

Granite City District 9 Board Of Education Votes To Start 2020-2021 School Year Online, Learning Plans, Extracurricular Rules Still To Be Announced

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July 23 2020 11:55 AM



GRANITE CITY - In a Granite City Community Unit School District 9 Board of Education meeting on Monday evening, the board voted unanimously to start the 2020-21 school year online, with all students engaged in E-learning, which will keep all school buildings closed through at least the first half of the school year.

The schools were set to open on Monday, Aug. 24, a one-week delay from the original opening day, because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Cases in the Metro-East and Southwestern Illinois areas have spiked in recent days, causing much concern.

In a statement that was read at the meeting, new superintendent Stephanie Cann cited the uncertainty of the present times as part of the reason to start the year online.

"Knowing that the number one priority is the health and welfare of our students and staff, the board has made a decision this evening to have our students engage in full remote learning for the fall semester," Cann said in her statement. "This very difficult decision was made after careful deliberation of all relevant information surrounding the reopening of schools. This included current COVID health trends in our area, many reopening plans from districts across the country, our parent and staff survey results, along with district fiscal and logistical restraints involved in reopening of schools."

Cann emphasized that E-learning will be much different than the end of the last school year, when schools statewide were closed because of the initial outbreak of the virus, as ordered by Governor J.B. Pritzker.

"Remote and E-learning will look much different than last spring in the Granite City school district," Cann said, "and will be consistently provided, with more explicit expectations and accountability for instructions and assignments. Detailed E-learning plans will be provided to the parents and guardians no later than Aug. 7. The specifics on extracurricular activities will be released, along with that remote learning plan.

"We appreciate your patience and understanding in these unprecedented times," Cann continued, "and please know that the education and safety of your children remains our primary concern."

All school board members who were present at the meeting --- Dennis Wilmsmeyer, Tanja Cook-Sedabres, Linda Knogl, Zack Nunn and president Matt Jones --- voted in favor of the proposal.

In other business, an opening on the board, due to the resignation of Kathy Hagnauer, will be placed on both the school district's website and social media platforms, and will be made available to all interested parties who meet the district's requirements and

qualifications. The opening will be made available for two weeks, after which the new member will be appointed by the board to fill the unexpired term after interviews and screening.