

Schools formulate back-to-school plan

BY DANIEL KENNEDY

RANDOLPH COUNTY — As students briefly returned to school campuses last week to close the book on the 2019-20 school year, educators in Randolph County continued to formulate plans for an eventual return for good.

Stephen Gainey, superintendent of Randolph County Schools, said students returned to campus for the purposes of returning any property belonging to the schools, including text books,

instructional materials, library books, athletic team uniforms and Chromebooks. Those who had personal items inside the school since closure March 13 were able to reclaim property during the process.

Meanwhile, focus groups of teachers, lead teachers, principals, assistant principals and central office staff members are working toward meeting 15 legislative standards passed along by the state in a back-to-school plan for the fall. Among the ques-

tions facing county school officials, they must answer how to take up attendance during the 2020-21 school year if remote learning is necessitated, how to grade students and what if all students and staff cannot be brought back at the same time.

“We don’t know, but we’re actively discussing these possibilities,” Gainey said. “Our preference will be that everybody comes back at the same time.”

Gainey said it is important

that parents and students know RCS is working on alternative solutions in the event an optimal back-to-school plan cannot be realized.

A survey of parents submitted May 21 gathered feedback on remote learning, regarding what has and has not worked well, in addition to obtaining suggestions for improvement. The RCS remote learning plan has to be submitted to the state

SEE **PLAN/PAGE A3**

PLAN

FROM **PAGE A1**

board of education no later than July 20.

Revised calendars for Randolph’s 30 traditional schools led to changes to a potential start date for all of the county’s schools. Randolph Early College start date was moved up two days to Aug. 4. Traditional schools will begin Aug. 17.

In the meantime, the calen-

dar of events throughout the summer began June 9 with the official closure of the 2019-20 school year, feeding sites that were operating during the time of school closure and delivery of those meals.

“After we close those sites and shut down the food delivery, we will move to our summer feeding program that happens every summer,” Gainey said.

That summer feeding program begins June 15 at sites across the county, including Trinity Elementary School. Sites will remain open from 11 a.m. to

12:30 p.m. each day.

Student services, including chorus and marching band, remain a focus of county staff as they continue to search for ways to reopen programs that are imperative to supplementing education.

“We know our students love those activities, and we want to get those activities back in gear as soon as possible,” Gainey said.

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