



# The Walton-Verona MIRROR

## Superintendent's Note



2020 has proven to be a year like none other. As a former history teacher, there are many dates associated with significant events that resonate not only with me but with every American. The attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on

November 22nd, 1963, and of course, the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11th, 2001; all hold special meaning for us all. For me, one of the most important days of my professional career was March 11th, 2020. All Northern Kentucky Superintendents met with Dr. Lynn Sadler, the Director of the Northern Kentucky Health Department. At this meeting, Dr. Sadler informed us the World Health Organization (WHO) had formally declared a global pandemic and the world as we knew it was about to change. At that time, I could not have imagined how true Dr. Sadler's words would prove to be. In the weeks and months since the WHO declared the pandemic, all of our lives have changed dramatically. Every aspect of our daily lives have been impacted by the virus in some way. Everyday tasks such as going to the grocery store or going to school have become events we now view quite differently as we must take the necessary precautions to mitigate the spread of the virus. As we approach the holiday season, families must now make difficult decisions to balance the desire for the traditional

### 2020-2021 School Calendar

Non-Instructional Days	Dec. 22 <sup>nd</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup>
Holiday: Christmas	Dec. 25 <sup>th</sup>
Non-Instructional Days	Dec. 28 <sup>th</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup>
Holiday	Jan. 1 <sup>st</sup>
Non-Instructional Day	Jan. 18 <sup>th</sup>
Professional Development – No school	Feb. 15 <sup>th</sup>
Professional Development – No school	April 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Spring Break	April 5 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup>
Last Instructional Day	May 25 <sup>th</sup>
Closing Day	May 26 <sup>th</sup>

NO EARLY RELEASE DAYS

family gatherings during this time of the year with the need to act responsibly and protect our loved ones from potential exposure to the virus. Certainly, at no time in my life has this country faced so many challenges for a sustained time.

School districts have been significantly challenged during this unprecedented time. We have been given guidelines and recommendations from medical and public health professionals on preventing transmission of the virus. While these guidelines and recommendations are undoubtedly well-intended, I cannot help but wonder: how many of the individuals giving these recommendations have ever taught in a public school? At times, I have felt as if we have all been given a series of impossible tasks by well-meaning individuals who are experts in

*(Superintendent's Note cont...)*

medicine, virology, and public health. Still, they are certainly not experts in teaching or leading public schools. Nevertheless, I am proud of our work so far this year to meet these recommendations. While we have not been able to conduct in-person instruction nearly as often as we would like, we have successfully completed in-person instruction for nine weeks so far this school year. Now that multiple vaccines are nearing the approval process, I am optimistic that at the very least, this school year will end much better than it began.

While the pandemic has presented us with challenges, I would also like to point out it has provided us with unique opportunities. For many years, our staff and parents desired to increase the amount of technology utilized by our students. The new funding made available to us by the CARES Act has enabled us to make this a reality for our students. Similarly, our instructional staff has learned to utilize this technology more effectively and efficiently than ever before. In particular, this is something I am very proud of this year. The professional growth that has taken place this year in our district far outpaces anything I have ever experienced before during my entire career. In addition to our recent advances in technology, I believe we have also successfully supported our community. Throughout this pandemic, we have gone the extra mile to provide meals to the children of our community. I also believe many parents and community members have an increased appreciation for teachers and schools. I am hopeful the positive perception of our profession will continue long after the pandemic ends. In many cases, school districts are the foundation of their communities, and we have certainly demonstrated that this school year.

In closing, while this global event has certainly presented us with challenges we never anticipated, it has also granted us unexpected opportunities. I firmly believe after this pandemic ends and we can look back on the past few months' events with a little more perspective, we will appreciate while it has undoubtedly been challenging at times, we have also taken advantage of the opportunities it has presented. As a result, our school district and, indeed, our entire profession is far better at educating students and serving our communities than ever before.

