW,' page 13

Making adjustments

Having spent nearly two decades as a basketball coach, Belgreen girls head coach Chad Green has tackled a plethora of challenges. But coaching in the middle of a pandemic poses new challenges for Green and his staff.

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

BELGREEN - One adjustment that everyone has had to make, beginning a few months ago, was learning how to do their job a different way on the fly in the midst of a global pandemic. High school sports were no different.

For Belgreen head girls coach Chad Green, who has spent the past 18 years as a coach, making adjustments is a key aspect of his coaching philosophy.

While the types of adjustments that had to be made to accommodate summer training for the Lady Bulldogs is something that Green hasn't had to deal with before, he has been encouraged by the results he's seen from his girls this summer.

"I'm going into year 18 of my career and I've never seen anything like what we've had to do. It's definitely been a different situation than anything I've ever experienced as a coach," Green said. "I think we've had some good workouts this summer. We've been able to get quicker and stronger and the kids that have been able to come have absolutely benefitted from the workouts and things we've been doing."

When the AHSAA came out and announced new health and safety guidelines that would allow for teams to get back to practicing and working out, there was one big exception: no competitions could be played. This meant that a large chunk of the Lady Bulldogs summer training was tossed aside before it ever began.

So Green went back to the drawing board to come up with new and efficient ways to make sure his girls got adequate training time while also ensuring that his players' health was at the top of the list.

"What we did on our side of the program is me, coach Tverberg, coach Robbins, coach Williams, and coach Bragwell all came together to come up with a workout plan and We decided on a Monday, Tuesday and Thursday workout plan," Green said. "We've also been doing stations which are doing really well with the distancing and everything. I'll take a group in the weight room while coach Tverberg and coach Williams will take a group for conditioning and then coach Robbins will take a group working on agility and ball handling and things like that. We'll work in those stations for about 40 minutes or so and then we'll rotate and that has worked very well for us so far."

Of course one aspect of being able to get back to practicing and working out is overcoming the mental aspect. Debating on whether or not to practice given the circumstances can be a difficult decision for some and others might be on the



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

Green and his staff have taken extensive safety measures to attempt to curb the spread of the Coronavirus as his players practice in various stations.

fence about the situation.

However, Green says that once practice and workouts were able to resume, his players were very receptive to getting back on the court and preparing for the season.

"Our girls responded well. Of course this is a whole new situation for all of us and we just have to do the best we can do. We went through the guidelines and screened them at the door and also did temperature checks every single day before they came in," Green said. "When a group would leave and another one would come in, we would sanitize everything and wipe everything down before it was used again. We just tried to be as safe as possible and prevent the sickness and make sure our girls felt safe to practice."

On the basketball side of things, Green lost key

See 'ADJUSTMENTS,' page 14

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'PREVIEW,' from page 11

Mae Jemison is tied at 1-1.
Brewer - week 3/September 11th
The last time the Golden Tigers matched up with Brewer High School, George W. Bush was still in office. Needless to say it has been a while since these two teams last saw one another. Also the two schools have only faced one another six times, a matchup that the Golden Tigers have owned heavily by outscoring the Patriots 284-46 across those six games.

Last season wasn't a favorable one for the Patriots as they finished 3-7 and seventh in the region just ahead of Ardmore, who we will get to in just a bit. Russellville leads the all-time series with a record of 6-0.

Lawrence County - week 4/September 18th
The lone holdover from the Golden Tigers' region from a year ago, the Red Devils will be looking to make a new go of it with a fresh slate of regional opponents. Going 4-6 last year, Lawrence County finished 7th in the region last year just in front of Dora High School.

The Golden Tigers were able to walk away with a victory on the road last year against Lawrence County by a final of 22-14. Russellville leads the all-time series with a record of 22-5.

Ardmore - week 6/October 2nd
To find Ardmore's last win against the Golden Tigers you would have to go all the way back to 1937 in which the Tigers won by a final of 9-0. Since then it has been nothing but the Golden Tigers in the victory column.

