



For Immediate Release

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Portsmouth City and Schools Partner for Back to School Week Event

(PORTSMOUTH, VA – August 1, 2019) – The city of Portsmouth and Portsmouth Public Schools (PPS) are partnering with respective agencies to create **Portsmouth Back to School Week**, August 24-30. The week-long event will be a celebration of teachers and learning; and it will connect the community, parents and faith-based organizations to students in Portsmouth's 23 schools and centers.

"The education and training of our young people are critically important in preparing them for the careers and jobs in the next part of the 21st century," said Dr. L. Pettis Patton, Portsmouth city manager. "The Portsmouth Back to School Week will galvanize school and city administrators, teachers, parents, students and community to work together in support of education."

"The beginning of the school is such a special time for all of us in public education," said Dr. Elie Bracy, III, PPS division superintendent. "It is a time of energy and excitement for the year to come. We are thrilled to have our entire city share in this enthusiasm and publicly show their support for our students, families and staff members as we kick off another year."

Below is the list of events happening before and during the **Portsmouth Back to School Week**:

Friday, August 2–4: Virginia Tax-Free Weekend Reminder

A three day sales tax holiday when persons can buy most items including school supplies and clothing tax free. Although most Virginia students won't begin school until after Labor Day, the time to shop for school supplies and clothing is early in the month. From August 2–4 at 11:59 a.m., Virginia will observe its sales tax holiday. During this time, the state sales tax (4.4%) and the local option tax (1%) will be waived on certain purchases for a combined waiver of 5.3%.

Tuesday, August 13: City Council Public Meeting *(City Council and the School Board)*

The week-long, event will bring together citizens, businesses, and faith-based community, in an effort to heighten the awareness and importance of education and school attendance. City Council and the PPS Schoolboard will sign a proclamation in an effort to show solidarity and mutual support for prioritization of education, school attendance and aligning with Council's 4 BIG Things: Lifelong Learning and the Best Place to Live.

Saturday, August 24 • 10 a.m.: Parade/Processional *(Free & Open to the Public)*

Begins at Godwin Street (near Third Baptist Church) and ends at I.C. Norcom. Parade will include all three high school bands, athletes, and cheerleaders.

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Immediately following the Parade: Annual Forward 2 School

Sponsored by the Portsmouth Schools Foundation, this annual event will have something for the whole family including bounce houses, health screenings, food and school supply giveaways. Forward 2 School will take place at I.C. Norcom High School. Event sponsored by the Portsmouth Schools Foundation Parks, Recreation & Tourism activities, Portsmouth Health Department, Department of Social Services, Behavioral Healthcare Services, and Friends of the Portsmouth Juvenile Court will be onsite. *(Free and Open to the Public)*

Sunday, August 25: Back to School Sunday

The City of Portsmouth and Portsmouth Public Schools Division sent an invitation to Portsmouth churches and pastors encouraging them to focus messages, during their morning services, on the importance of education and announcing the Portsmouth Back to School Week. The churches will also be invited to join the Portsmouth Schools Foundation's Forward 2 School in an effort to show community collaboration. Wednesdays are widely known in the faith-based community as Bible Study Night. Pastors have also been asked to dedicate their Wednesday Night Bible Study to focus on the importance of good "study" habits and academic success.

Tuesday, August 27: Back to School Pep Rally

The more than 2,000 employees of PPS will gather together for a Back to School Pep Rally. Held at Churchland High School, the pep rally will feature live performances, a motivational speaker and surprise giveaways to celebrate the start of school and outline the priorities for the upcoming year. Elected officials will also be in attendance. *(Closed to the Public)*

Wednesday, August 28: Kickoff to Kindergarten • 3–6 p.m. • (Portsmouth)

The Portsmouth Public Schools Title I Office will be hosting, Kickoff to Kindergarten, a special event aimed to prepare and help get rising kindergarteners excited for the start of their school careers. This event will be held at the Resource Center, 3651 Hartford Street. There will be music, food, door prizes and a bounce house. All rising kindergartners are welcome to attend. In order to be attend, students just need to bring a summer reading log.

Thursday, August 29: Sunset Thursdays at High Street Landing • 6:30 p.m.

An acknowledgement of the Portsmouth Back to School Week. Representatives will also provide a special thanks to citizens, businesses, and the faith-based community for being education partners. *(Free and Open to the Public)*

Wellness Day • Woodrow Wilson High School • 8:30 a.m.–Noon

Wellness Day is a division-wide event made possible through a partnership between the Portsmouth Schools Foundation and the Portsmouth Public Schools. This event gives Portsmouth Public School employees access to a wide variety of health screenings provided by volunteers from the medical community. *(Closed to the Public)*

Friday, August 30: Support your local High School Friday Night Football Game

Games for each of Portsmouth's three high schools will be in full effect whether they are away or home. Wilson High School at Lakeland High School and Churchland High School plays at Grafton High School. Both games begin at 7 p.m. I.C. Norcom does not have a game scheduled.

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