## Important Websites

*Kentucky Virtual Library*  
www.kyvl.org ID: wv#k12  
Password: pagedown#21

*Kentucky state police sex/criminal offender registry*  
kpsor.state.ky.us

*Kentucky Department of Education*  
www.education.ky.gov

*Walton-Verona Independent Schools*  
wv.kyschools.us

*The City of Walton*  
www.cityofwalton.org

*Mirror Publications Online*  
<http://wv.kyschools.us/aboutus/themirror>.

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*Walton-Verona Board of Education*  
16 School Road  
Walton, KY 41094  
(859) 485-4181  
[WVDist@wv.kyschools.us](mailto:WVDist@wv.kyschools.us)  
<http://www.wv.kyschools.us/>

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## Principal's Pause – Elementary

Luke Patterson, Principal

[luke.patterson@wv.kyschools.us](mailto:luke.patterson@wv.kyschools.us)

### It's Importanter!

When students came back to in-person school on September 21st, I was a bit of a nervous wreck. I had strong convictions students, particularly elementary-aged students, needed to be in school. I regularly scoured the web for studies and articles that spoke to how safe it was to have elementary students in person during the COVID-19 pandemic. Every study or article I was able to find stated schools with young students were not shown to be a contributing factor to the spread of COVID-19 and posed very little risk to teachers and students alike. My team and I worked very hard to build a plan to allow learning with as little disruption as possible from required health precautions. It's one thing to read articles and studies about this and to build a plan that you believe in, but on the night of September 20th, I found myself lying awake asking myself over and over again, "What if I'm wrong?"

As September turned into October which turned into November, I felt really good about how things were going at WVES. Students were back in classrooms and learning directly from their teachers, the students and staff seemed generally happy, and most importantly, we didn't experience any outbreaks of COVID-19. We did have a couple of situations where someone tested real, but it was never traced back to coming from WVES. I felt comfortable enough to say I wasn't wrong and coming back to school was the right decision.

As we got into November, the case numbers were starting to rise again, and even though we didn't have anyone contract COVID from WVES, the community spread was starting to have an impact due to quarantining students and teachers. I began listening to the governor's daily press conference regularly again, trying to read between the lines on whether he would order schools to close to in-person instruction. The decision was made in our district the middle school and high school would move to virtual instruction, which was part of an effort to help make it possible to keep the elementary school open. One of the thought processes behind this was the extreme difficulty to teach young children virtually, and

finding childcare for elementary-aged students if the school is closed. I supported the decision by Dr. Baker to do this.

Then on November 18th, the governor issued the executive order to close schools, which caught me a bit off-guard in the sense I knew it was possible, and maybe even likely, but I didn't anticipate it to happen so quickly. Once again, our teachers had to move quickly to prepare for students to receive virtual instruction until at least December 7th. At least this time they had experience on their side!

On November 19th, I watched the students walk out to the buses for the last time for at least a few weeks. I reflected on this later as I wrote my weekly email to my teachers and staff, and I'd like to share it here in closing:

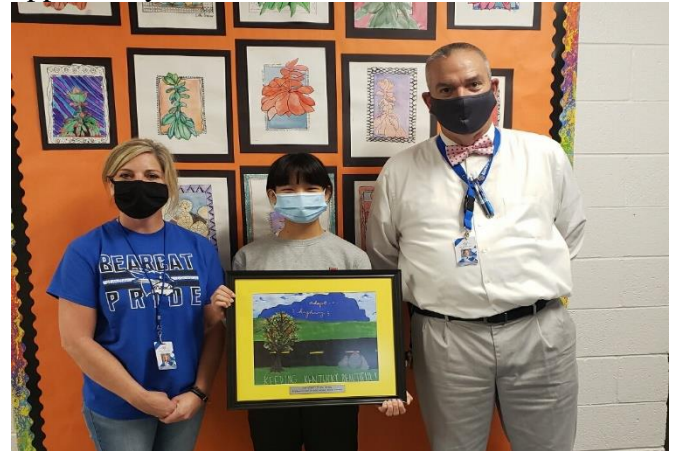
When I was a math teacher, I lived by the slogan, "English is important, but math is importanter." I truly love math and believe deeply in its importance. I used to tease science teachers (and try to convince my students as well) science class was nothing more than applied mathematics - ecology is applied biology, biology is applied chemistry, chemistry is applied physics, and physics is applied mathematics. You don't get science without math; so like I said, math is importanter. As a principal, you all have heard me say many times loving our students is the most important thing we do, everything else builds from there just like science builds from math. Great lives come from a great education, a great education comes from a great school, a great school comes from great teachers, and great teachers come from a great love for their students. I believe this so deeply that I've said to you all- if you don't love each and every one of these students and believe they are worth it, I don't want you working at Walton-Verona Elementary. We can improve teaching strategies, fix classroom management, etc., but we can't change someone who doesn't love students. Yesterday, as our students were leaving, I saw many of our teachers and staff red-eyed and teary, trying to conceal their emotions of everything that is going on (some of you were good at this, but some of you were really, really bad 😊). This is a great testament to the

