



**TODAY:**  
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High: 42° Low: 22°

**THURSDAY:**  
Rain likely  
High: 45° Low: 30°

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# The Messenger

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2021

Madisonville, Kentucky

\$1.49

## SMOOTH TRANSITION

Dawson teachers glad to have students back in classrooms

BY JODI CAMP  
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After months of empty classrooms, Dawson Springs Independent Schools welcomed students back on Monday.

Todd Marshall, principal of the middle and high school, said things are going smoothly after two days of in-person learning on the school's hybrid format.

"Our kids have transitioned back into it very easily," he said.

Jennifer Ward, principal of the elementary school, said the kids and teachers are excited to be back and in a routine.

The elementary, middle and high schools have gone through winter testing to get an idea of where their students are academically and what they need to work on. The elementary used i-Ready, while the middle and high school used CERT testing to determine a student's benchmark level.

"They are not doing as well as we anticipated, which is normal. They really need the teacher's instruction to help them benefit in taking that test," said Marshall.

Ward said her students are not where they would normally be at this time of year, but they are not as far behind as the teachers thought they may be due to remote learning limitations.

Marshall and Ward said students do have learning gaps that need to be filled, but the school is looking into ways to help.

Superintendent Leonard Whalen said the school system is discussing having summer classes available to help.

"We don't have a definite plan, but it is something we are talking about doing," he said. "We are in a situation right now



where we have to figure out where the students are in the learning process, and we will be trying to pick up from that."

First-grade teacher Marcella McCuiston said it was wonderful having the students back, she just wished all the kids could come back.

"I think we are just going to have to get through this pandemic, and right now their health is most important," she said.

Whalen hopes students can soon return to regular class schedules but is happy with progress so far.

"Right now things seem to be going well," said Whalen. "We are trying to get in and keep it rolling."



Photos by Jodi Camp/The Messenger

**Top:** Brannigan Ethridge, the high school Spanish teacher at Dawson Springs High School, helps Ethan Osborne, a 10th grader, work through a scheduling problem.

**Above:** Sam Jones, a first grader at Dawson Springs Elementary, listens to his teacher explain how to subtract before starting the problem in his workbook.

## Council to meet in-person starting Feb. 16

Capacity limits in place; masks required

BY WILL WHALEY  
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At the end of Monday's Madisonville City Council Meeting, Madisonville Mayor Kevin Cotton announced that the next meeting on Monday, Feb. 16 would be both in person and online.

"Those of you that are comfortable coming in person, that will be an option for you, and those that are not comfortable, feel free to still use the WebEx option," said Cotton. "Masks will be required if you are going to be here for the in-person. We will re-evaluate as time goes on. We know that the coronavirus is still here. We are still dealing with cases, but we want to give an opportunity for those that want to get back to in-person. It will be limited numbers and masks will be required."

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## Biden, Yellen say GOP virus aid too small

Democrats push on

BY LISA MASCARO  
AND JOSH BOAK  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden panned a Republican alternative to his \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 rescue plan as insufficient Tuesday as Senate Democrats pushed ahead, voting to launch a process that could approve his sweeping rescue package on their own, if Republicans refuse to support it.

Biden and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen joined the Democratic senators for a private virtual meeting, both declaring the Republicans' \$618 billion offer was too small. They urged big fast action to stem the pandemic crisis and economic fallout.

As the White House reaches for a bipartisan bill, Democrats marshaled their ever-slim Senate majority, voting 50-49, to

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## County jail policy amendments approved

BY WILL WHALEY  
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The Hopkins County Fiscal Court approved amendments to the Hopkins County Jail policy on Tuesday after being presented with the changes in a public safety committee meeting earlier this year.

Jailer Mike Lewis said these were not dramatic changes to the policy and added that most were already in place but need

final approval from the court.

The attendance policy was changed where it allowed employees to not be penalized for visiting the doctor while still keeping the point system in place to help prevent tardiness and absenteeism. Another change concerned mail for inmates.

Lewis said the main reason for the change was technology.

"We no longer pass out every piece of mail that an inmate

receives. If it is legal mail, they do receive the actual note, other than that it is scanned into a kiosk where they can read the scanned copy," Lewis said in a past interview about the policy changes.

Also at the meeting, the court approved the maximum amount which the Hopkins County Sheriff may spend during 2021 for deputies and assistants in his department at \$3,500,000.

This amount includes all monies paid to deputies and assistants from fees and all amounts paid from all other sources for salaries and wages including overtime, vacation pay, health insurance premiums and other benefit contributions.

The court also approved the maximum the Hopkins County Clerk may spend during 2021 for deputies and assistants in the Clerk's office at \$1,200,000.

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