

I want to welcome you to the Randolph County School System. The 2021-2022 school year will be one with a strong focus on “getting back to the basics of learning and teaching.” This work also will involve efforts to increase access to instruction for students at school as well as away from campus through the acquisition of digital resources. The individual instructional needs of our students at all levels of academic performance will remain a priority as well.

Several positive changes will be in place at the start of the 2021-2022 school year in comparison to the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Examples of these positive changes are noted below:

- 1) Students at all levels of school (elementary school, middle school, and high school) will attend school for five days of in-person instruction per week at the same time.
- 2) Middle school athletics, high school athletics, performing arts events, and all other extracurricular activities will operate according to the regular procedures associated with each event.
- 3) The school cafeteria will be used by students for lunch at all levels of school (elementary school, middle school, and high school).

Despite the previously-noted positive changes, many safety standards will have to remain in place until further notice in our efforts to have school while dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, school trips/field trips as well as grade level assemblies and/or school-wide assemblies will not be permitted. Furthermore, school visits by parents and other visitors, such as guest speakers, will not be permitted. However, please remember that these safety measures, as well as several other ones, will be in place until further notice. As conditions with the COVID-19 pandemic change, these standards will be assessed and revised as needed. Hopefully, these revisions will be caused by positive developments with the COVID-19 pandemic and the eventual removal of these safety restrictions.

I also want to share two other positive developments in our school system. To begin with, during the 2021-2022 school year, our school system will grow from 31 schools to 32 schools. The new school, The Virtual Academy at Randolph, will open on 8/23/21. This online academy will serve students in grades K-8. It will be exciting to watch this new school’s development during the 2021-2022 school year and future school years in our school system’s continued efforts to meet the needs of all students.

The school system’s local budget for the 2021-2022 school year is another area of excitement. More specifically, through the hard work of the members of our Board of Education and County Commissioners, all of our school system’s local budget requests were approved. This budget result led to an increase in the school system’s “current expense” funding by \$1,024,000. Supplement increases for all employees in our school system resulted from this work. Furthermore, our school system received an additional \$100,000 in our “special capital outlay” funding to support the “9-Year Facility Upgrade/Repair Plan.” This funding is provided on an annual basis in addition to our “regular capital outlay” funding. In addition, since the creation of the “special capital outlay” funding starting with the 2014-2015 school year, it has grown to \$950,000 provided on an annual basis. Overall, the teamwork of the members of our Board of Education and the County Commissioners continues to play a major role in the success of our school system.

In closing, it is an exciting time to be a part of the Randolph County School System. I hope your time in the Randolph County School System is very enjoyable regardless of whether you are a student, staff member, parent, community member, or visitor to our webpage or a school event. Furthermore, I look forward to the 2021-2022 school year and the opportunity to work with you in an effort to help our school system continue to improve during our move to the future.