love you have for these children that have been entrusted to you. But an even stronger testament is the fact that I saw many of our students in tears as well; this means not only are the students truly loved by you, but they know that they are loved by you. And knowing that you are loved is important.

*(Matters from the Middle cont...)*

[Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Calendar](#)

Congratulations to 8th Grader, Alice D., for winning 1st Place in the annual Kentucky Transportation Cabinet calendar art contest. Shout out to our art teacher, Buffy Houchens, for providing this opportunity to our students.



[Targeted Services](#)

Targeted Services at WVMS Walton-Verona Middle School has been running a weekly Targeted Services Program on Fridays in order to better support our struggling students. Teachers connect with and identify specific students who need additional support and work with their parents/guardians to get them on the weekly list. Some students come in for a couple hours and others are here even longer. Bus transportation is offered for those that need it in order to have access to the service so they can be at school from 8:00- 12:00. If you have concerns about your child, I encourage you to reach out to your child's teachers; they will be happy to set you up with the appropriate level of support needed for your child.



Troy Ridener, Asst. Principal  
[troy.ridener@wv.kyschools.us](mailto:troy.ridener@wv.kyschools.us)

Brianna Miller, WVMS School Counselor  
[brianna.miller@wv.kyschools.us](mailto:brianna.miller@wv.kyschools.us)

Follow us at Twitter @ WVMS Principal

**MATTERS FROM THE MIDDLE-  
WVMS**

*Eric Morwessel, Principal*  
[eric.morwessel@wv.kyschools.us](mailto:eric.morwessel@wv.kyschools.us)

[New Ranch Day Program](#)

New Day Ranch Program Walton-Verona Middle School started our second year with the New Day Ranch Program on November 6th. Ten (10) WVMS students and several staff are involved in the program this year, which will run for 10-12 weeks on Fridays. Students learn about horse behaviors, horse care, and leadership skills throughout the program. Students build confidence in themselves while also building relationships with the other students and staff in the group. Students work in partners and each set of partners has their own horse they are responsible for while on the ranch. Students will be attending every Friday morning for about one hour and will continue to learn a great deal about horses, behaviors, and relationships. A huge thank you from WVMS to Beth Long and the entire New Day Ranch staff.  
<https://newdayranch.org/>



## ***HIGH SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS – WVHS***

*Adam Nash, WVHS Principal*  
[adam.nash@wv.kyschools.us](mailto:adam.nash@wv.kyschools.us)

Welcome back to school and the start of the Spring semester of the 2020-21 school year. With the conclusion of fall semester, students have completed two classes in the Fall and will start two new classes for the Spring Semester. Students will also continue in their other four classes for the remainder of the school year.

This prior semester presented many obstacles for teachers, students and families. But, with any challenge, we can see opportunities for growth. We have witnessed many stories of growth and determination as students work to balance their classwork, extracurricular activities, and non-school related commitments like work and friendships.

Many students have excelled in the classes as we shifted between nontraditional instruction, virtual learning, and a hybrid schedule. But even the strongest students still struggle with the lack of socialization due to the COVID-19 pandemic's restrictions. Please take every opportunity you can to talk with your children about their social-emotional health. Teens are very resilient but with such a drastic change to their "normal" social patterns, even the toughest students can feel isolated or depressed.

