

MONONGALIA COUNTY SCHOOLS

SOLAR ECLIPSE – MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 2017

On the afternoon of August 21, 2017 a total solar eclipse will be visible through much of the United States.

Monongalia County Schools will remain open and on a regular schedule during the solar eclipse on Monday, August 21. Most of West Virginia will experience an 80-93% total eclipse depending on your location. This is the first total solar eclipse since February, 1979 to be visible in the lower 48 states. It will be the first total solar eclipse in 99 years to sweep from coast to coast. The next total solar eclipse won't come our way again until April 8, 2024.

This eclipse is a great teaching opportunity and we will be embracing this rare event. Our science standards provide numerous avenues for teaching about the eclipse.

Schools that have purchased viewing glasses compliant with the ISO 12312-2 international safety standards will be allowed to proceed with planned viewing events. All schools are being encouraged to share the viewing experience with their students by utilizing television feeds, internet live streams, or recordings of the event. Parents may notify their child's school if they wish to opt out of the live viewing experience.

The district has also provided teachers with resources and lessons about the solar eclipse that are aligned with West Virginia's content standards. As part of their instruction, these teachers will be talking with students about the dangers of looking directly at the sun at any time, but especially during the solar eclipse.

While medical professionals advise it is always dangerous to look directly at the sun without appropriate eye protection, out of an abundance of caution, the district is taking extra steps to ensure student safety during the eclipse, while allowing schools to take full advantage of this rare learning opportunity.

Parents or guardians who would like to pick their students up one hour early (12:00 noon) to view the eclipse with them, will be allowed to do so. This hour will be counted as an excused absence. It is NOT exempt from high school finals. Prior to Monday, we encourage families to talk about the upcoming eclipse. There are many resources available online and in phone apps (checkout the free *Eclipse Safari* Apple/Android).

Finally, as school is dismissed, staff will be on hand at each school to instruct students not to look directly at the sun and to monitor students as they exit their schools. Elementary students, whose parents pick them up or ride school buses, will not be permitted to go outside until their transportation has arrived.

Remember the Beatles said – “here comes the sun, and I say...It's all right.” And on Monday, we can add, “there goes the sun and then here it comes again....” What a phenomenal site to see!