

www.knoxfocus.com



Phone: 865-686-9970 | PO Box 18377, Knoxville, TN 37928 | Located at 4109 Central Avenue Pike, Knoxville, Tennessee 37912

Haslam family gift will support insurance for student laptops

family will help economically disadvantaged families obtain insurance for new Chromebooks that will be provided to all K-12 students in Knox County Schools

Earlier this year, the Knox County Board of Education and Knox County Commission approved a 1:1 plan that will make a Chromebook computer available to each KCS student in grades K-12, starting in August.

While that plan makes Chromebooks available at no cost, families will be given the option to buy insurance for \$30. This insurance will offset the cost of repairs or a total loss of the device, which would result in a charge of \$200.

Recognizing that some families

ance, the Haslam family will provide a their Chromebooks and to enhance \$900,000 gift to offset the cost of that insurance for Knox County's needlest families. The joint gift is being made by Natalie and Jim Haslam; Dee and Jimmy Haslam; former First Lady Crissy Haslam and former Gov. Bill Haslam; and Ann Haslam Bailey and Steve Bailey.

"The Haslam family has always been strong advocates of education and of Knox County Schools in particular," said Superintendent Bob Thomas. "This gift continues their legacy of supporting our students, and we're deeply grateful for their generosity. By providing insurance for families who otherwise could not afford it, we believe this gift will give

their learning.

In a statement, the Haslam family said, "Equal access to education is critical, and this includes the technology tools that help students learn. We want to ensure that all Knox County students feel comfortable and confident utilizing the new Chromebooks for enriched learning, and we hope that the coverage of insurance fees will allow all students to consistently utilize their Chromebooks. As a family, we are always humbled to being able to help empower our youth and continue to give them a stronger and equal foundation from which they can



The Haslam family from left to right: Bill Haslam, Steve and Ann Bailey, Jimmy, Dee, Natalie, Jim and Crissy

South High Senior Living opens



Thursday with a ribbon cutting. Dover, who also developed Knoxville High School into a senior living faciland renovated the facility, designed originally by Charles Barber, into a Memory Care

state-of-the-art assisted living facil-

The South High Senior Living ity, took the 1937 South High School facility is now "like new" and has

KCS unveils reopening plan for 2020-21

Knox County Schools unveiled its reopening plan at the board of education's regular session meeting Wednesday at the Andrew Johnson Building

While the schools will open, the school year won't begin as scheduled. Classes will begin on Aug. 17, a week later than expected and KCS Superintendent Bob Thomas urged parents and students to be patient when things finally get going.

"I'm asking all of our stakeholders for grace. It's not going to be perfect on the first day," Thomas said. " wish it would be perfect, but it probably won't be."

Although schools are slated to open, the plan, which was released prior to the meeting on the KCS website and on its social media outlets, includes a virtual learning option.

Parents and students wishing to participate in remote learning must enroll in the Virtual Learning Program by Wednesday, July 22. Students who select the remote learning option must remain in the program for at least the fall semester.

"If students go into remote learning, they have to stay there for the whole semester," Thomas said. "We wanted to try to remain as flexible as we could, but they'll have to stay for the first semester

We tried to listen to everybody and incorporate as much of what we heard into this plan and give the parents choices.

Remote learning will continue regardless of COVID-19

Continue on page 3

3 of 5 Board of Health Benchmarks turn red

Senior Writer steelym@knoxfocus.com

By Mike Steely

Senior Writer steelym@knoxfocus.com

Old South High School, aban-

doned for years until developer Rick

Dover bought it, officially opened

19 benchmarks showing as red to deal with the pandemic got a ments for the county. lights in the Knoxville region the Knox County Board of Health pitals was indicated in "yellow" has issued a list of recommen- or caution. dations, including continuing its mask mandate, and voted quality officer of the University lion COVID-19 grant to help Wednesday to begin meeting Health Systems, was successful deal with the local upsurge and ing masks is "so fundamentalweekly rather than bi-weekly.

ment Director Dr. Martha Buchan- dation" which went into effect al. She said that one of the test- in the region will be hospitalan introduced the "traffic light" symbol months ago but this is the first time three of the indicators are shown in as a stop or red light. Three of the benchmarks Director Myers Morton about the being reported back to the health includes her staff.

the number of COVID-19 cases, recommendation. an increase in deaths and lag-"green" light the capacity of hos-

in introducing a two-page "Comafter Jacobs asked Deputy Law

Jacobs had been the lone "No" With three of the five COVID- ging test results. While capacity vote on the initial mask require- about before results are report- nating efforts to look at creating

Knox County Health Department Director Dr. Martha Buck- two weeks between board meet- the virus spikes again, eases off. hannon told the board the ings the number of deaths have and then spikes again Dr. James Shamiyeh, chief county has received a \$7.1 mil- increased from five to 15. that funding will go to the Knox Iy important." He said that 52 Knox County Health Depart- munity Education Recommen- County Commission for approv- people of every 1,000 cases Thursday. The unanimous vote on ing companies has pulled out ized and hospital capacity is the guidelines got Knox County of local testing and switched to decreasing. He said hospitals Mayor Glenn Jacob's "Yes" vote Nashville testing. She said that are experiencing "staff fatigue" test results have been too slow in and Dr. Buchanan indicated that

who were tested are "out and said local hospitals are coordied back to the department.

She also noted that during the

Dr. Shamiyeh said wear-

She said, with that lag, people said of the virus outbreak and additional space. He said when local health efforts settle down

> Mayor Jacobs described the effort as "buying time until we have a vaccine" and called the increase in cases "pretty alarming.

Buchanan said the health department is getting reports from citizens about businesses not following COVID-19 requirements and said those businesses

Continue on page 4





2026 N Charles G Seviers Blvd · Clinton, TN 865.457.0704

www.rayvarnerford.com



Comforters, Drapes, Quilts & More

In Fountain City

Full Service Dry Cleaner & Laundry

688-2191 www.hallscleaners.net