



**MEDIA CONTACT:**

***Dr. Amber Rach***

*Chief Communications & Community Engagement Officer*

Office of Communications and Community Engagement

757-628-3459

[arach@nps.k12.va.us](mailto:arach@nps.k12.va.us)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 22, 2020

**Norfolk School Board Votes to Reopen Schools Virtually this Fall**

NORFOLK, VA – In a virtual special call meeting held July 22, the Norfolk School Board voted 6-1 on a 100 percent virtual reopening of Norfolk Public Schools for the first quarter (first nine weeks) of the 2020-21 school year. The Board will reassess in-person instruction options for students of equity and opportunity based on local health data related to COVID-19.

“The safety of our students, teachers and staff is of utmost importance to us,” said School Board chairperson Adale Martin. “As COVID-19 cases continue to rise in our area, we believe beginning the school year virtually is the most responsible option. Dr. Byrdsong and her staff will continue to monitor local health conditions in consultation with the Norfolk Public Health Department and my school board colleagues to return to in-person instruction when deemed safe.”

The vote comes after informational presentations by Superintendent Dr. Sharon I. Byrdsong and her administration during the Board’s regular meeting July 15 and the Board’s special call meeting July 22. The Board deliberated over four reopening options and requested additional information regarding the impact of virtual education on students of equity and opportunity before making their decision.

“We are pleased with Superintendent Dr. Byrdsong and her administration’s planning to make all students’ virtual educational experiences engaging and relevant this fall,” Martin said. “We are also confident that the administration will continue to offer services to support students’ social, emotional and nutritional well-being.”

Beginning this fall, students and their families will be provided grade-level-specific, virtual school schedules to include daily interactions between teachers and students, asynchronous activities, art and music sessions and small group and independent learning opportunities using software provided by the division. Students’ schedules will also provide additional instructional time for students of equity and opportunity, as well as after-school support for all students.

“The School Board’s decision allows NPS’ administration the time to refine students’ schedules, provide training and support to our school administrators and teachers and communicate our reopening plan to our community in the next month,” said Superintendent Byrdsong. “We remain committed to offering an excellent, equitable education to every one of our students.”

The entire special call meeting from July 22 and all archived NPS School Board meetings are available to view at [www.npsk12.com](http://www.npsk12.com).

###

Norfolk Public Schools (NPS) is on a mission to ensure that all students maximize their academic potential, develop skills for lifelong learning, and become successful contributors to a global society. We believe Norfolk Public Schools is the cornerstone of a proudly diverse community with highly qualified teachers and staff dedicated to providing diverse teaching and learning opportunities for all students.