Like their regional counterparts in Brewer, Ardmore and Russellville don't have too much of a storied past. Outside of that 1937 bout, the two squads have only faced one another four times from 2014-2017.

The last time Russellville and Ardmore squared off, the Golden Tigers easily handled the Tigers by a final of 44-6 in 2017.

Last season was not awfully kind to the Tigers as they finished with an 0-7 regional record and an overall record of 2-8 with their only wins coming against West Morgan and Elkmont.

Russellville leads the all-time series with a record of 4-1.

East Limestone - week 8/October 16th
East Limestone missed the playoffs last season after going 9-3 and making it to the second round of the playoffs in 2018. Finishing 4-6 last year, the

See 'PREVIEW,' page 14

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'PREVIEW,' from page 13

record was good enough for the Indians to finish just behind Arab in sixth place in their respective region.

Once a staple of the Golden Tigers schedule every year from 2008-2017, before making the move to region 8 in 2018, Russellville took the last three matchups from the Indians from 2015-2017.

Now East Limestone will look to bounce back after making the move back into familiar regional territory after a 2-year hiatus.

Russellville leads the all-time series with a record of 8-2.

Lee - week 9/October 22 (Thursday)

Last season was not kind to the Generals. Finishing 1-9 with their only win coming against a winless Columbia High School squad, Lee finished last in their region in 2019.

This will be the 15th all-time matchup between the Golden Tigers and Lee with the original game dating all the way back to 1962, a game Russellville took by a final of 41-13. More recently the last matchup between Russellville and Lee came in 2017 in which the Golden Tigers solidly beat the Generals 45-0.

Russellville leads the all-time series with a 11-3 record.

'ADJUSTMENTS,' from page 11

starters such as Ansley Tate (who was named the *Franklin Free Press* girls player of the year last season), Autumn Bragwell, and Katie and Gracie Dempsey to graduation, the Lady Bulldogs still have a group of talented young players led by a key senior in Emma Dempsey.

"Emma is an all-state center for us coming back and she's a big piece of our puzzle for us. "Noelle Willingham is a great athlete and will probably play point guard for us this year. We've got a young team up and coming and I'm sure we're going to have to play a lot of younger players to go along with Emma," Green said.

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Absentee voting has started for the August 25, 2020, City of Russellville Municipal Election.

The Alabama Secretary of State has eased the absentee voting rules to allow ANY citizen to vote absentee in advance of municipal elections.

To get an application, log onto the Secretary of State's website, www.sos.alabama.gov, and print one, or you may contact me at 256-577-0030 and we will be glad to drop off an absentee application for you to complete.

Please remember if you send in your absentee application through the mail, you must include a copy of a photo I.D., such as your driver's license or state I.D. card.

You may also vote absentee in person at Russellville City Hall during normal business hours. Again, valid photo I.D. will be required.

Absentee voting continues through August 24, 2020.

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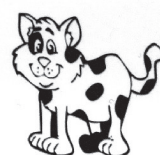
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August 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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November 2020						
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December 2020						
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January 2021						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Teacher PD - August 6-18
 Schools Open - August 19
 Labor Day - Monday, September 7
 Homecoming - October 16
 Fall Break - October 5-6
 Teacher PD - October 7
 Veterans Day - Wednesday, November 11
 Thanksgiving Break - Nov. 25-27
 Christmas Break Begins - December 21
 Teacher PD - January 4 and 5
 Students Return - January 6
 MLK Holiday - Monday, January 18
 President's Day - Monday, February 15
 Spring Break - March 29 - April 2
 Spring Holiday - April 30
 Last Day for Students - May 28
 Last Day for Teacher - May 28

Beginning/Ending of Nine Week Grading Periods

- 1st - August 19 - October 15
- 2nd - October 16 - December 18
- 3rd - January 6 - March 11
- 4th - March 12 - May 28

Virtual Days
 Teacher Days
 Student Days
 Holidays/No School
 Early Dismissal