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RCSS unveils backup plan for 2020-21

Gainey: 'We surely hope Aug. 17 is a school day like we've always known it, but if not, we'll be prepared.'

By Tyler Davis

For The Courier-Tribune

During Randolph County School System's board meeting on June 1, Superintendent Dr. Stephen Gainey gave a cursory look at planning for the 2020-21 school year. He said the school board is likely to introduce a remote learning plan

for approval at the next board meeting.

Gainey said any remote learning plan they do pass would be applied "as needed."

"We surely hope Aug. 17 is a school day like we've always known it," he said, "but if not, we'll be prepared."

Gainey implored students and parents to take the survey posted on their webpage to provide feedback on the remote learning plan in place now.

Gainey said staff members are also working on a back-to-school plan, addressing issues

in six areas:

- Academics.
- Communication.
- Finances.
- Human resources.
- Operations.
- Student services.

All six areas are being considered for the 2020-21 school year. No specifics were discussed, but Gainey emphasized the importance of transparency between parents and the school system leadership.

Gainey mentioned that the board will have to be "crafty" and "strategic" with resources

and planning going forward.

"We're closing for the 2019-2020 school year," Gainey said. "We're going to back to school Aug. 17 — somehow, somehow."

RCSS is getting federal relief money from three sources: State PRC 154-COVID Supplemental Funds, Federal PRC 163-CARES Act, and the HB 1043-2020 COVID Recovery Act.

Uwharrie Ridge growth, concern

Director of Career-Technical Education Nancy Cross took

the floor to give a report on Uwharrie Ridge 6-12.

She reviewed Uwharrie Ridge's growth going into the final year of its transition, with the first graduating senior class attending in the fall.

For the 2020-21 school year, 533 students are projected to attend, which is 83% of the campus' capacity.

Cross outlined new and upcoming opportunities offered to students at Uwharrie Ridge.

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Nearly half of the school's junior class, 22 out of 54, accessed Career and College Promise classes with Randolph

Community College. New classes in drone technology and computer science were offered. Cross praised principal Brian Hill for starting to build traditions at a school without high school traditions.

Prom was planned but canceled in the face of COVID-19, but Cross said

"it's on tap" for next year.

Board Member Tracy Boyles expressed concern in the attendance projection, saying the growth wasn't meeting expectations. He said Uwharrie Ridge has to "offer more to get that rise."

Boyles also stressed the importance of winning

the community's support to introduce more programs, specifically in reference to an agriculture program.

"We haven't found our niche yet, but we got to find it," Boyles said. "Because if we don't, we're going to stay at 50 kids this year."

Summer learning for K-4

Dr. Lynette Graves, Director of Elementary Education and Title I, presented a proposal to begin a supplemental summer learning program for students in grades K-4. It would be provided remotely with an option

for parents who want their child to access the program through printed materials.

Elementary teachers would be hired to support by phone and virtually.

The plan, meant to help those whose learning was negatively impacted by COVID-19, was passed unanimously.