

ESSEX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Office of the Superintendent

Essex County Public Schools
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May 13, 2021

Greetings Essex Schools Family!

In keeping with my last correspondence about planning for the coming school year, I notified the Essex Schools' community that we are preparing to offer virtual instruction through a partnership with a learning management system (LMS) vendor. I also indicated that we selected a committee of teachers, students, parents and administrators to provide a recommendation to me and the School Board, concerning the vendor best positioned to meet the needs of our students. That committee provided that recommendation and the selected vendor is Virtual Virginia (VVa). Students on the review committee mentioned that "VVa should be used given the ease of use with the home school division and it operates in a similar manner to ECPS." Teachers on the committee maintained, "VVa offers synchronous instruction and a schedule similar to ours."

In our survey results thus far, 20% of our families have requested entry into the Essex Schools Virtual Academy (partnership with VVa). To allow our students and families to make an informed decision about which path to pursue, virtual or in-person, we are planning virtual academy information sessions:

Date	Time	Place
May 27	5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.	EIS
June 1	5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.	EHS

The informational meetings will also be recorded and later provided to those unable to attend. The sessions will entail a complete overview of the virtual instructional partnership with Virtual Virginia, from course selection, grading, even teacher-student interactions.

Applications for admittance into the Essex Schools Virtual Academy will be available online, in each school's office, and the School Board Office by **June 2**, with an application deadline of **June 14**. Notifications for entry into the program will be given out on **June 16**. Application criteria will be based on a student's past success in virtual instruction, a student's capacity to operate effectively in the virtual world with minimum parent support, and those significantly predisposed to health challenges (in addition to other admission criteria). For every student who enters the virtual academy, the school division will have to pay a fee of approximately \$3000.00. Given the prohibitive nature of such costs, there will be a limited number of spaces within the Essex Schools Virtual Academy. Should you have any questions regarding this notification, please contact your child's school principal.

Sincerely,

Dr. Harry R. Thomas III
Division Superintendent, ECPS