



**Jacksonville | North Pulaski**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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*Building Futures: Every Scholar, Every Day*

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October 7, 2020

9:22 pm

JNPSD School Community:

Please continue to stay informed through all of our postings on JNP social media, JNP website, local media, and other communication outlets. All community updates, official documents, and other information posted since March 6 is available for your reference.

**Governor's Press Conference (APSRC Report)**

Governor Hutchinson also shared ADH guidance for Halloween activities. The guidance includes:

Wear a cloth face covering instead of a costume mask alone or on top of your cloth face covering

Limit the number of houses children visit

Only eat factory-wrapped candy that has been wiped with a sanitary wipe

Low-risk activities include: Carving and decorating pumpkins, decorating your house, having a virtual costume contest

Visit the ADH to view moderate- and higher-risk activities outlined in the guidance.

Arkansas Department of Education Deputy Director Dr. Ivy Pfeffer reported there are 22 instances where districts are currently pivoting to virtual instruction either for an individual class, grade-level or school building. Dr. Pfeffer noted there were 13 new modifications last week, down from 26 the week before.

Dr. Pfeffer also shared that districts are engaging their Ready for Learning committees and reconsidering some of their school day operations to look for more time for educators to engage also with their virtual learners.

“Right now we have about 25 percent of our students who are virtual learners and we know that in many cases that takes on a whole new approach to teaching and requires a lot of shifts in instruction,” Dr. Pfeffer said.

In an effort to ensure districts have the proper supports to help with students who might become disengaged, or who might be struggling with this new type of learning, the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education in partnership with the Graduation Alliance has launched a new initiative called ENGAGE Arkansas.

“This initiative will provide support for districts by reducing the workload in identifying, locating and reengaging students, and allowing districts instead to focus on providing necessary educational supports to students both in-person and learning virtually. This partnership includes our state’s Education Renewal Zones (ERZ), six housed in universities across the state. The initiative also includes the Arkansas Department of Human Services. Together these partners will help to provide wraparound support to students and families,” Dr. Pfeffer said.

“The partners will determine how the pandemic has affected student enrollment and create regional strategies to help find no-show students, identify at-risk students and also identify students who are disengaged. Beginning immediately, this partnership, which also includes Graduation Alliance, will provide districts with access to outreach counselors who will utilize multiple strategies designed to reach students and families. Students will also have access to academic coaches and telehealth services,” Dr. Pfeffer added.

Over the longer-term, this initiative will be supported so that each ERZ will develop a plan that they will use, with local data, to provide support for students long-term. Graduation Alliance will be providing technical assistance and support to help build that capacity at each of the ERZs.

Webinars will be held this week and DESE is encouraging Districts to participate.

“We’re really excited for this opportunity because we know that this is something that is going to benefit all students in all of our districts, and we will be keeping everyone updated on the progress as we see it,” Dr. Pfeffer said.

Quitman School District Co-Principal Julie Wallace shared her district’s experience since the return to onsite instruction.

“To say that we began school differently this year is an understatement. We have developed a Ready for Learning Plan that has a lot of changes in it, as far as our bell schedule, changes in the classroom to accommodate social distancing, masks, we had a virtual open-house this year. We also did a staggered start to our school day. Half of our students came on Monday, the other half came on Tuesday. That allowed for our students to feel more comfortable coming into the school,” Wallace said. “On our first day of school with our fifth graders, there was a fifth grader that was crying. I went up to

him because I thought he was upset about returning to school and he said, 'I'm just so happy to finally be back at school and I am so happy to be here.' So, it was happy tears. Those kinds of stories are what keep us going."

Wallace added, "Our staff has been very committed to onsite instruction. In fact, 100 percent of our staff wanted to come back to school, and we see the evidence of their commitment every day as you walk down the hallways and into their classrooms. We've had fewer staff absences than ever before to date. We spent six weeks teaching students how to use a Chromebook in case they need to pivot to online instruction at home. We've also committed to spending time addressing the whole child, providing emotional support. Every person on our campus, it doesn't matter if it's a teacher, administrator or custodian, they are all checking in on our kids and ensuring their emotional needs are met. We are thankful the USDA is providing free meals to all of our students to provide for their physical needs. We are meeting our students' academic needs using the playbook that many of our staff members helped develop. We are also thankful that Governor Hutchinson has allowed normal activities to resume on campus so our students' social needs are being met as well. We currently have 9% of our students have chosen virtual, and very few have had to quarantine. In those cases, the hotspots that were provided by the state have been very helpful for those families without internet access."

1. JMS and JHS Parents and Scholars: Virtual Mondays begin on October 12. Please refer to the previously publicized information from your schools.
2. Please refer to the publicize food delivery routes if you need free breakfast and lunch.

Thank you for supporting JNPSD.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryan Duffie', written in a cursive style.

Bryan Duffie. Ed.D.  
Superintendent