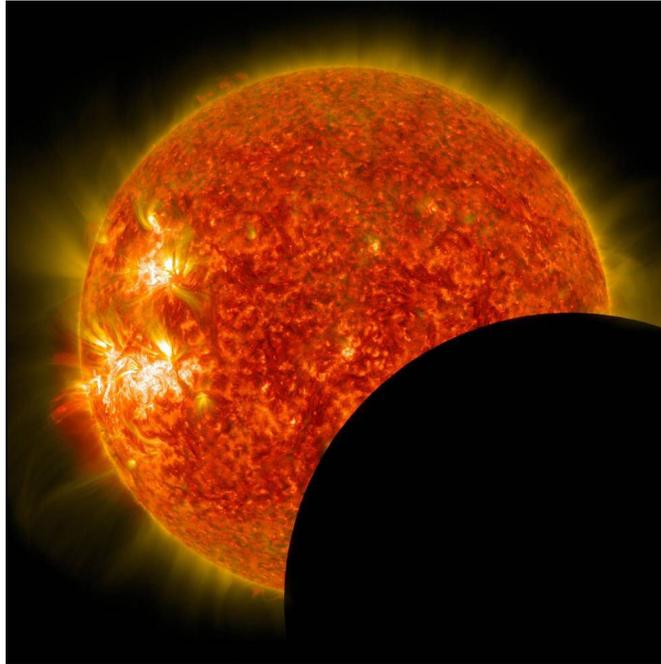


http://www.northwestgeorgianews.com/rome/news/education/school-dismissal-times-being-pushed-back-for-solar-eclipse/article_f9297bb8-7806-11e7-b36d-4bd82d0ed5b3.html

School dismissal times being pushed back for solar eclipse

Spencer Lahr Aug 3, 2017 Updated 9 hrs ago



NASA issues safety tips for eclipse watchers.
NASA photo

The Rome and Floyd County school systems will delay dismissal times by 30 minutes on Aug. 21 due to the solar eclipse, partly a response to safety concerns, but also extending the amount of time for students to participate in unique educational experiences.

The school systems released statements on their decisions Wednesday. Schools will start at their regular times.

The eclipse will start in Rome just after 1 p.m. and go until 4 p.m., and around 2:34 p.m., 97 percent of the sun will be covered by the moon as it passes between the earth and the sun. There will be about a 70-mile-wide strip stretching from the West Coast to the East Coast that will experience a total eclipse.



The statements mention that part of the reason behind delaying the dismissal times is to make sure students safely view the eclipse.

Since Rome is not in the path of totality — where there will be around a two-minute period where people can safely look at the sun — students, along with anyone else watching locally, need to use solar glasses, telescopes with special filtering lenses or things like homemade pinhole projectors to watch the eclipse during all of its duration.

Holly Amerman, coordinator of gifted and STEM education for Rome City Schools, said there couldn't be a better opportunity for students to get greater experience with the system-wide emphasis on phenomenon-based learning. The style essentially leads kids through learning science like a scientist would, with students studying and observing events in the natural world and then explaining the scientific processes therein.

Across all grades in the Rome school system, educational activities are planned for not only the day of the eclipse but included in the lead-up to it. Learning about eclipses is included in the standards for elementary schoolers, Amerman said — sixth-graders usually have a unit in eclipses later in the year, but it's being moved up to before the celestial event.

The sixth-graders will develop appropriate lessons for the lower grades, like making eclipse-related storybooks or videos, and younger students will draw or write about what happens during a solar eclipse.



Other activities planned include high schoolers reading about the inclusion of an eclipse in the storyline of Mark Twain's "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," and how a character plays the natural happening to his advantage; and in social studies classes, students will learn about the ancient cultures' explanations of solar eclipses. Also the band will learn music from Gustav Holst's "The Planets."

Amerman said for more information on the eclipse, visit eclipse2017.nasa.gov.

She reminds people that trying to capture cellphone pictures of the event can damage phones that don't have solar filters, which can be widely found for purchase online.

Floyd County Schools' Science Specialist Roy Mitchell is planning activities for the system. He was unavailable Wednesday to speak about the system's plans for the eclipse.



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