

A. Russell Hughes
Superintendent of Schools

Walton

COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Parents and Guardians,

I am certain you are aware of the solar eclipse that will occur on Monday, August 21st. This will be the first total solar eclipse to occur coast to coast in the United States since 1918. This rare phenomenon is one that many people are excited to watch and, I believe, is a significant educational opportunity for our students.

As always, my concern is for the safety of our children! A solar eclipse can pose some danger to those who look directly at the sun. The only safe way to view an eclipse is by using special glasses designed for the specific purpose of viewing the event. These glasses need to be compliant with the ISO 12312-2 International Safety Standard. Unfortunately, we have learned of reports that the market has been flooded with counterfeit versions of these glasses. We also have learned that the online retailer, Amazon, has very recently recalled certain brands of eclipse glasses that were stamped with the ISO standard. The uncertainty created by this information poses a risk to our students that I am unwilling to take.

Therefore, I have decided that there will be **no outside activities at any of Walton County's schools on Monday, August 21st between the hours of 11:30 am and 3:15 pm**. This decision was not made haphazardly; but rather was made after hours of research on both eclipse safety standards and eclipse glasses, as well as consultation with surrounding school districts.

I ask that you please have serious conversations with your children regarding the danger of looking at the sun anytime, but especially during a solar eclipse. The peak of the eclipse will occur at 1:36 pm on Monday. Some school dismissals will begin shortly after this time. Students will be instructed on the safety precautions they need to observe before dismissal, but we need your help in emphasizing the importance of them following the guidelines they receive from their school.

Our teachers will be using live streaming websites provided by NASA and Discovery Education to follow the eclipse as it unfolds across the nation so that our students are able to witness this rare event safely.

As usual, know that absences will be excused with a note from you for Monday, August 21st if you choose to keep your child home during the solar eclipse.

Thank you so much for your support and assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



A. Russell Hughes
Superintendent of Schools

"Preparing the Whole Child for a Life of Success"

Gail Smith
District 1

Kim Kirby
District 2

Bill Eddins, Jr.
District 3

Marsha Winegarner
District 4

Jason Catalano
District 5