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KCS to continue virtual and in-person learning for spring

By Ken Lay

Knox County Schools will continue to offer both remote and in-person learning opportunities for the upcoming spring semester.

Superintendent Bob Thomas announced the decision Wednesday night at the school board's work session meeting at the Andrew Johnson Building.

"I want to thank our teachers, administrators and employees for making the re-opening of our schools possible," Thomas said. "It was a challenge and we knew it was going to be."

"I want to thank them for what they've done to make this possible when we opened six-and-a-half weeks ago today. I'm pleased to announce that we will offer both virtual and in-person learning for the spring semester, beginning on January 5."

Thomas also noted that families that opt to keep their current learning model will not have to make any changes with the district.

"For those who want to stay in the classroom or stay in virtual, they do not have to do anything," Thomas said. "If you want to move from virtual to the classroom or if you want to move from the classroom to virtual, you will have a window to decide between Oct. 26 and Nov. 6."

"I would encourage families and parents to start thinking about that now and not wait until Nov. 6. We will have more details available on our website soon."

Thomas also requested that parents and families be patient as they await responses from their children's teachers.

"I appreciate the involvement of our parents and families, but I'm going to respectfully make one request: that our parents and families be patient with our teachers and responsiveness."

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Road to Fame inductees for 2020 include (top row, L-R) Bryce Beeler, Cody Humphrey, Randy Carroll, (middle) Scott Carter, (bottom) Wes Kitts, Larry Neely and Dink Adams.

By Steve Williams

Halls High Road to Fame's Class of 2020 has quality

The second class of the Halls High Athletics' Road to Fame may not have the quantity of the inaugural 2019 class, but it has the quality.

The seven inductees of the 2020 class will be announced and presented in a ceremony prior to Halls' homecoming game against South-Doyle Friday night.

Talk about quality. The school's football field just happened to be named after one of this year's Road to Fame honorees - Dink Adams, or as it says on the scoreboard, Dink "Dink" Adams.

During his 32-year career at Halls, from 1968 until 2000, Adams was a physical education teacher and head football coach, assistant principal and athletic director, and head principal.

Other 2020 inductees are Bryce Beeler, Randy Carroll, Scott Carter, Cody Humphrey, Wesley Kitts and Larry Neely.

"I think they are as exceptional as the 12 inductees we had in the first class," said Jerry Julian, president of the Road to Fame program. "Each one is an individual with great achievements."

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'Fall in Love With South High' services soiree draws visitors

By Mike Steely

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Opening an assisted living center in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic was unusual for Helen Porter, executive director of South High Senior Living, but she endured. The facility, in the totally renovated school building at 835 Tipton Avenue in South Knoxville, is up and running.

"It's been interesting to watch it finally come to life and to now have residents here," she told The Focus Wednesday. She was busy greeting guests, neighbors, and coordinating the Senior Services Soiree event that

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Helen Porter, executive director of South High Senior Living, points out illustrations of the many rooms at the new assisted living and memory care facility in South Knoxville. Photo by Mike Steely.

Ani Roma selected as citizen member of Board of Health

By Mike Steely

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Ani Roma, a health teacher at Hardin Valley Middle School, was selected last Monday by the Knox County Commission to be the lone citizen member of the Knox County Board of Health. About two dozen people submitted resumes but after seven hours of debate only a handful of candidates remained at the meeting.

As so many candidates had abandoned the long meeting, Chairman Larsen Jay moved to postpone the selection of the citizen Board of Health member. However the motion failed as Commissioners Randy Smith, Kyle Ward, John Schoonmaker, Terry Hill, Charles Busler and Justin Biggs voted against deferring the selection.

The eight remaining applicants spoke for

about two minutes each and Commissioner Hill nominated Roma.

Roma told the board she's a local business owner, a health teacher, has children in Knox County Schools, and is an avid outdoor person. She said she supports "long term wellness for our community."

It took three rounds of voting but Roma was selected with the votes of Commissioners Dasha Lundy, Courtney Durrett, Carson Dailey, Busler, Hill and Jay. Voting for Ward's nominee, attorney Steve Weiner, were Commissioners Richie Beeler, Smith, Schoonmaker and Ward. Although restaurant chain owner Randy Burleson had been mentioned last month as a candidate, his name was never brought up during Monday night's discussion.

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