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**EARLY REGISTRATION HELPS PARENTS, CHILDREN  
AVOID HEADACHES NEXT FALL**

As the chief records manager with Newport News Schools, Penny Norton – above all people – knew she shouldn't wait until the last minute to register her son for school when they moved from Isle of Wight two years ago, but she procrastinated anyway.

As a result, her son had to sit in the Gildersleeve Middle School library for the first day-and-a-half until he could be properly processed.

“I knew better, but I was slack,” Norton says. Her son was embarrassed and frustrated about the incident, but Norton says she understands – better than most – why late registration leads to a chaotic start to the school year.

“There are multiple things that happen to families that cause you to put off what you know you should do. I delayed because I was in the middle of closing on our house,” she says.

To prevent other parents and students from experiencing similar problems in the fall, Newport News Schools has initiated a promotional campaign and the establishment of special registration centers to encourage parents to register early. Parents who register early are able to ensure their child has a teacher assignment, books and desk; learn their child's school, homeroom and schedule; ensure their child has a bus stop; and obtain information about open house schedules.

Parents must register their children if they:

- are starting school for the first time,
- are new to Newport News schools,
- or have moved over the summer.

Parents can register at their new school weekdays during the summer or visit a registration center at designated times. Also, parents who require alternate in-zone stops for childcare must submit a request at the child's school in advance or registration center in advance.

The registration campaign, called 'Every Student Counts,' includes radio, print and bus (HRT) advertising, as well as banners, signs, brochures and posters.

Making residents aware of the need to register children early is a top priority for school administrators. Last year 3,275 students were registered the week before school opened or during the following two weeks. That's 10 percent of the student population and makes for a confusing – and expensive – situation.

Late registration and other transportation issues require the school division to hire temporary workers to work from six to eight weeks every fall to handle the 2,000-plus calls and faxes per day it receives from parents with requests and questions. In addition, six supervisors answer calls daily from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m.

"It takes at least two to three days to get each student into the computer system so that we can assign a classroom and bus stop," says Transportation Executive Director Frank Labrecque.

"Parents get frustrated because they don't understand why it takes so long to make assignments, but there is a lot involved with each one," Labrecque says. He explains that moving or creating a new bus stop, for example, requires someone to physically go out to look at the location before it can be approved.

"We want students to have a successful and positive school year, and registering early will help reduce the stress and anxiety of parents and students."

To register children **who have moved within the city**, parents must provide legal residence verification such as a lease, contract or mortgage; current utility bill; or a military housing acceptance letter.

To register a child in Newport News Public Schools **for the first time**, a parent must also provide immunization records, a certified birth certificate, a physical exam for children in pre-K through fifth grade, previous report cards and/or the address of the previous school and the child's Social Security Number (preferred but not required).

Parents using the special registration centers for registration are allowed to register children for multiple schools at one stop. Those registering at the registration centers will receive a free school supply starter kit while supplies last.

Schedules for the centers are as follows:

- Huntington Middle School, 3401 Orcutt Avenue: July 10 -- 8 a.m.-12 noon and 4-7 p.m.; July 12 -- 8 a.m.-12 noon and 4-7 p.m.; July 14 (Saturday) -- 8 a.m.-12 noon; July 24 -- 8 a.m.-12 noon and 4-7 p.m.; July 26 -- 8 a.m.-12 noon and 4-7 p.m.; and July 28 (Saturday) -- 8 a.m. to 12 noon.
- McIntosh Elementary School, 185 Richneck Road: Aug. 7 -- 8 a.m.-12 noon and 4 p.m.-7 p.m.; Aug. 9 -- 8 a.m.-12 noon and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.; Aug. 11 (Saturday) -- 8 a.m. to 12 noon.

For more information about school registration, parents can call the registration hotline at 283-7848 or visit the Web site at [www.nnschools.org](http://www.nnschools.org).

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