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PRESS RELEASE

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HCDE Schools to Close August 21, 2017

HAMILTON COUNTY, Tenn. – Due to safety concerns, Hamilton County Schools will close all schools and school age childcare on August 21, 2017.

This date coincides with the first total solar eclipse to occur across the entire continental United States in 99 years. A solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes directly in front of the sun, and casts its shadow on the Earth below.

The eclipse will reach totality at approximately 2:30 p.m. EDT, which means many schools will be dismissing during the event and Hamilton County Schools' buses will be on the county's busy roads. "The safety of our students is always our number one priority," said HCDE Superintendent Dr. Bryan Johnson. "By closing the schools we ensure the safety of our precious students, as well as the many HCDE employees."

To capitalize on this incredible learning opportunity, dozens of HCDE science teachers attended special professional development sessions this week. The sessions, led by experts from Nashville's Adventure Science Center, encouraged teachers to brainstorm lessons all about this rare opportunity, complete with safe viewing practices. Every K-12 teacher will be provided lesson plans about the eclipse and safety to present in the weeks leading up to the event. Many teachers and counselors have also purchased eclipse glasses for their students to view the event safely at their homes.

Although Chattanooga will only view a 90% coverage of the sun, northern Hamilton County towns including Bakewell and Sale Creek will view a total solar eclipse as the moon's shadow, called the umbra, blocks the sun completely.

As a general reminder, it is never safe to look directly at the sun, even during an eclipse. The use of camera obscuras or eclipse glasses are advised. [Click here to learn more about the solar eclipse safety.](#)

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