

*Bob Thomas, Superintendent*

Dear KCS families,

We were very excited to welcome our teachers back to the classroom yesterday, getting ready for the new school year. We have the very best educators and I know they miss their students and can't wait to start teaching.

We want the very best start to this school year. In order for us to do that, we need to give our administrative team and staff an additional week to prepare. After considering a variety of factors, I am delaying the start of school for students by one week. This means **the first day of school, both in-person and virtual, will be delayed one week to Monday, Aug. 24.** (Reminder, the first day of school is a half-day for students.)

I want you to know that this was not a decision that we took lightly, but we felt it was important to help our schools be better positioned for reopening, especially with the launch of our new virtual learning program. As you know, the demand for virtual learning significantly exceeded our expectations with more than 18,000 students enrolled. While we are excited that so many want to take advantage of this opportunity, it has also created some challenges in an already compressed timeline.

The additional week will allow us to:

1. Provide schools more time to complete scheduling of both in-person and virtual classes. As you might imagine, this is a massive undertaking every school year for on-campus classes alone. Adding virtual classes has created another layer of scheduling that schools have never had to manage before.
2. Secure additional staffing to cover some KCS virtual classes. While our vacancies are reflective of where we usually are this time of year for in-person instruction, we must fill positions to cover some of our core classes that will be taught through the virtual learning program.
3. Provide new hires for the virtual learning program time to train on our online platforms. We are hiring new employees daily, and an additional week will help them complete this training.
4. Provide existing KCS teachers more time to become more familiar with our online platforms. While most of our teachers (82%) volunteered over the summer to take advantage of the online training that we offered, this will allow time for all to complete or review it.
5. Get devices deployed to all students. As we have stated, we are continuously monitoring the public health situation in our community and it is important for our families to be prepared if a school(s) or the district must go to remote learning. Getting devices in the hands of our students will give them an opportunity to become familiar with them before school starts.
6. Provide case managers and special education service providers more time to make individual contact with students and families. While we are making great strides, additional time would be beneficial.

7. Provide more time for supplies to be received and delivered to schools (including misters and walk-through thermometers).

This school year won't be easy, but we are determined to start school in the safest manner possible.

Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,

*Bob Thomas*

Bob