

# Gainey reviews schools' COVID response, outlook for fall semester

**Eighth person dies from COVID-19 in Randolph County, another 26 people test positive**

**By Larry Penkava and Ray Criscoe**

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ASHEBORO — Dr. Stephen Gainey was featured Thursday on the Randolph County COVID update video. The superintendent

of The Randolph County School System said the 2020-21 school term will begin on Monday, Aug. 17, one week earlier than originally planned due to orders from the state.

“There are a lot of uncertainties for next year,” he said, including development of safety precautions expected to come from the state. As for extracurricular activities, Gainey said, “We’re waiting for

decisions.”

While plans are for students to return to school for the fall semester, Gainey said remote learning from home “will probably play a role.”

He reviewed what had happened in the school system since March 13, the last day students were in school. Because of the COVID-19 virus outbreak, Gov. Roy Cooper ordered public schools to close and for students to be given

lessons online or from packets for the remote learning program.

With concerns for the next year, Gainey said he would like input from families with schoolchildren, particularly on the remote learning program. He also reminded parents that all school materials should be returned by June 4.

With so many children on

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# SCHOOLS

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free and reduced lunches unable to be fed at school, Gainey said, the school system has delivered 205,872 meals at various locations around the county. He thanked those who helped, including social workers, bus drivers and sheriff deputies for helping to feed the children.

As for graduation at the seven high schools, Gainey said that the board of education, principals and high school seniors “wrestled with” coming up with an alternative plan. A survey of seniors, he said, received a 71 percent response rate, with 82 percent of respondents favoring graduation ceremonies in late July or August. It was decided to have all graduations on Saturday, July 25.

Gainey said school buildings are meant for students. “We miss you ... we miss the parents ... and we miss community members at (school)

events. But I’m confident we’ll get to the other side of this crisis and return to normal.”

Leading off the video was Darrell Frye, chair of the Randolph County Board of Commissioners. Saying that this was the last video before the Memorial Day weekend, Frye gave a refresher course on the origins of Memorial Day, which began as Decoration Day during the Civil War. Its purpose is to remember all veterans who have given their lives for the country.

“We should never take our freedoms for granted,” Frye said. “Remember those who gave their lives so we can be free.”

Susan Hayes, director of Public Health, reminded citizens to continue to practice social distancing, to wear masks when in public and to wash hands frequently. She also summarized Phase 2 of reopening the state for business.

County Manager Hal Johnson said this was the 18th video updating the public on the county’s

response to COVID-19. He reminded viewers that the next video will be released on Tuesday, May 26.

## Randolph County numbers

Randolph County Public Health announced on May 22 the eighth death in the county from COVID-19. The number of lab-confirmed cases jumped by 26 from the previous day, up to 543. There were 14 patients hospitalized, 192 cases in isolation and 343 released from isolation.

## State numbers

As of 10:51 a.m. Friday, May 22, there were 21,618 cases of COVID-19 in North Carolina, with all 100 counties reporting at least one infection. There were 728 deaths from the virus.

## State unemployment figures

North Carolina has paid a total of \$2,367,858,741 in unemployment insurance

benefits to 573,736 claimants during the period from March 15-May 21, according to NC Department of Commerce Employment Security. Of the total, \$1,289,490,058 came from Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation and \$411,670,045 from Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. The remainder was from the state’s unemployment insurance fund.

During the March 15-May 21 period, the state has received 1,266,894 claims for unemployment insurance benefits, including 14,061 on May 21. Of the total claims for the period, 930,032 were made by individuals.

## Badin Road Drive-In reopens

Among businesses reopening this weekend is the Badin Road Drive-In on Badin Lake near Albemarle, according to its Facebook page.

The drive-in features two screens. One will show the movies “Trolls: World Tour” and “Onward.” The second

screen will show “We Summon the Darkness” and “The Invisible Man.” Showings began Friday night, May 22.

Stricter rules will be in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic. People will help park cars to keep them six feet apart; about 350 vehicles will be allowed in, which is “significantly less than normal,” the FB post said. Those in the cars can sit outside as long as they remain in their parking area.

Concessions and bathrooms will be open, but

with markings to maintain 6-foot separation. Bathrooms will be limited to a finite number of people at one time and be closed periodically for restocking and sanitizing.

The playground will be closed until further notice.