



## **Office of the Superintendent**

November 13, 2020

Dear SCPS Families and Staff,

I hope this letter finds you doing well during these very challenging times. Today we completed our tenth week of instruction. The overall feedback I have received, along with what I have observed, is that we continue to make important gains as we implement the Stafford County Public Schools Return to Learn Plan during the COVID-19 Pandemic. I also recognize that challenges still exist and we are constantly reviewing our plans based on feedback we receive and data we collect. I want to again thank the teachers, staff, parents, and students for their partnership and cooperation during this most unusual time. Like many of you, I look forward to the day I do not need to mention the COVID-19 Pandemic in a message to parents and staff.

### **INSTRUCTION**

Our elementary hybrid model is in full swing and approximately 60% of K-5 students are participating in face-to-face classroom instruction. We are planning to expand on-site high school Career and Technical Education courses in December. More information will be forthcoming.

In December students at all levels will once again take the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Mathematics Growth Assessment as well as the STAR Reading Assessment. Both assessments ascertain students' level of proficiency in reading and math, so it is important that students do their best. Students who are not proficient on these assessments may receive communication from the respective school about additional learning opportunities.

Per Virginia mandate, middle and high school students taking semester (4x4) Standards of Learning (SOL) classes that end in January are required to take the end of course SOL tests. Students must take these SOL tests in person at their respective school. Each school will send out specific information about testing dates and related information as plans are finalized. SCPS will provide transportation to and from school for students to take these tests.

In December we will upgrade the instructional technology in approximately 1,500 classrooms. This will enhance our ability to deliver both on-site and virtual instruction to our students. I want to thank our technology department and the many teachers who helped create this new classroom design. I also want to thank the School Board and Board of Supervisors for their support of the funding required to purchase the new technology.

I want to remind everyone about the importance of students attending classes, even in the virtual environment. Attending classes and being engaged is essential for students to be successful in their academic work. Students must log into their virtual, live classroom platform daily (Google Meet/Canvas). This allows teachers to accurately report attendance. We understand that students at times might have an important reason, such as an illness, to miss class but we still encourage you to reach out to their teacher and make arrangements to address the missed instruction. [I have included an attachment to this letter from our Office of Attendance Services that further clarifies our attendance policy.](#) Please be sure to read and review it with your student(s). If you have any concerns about your child's attendance, please contact your child's teacher, school counselor, or principal.

### **SURVEY RESULTS**

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond to the parent and licensed staff surveys a few weeks ago. We had nearly 9,000 parents representing approximately 12,000 students and close to 1,900 licensed staff who took the time to complete the survey; we appreciate the feedback. The results of the survey will be distributed to each school so they can review the areas that have been identified as successful, while also addressing areas where improvement is warranted. Next week, I plan to review the division wide results and work with others to address those concerns that provide opportunities for improvement.

### HEALTH INFORMATION

Our community, like most communities, is seeing an increase of positive COVID-19 cases. Our local school data consistently shows that school-based COVID-19 positive cases are overwhelmingly transmitted from outside the school setting, and that our data is showing few school-related transmissions. Yesterday we again reviewed our health mitigation strategies and data with the Rappahannock Area Health Department staff, including the medical director, and again we were told that we have the correct health mitigation strategies in place to mitigate the spread of this virus.

I want to remind our community of those health mitigation strategies we have in place to slow the spread of COVID-19. Upon arrival at any SCPS facility, all visitors and staff must answer health screening questions and have their temperature checked. While on site, individuals are to maintain six-foot distances whenever possible and wear a face covering per the SCPS School Board policy. Hand sanitizer stations, directional signage, and physical barriers are in place in all buildings. Additional air purifiers are being installed at all building clinics, isolation rooms, and front office spaces. Families are asked to screen their students for COVID-19 symptoms prior to sending them to school. Students and staff who do not feel well are to remain home and contact their building administrator. Staff and students are to self-quarantine after exposure in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Virginia Department of Health guidelines. We continue to review and update these protocols to ensure the highest level of safety for all our students and staff.

### WEATHER NOTIFICATIONS

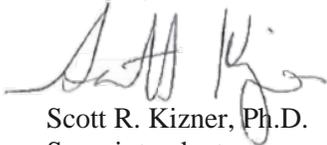
I have been asked numerous times how I am going to address weather-related issues. My initial response to this question is that our school system prides itself greatly on the importance of equity and fairness to all. In other words, if our schools had to be closed and buses could not drive safely, we know there are students that cannot successfully learn at home virtually because they do not have internet access. We also know there are students that need specialized direct instruction by qualified staff in order to be successful. There is also something nice about allowing children to play in the snow or catch up on work that needs to be completed. Every situation will be evaluated by the weather conditions that are presented and in a few weeks you will receive more guidance on this subject.

### PROPOSED CALENDARS

We have [proposed 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school calendars](#). If you would like to provide feedback on these calendars, [please send comments and suggestions through this form no later than November 30, 2020](#). Your responses will be shared with the Stafford County School Board for consideration.

I again want to thank all of you who have reached out to me since March and provided me suggestions or feedback on our instructional plans and delivery models. I take each comment seriously, and I recognize that there are many competing opinions on what is the best way to move forward. I have personally valued the respectful way we can listen to each other even if we may disagree on what that is. For that I thank all of you. My next letter will be on December 18th. I wish everyone a great weekend and an early Happy Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,



Scott R. Kizner, Ph.D.  
Superintendent