



Office of the Superintendent

January 22, 2021

Dear SCPS Families and Staff,

I want to again thank everyone for their cooperation and understanding as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 world-wide pandemic. I also appreciate the many comments I receive, and I hope you appreciate that there are many diverse suggestions and opinions on how we should move forward.

As I have said since March of 2020 this health crisis has resulted in our school division, along with many others, adjusting their plans as new information is provided and as conditions warrant changes. The Governor and the Virginia Department of Education have made it clear that decisions will be made at the local level and not determined at the State level like they did last March. We continue to meet with our local health department leaders on a weekly basis to review our Return to School Plans. The Rappahannock Area Health Department continues to remain supportive of our Return to School Plans, however, the success of our plan is contingent upon our ability to follow the health mitigation strategies that are identified in the Virginia Health Department Guidance referenced later in this letter. It requires the entire community to follow the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Virginia Department of Health if we want to reduce the COVID-19 spread in the Stafford area.

Stafford County Public Schools, like many other school divisions, is experiencing a shortage of bus drivers. The shortage of bus drivers is always a concern but it is a greater concern when we can only have approximately 24 students, to meet physical distancing requirements, on a bus instead of approximately 70 students in a non-COVID-19 physical distancing environment. In order to provide our transportation department with more time to properly develop bus routes to accommodate the middle and high school hybrid students, we are phasing in the implementation of the middle and high school hybrid model starting February 9th. Again, I thank you for your cooperation and understanding as we make this change.

Secondary Hybrid Implementation

All middle and high school students will begin the second semester (February 2) in the current remote, virtual learning environment with the exception of those exempt groups who are currently attending in-person. Please remember that the instructional hours for middle and high school students will change on February 2. High school students will begin instruction at 9:50 a.m. and conclude at 3 p.m.; middle school students will begin instruction at 11 a.m. and conclude at 4 p.m. Your child's principal will provide further information in the coming weeks regarding the new schedule.

We will begin a phased in approach to the secondary hybrid program on February 9. All middle school students and high school freshmen (9th grade) will begin reporting on February 9th. High school 10th, 11th, and 12th graders will begin hybrid instruction on February 16. The phased in approach will allow freshmen to experience a transition week before upperclassmen return to the building.

On January 14, 2021 the Virginia Department of Health released updated [Interim Guidance for Re-opening PreK-12](#). These guidelines, along with those from the Rappahannock Area Health District, provide more guidance to help inform decisions about school operations.

The guidance states the three Centers for Disease Control core indicators should not solely dictate the decisions that school divisions make to best serve their communities. As I have publicly stated, we use four indicators, along with this guidance, in our decision-making process for the implementation of our Return to School Plan:

- The ability to follow our mitigation strategies;
- The number of school-based transmissions;
- Our ability to staff the right people in the right positions; and
- Our ability to contact trace.

February Holiday and Professional Day

Next month, we will have a Professional Day on February 1 and the President's Day holiday on February 15. On both of these Mondays, there is no asynchronous learning required of students.

Though February 1 is not an instructional day for students, we will still provide our curbside and bus meal distribution from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. All bus distribution sites will be open in addition to the following school curbside sites: NSHS, MVHS, BPHS, SHS, CFHS, and SHMS. There will not be an evening meal service available on February 1.

Snow Day/One-Hour Delay

With winter weather looming, I am providing clarification regarding our closing and delay procedures beginning February 2.

At this time, if a **one-hour delay** is called, elementary school and early childhood education students will be virtual. Students who would normally report to school that day at either 8 or 9 a.m. will login to their Google Meet at 9 or 10 a.m., an hour later than their normal school starting times. Students will attend virtual afternoon sessions (synchronous or asynchronous) at their usual starting time. Only those elementary and PreK students with an IEP who access instruction as indicated in "Plan C" or who are scheduled to report to the Internet Cafe will come into the school buildings one hour later than their normal reporting time when a one-hour delay is called.

There will be no changes to the middle and high school schedule if a **one-hour delay** is called. Middle and high school students will come into the building at their regularly scheduled time. For middle school students, that will be 11 a.m., and high school students at 9:50 a.m.

At this time, if schools are closed for a single day due to inclement weather, no students will report to school and the superintendent will determine if it is an asynchronous day or a good old fashioned snow day. This process will be re-evaluated if schools are closed for consecutive days.

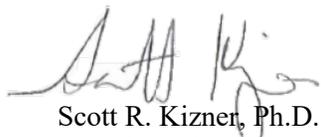
2021-2022 Budget Presentation

I will present my proposed 2021-2022 school budget at the January 26th school board meeting. The school board will also discuss the planning of the 6th high school which is scheduled to open in 2025. The meeting will be held at Shirley C. Heim Middle School at 7 p.m. You [may watch the live stream](#), or view it on cable television. All who attend must wear masks and properly physically distance.

Again, I thank all of you during this very difficult and challenging time. I look forward to the day that I can stop discussing COVID-19 and we can focus on the excitement of learning that takes place in our schools. I also want to recognize and thank all of the Stafford County Public Schools staff for their continued professionalism. All of us are experiencing something we never imagined when we decided to become educators and members of the Stafford County Public Schools team.

I end by saying we will continue to monitor this health crisis and if changes are warranted, they will be made. My next letter will be on February 26th unless an earlier communication is required. Please have a great and safe weekend.

Sincerely,



Scott R. Kizner, Ph.D.
Superintendent