We look forward to the return of students into the building when allowed. As we approached the start of the school year in August and September, I was apprehensive about how students would respond to the new "norms" of schooling. How would students react to the mandatory mask requirement? What would student participation be like with a reduced number of students present in the classroom? How would high school students respond to a seating chart in the lunchroom? In spite of these questions, it turned out students were excited to be in school and appeared un-phased about the new requirements of attending school. This is a testament to the great students we have at Walton-Verona High School and that mindset starts at home.

I would like to say thank you to the parents and guardians of WVHS students for raising such great kids. As educators, we get to spend a

large amount of time with students every day, but students get so much of who they are from the inflectional adult figures at home. Without such accommodating students, our in-person schooling was enjoyable and successful. We look forward to the return of students to WVHS and even more excited to the return of the "normal" school day we once had.

As we pass the halfway point of the school year, it is important for students to keep up with their academics and make contact with their teachers for extra help. The best way to contact the teachers of your child is to email them. All of the email addresses of the teachers are available on the school's website.

Students will begin to plan and register for classes for the 2021-22 school year in February of 2021. Please be on the lookout for more information from Mrs. Sarah Hester, the high school's Guidance Counselor.

I would like to thank all of the parents, students, and staff members for their hard work and dedication as we navigate this difficult time together. I do not know of one teacher who went to college to study to be a teacher to sit in front of a computer and teach to a web camera. People get into the career of education because we enjoy working with students and helping them prepare to face the world and become successful adults. This is a challenging time and we will continue to work hard.

COVID-19 will pass, and we will return to our normal school day soon. As you go about your day, please do your part by wearing a face covering, washing your hands and practicing social distancing to ensure we can get students back into the building fulltime.

Go Bearcats!

### ***WVHS Yearbook Pick-Up Available***

2019-2020 WVHS Yearbooks are in and at the High School for pick up. Stop by the front office to pick it up and/or send an email to [Jamiee.Sampson@wv.kyschools.us](mailto:Jamiee.Sampson@wv.kyschools.us).



## Directory Information

From time-to-time school-related groups and organizations ask for the addresses of students or graduates. Examples of these groups include the PTSA, Music Parents Association (WVMPA), WAVE Foundation, Alumni Association, class reunion groups, Military recruiters, and so on. If you object to having this information released, please contact the appropriate school or district office.

Walton-Verona High School has declared its campus to be TOBACCO-FREE. No smoking or other use of tobacco/nicotine products is permitted on our school grounds at any time. In the interest of the health and safety of our students, we ask you to serve as a role-model and help us maintain a tobacco-free environment. Thank you for your assistance.

### *Technology Resources for NTI:*

For students and parents who need assistance during NTI, please visit our District Digital Learning Coach's webpage at:

<http://wv.kyschools.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=324341&pageId=9829526>

You will find a link to her webpage that contains a plethora of information on technology resources to use while in our new mode of education. This includes directions, descriptions, links, and more.

### **STUDENT ATTENDANCE REQUEST**

Attention Parents: Should your child need to be absent for 5 days or more due to illness, surgery, hospital stay, or certain extenuating circumstances, please contact the school where he/she attends.

**HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION** is available for students that have a qualifying ailment verified in advance by a doctor. Homebound Instruction allows your child to keep up with his/her school work and he/she is not counted absent while in this program.

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## *The Walton-Verona Mirror*

*The Walton-Verona Mirror is a reflection of the Walton-Verona District and is intended to provide information to its students, parents, and employees. Any comments or suggestions can be submitted to Mrs. Sampson's Journalism class at the Walton-Verona High School.*

Please email [Jamiee.sampson@wv.kyschools.us](mailto:Jamiee.sampson@wv.kyschools.us) or [MirrorSubmit@wv.kyschools.us](mailto:MirrorSubmit@wv.kyschools.us)

**Walton-Verona Provides Equal Educational and Employment Opportunities**

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