



STAFFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Office of the Superintendent

September 25, 2020

Dear SCPS Families and Staff,

As we just finished our 4th week of school I want to again thank all of the students, parents, and staff for working together to support each other as we navigate the new learning environment due to COVID-19. I fully recognize that for many virtual learning and teaching requires a great amount of work and long hours. We have received significant feedback with suggestions on how we can improve the process and we are taking the steps to address those suggestions that are doable and keep us in compliance with state and federal requirements. [We posted on our website an August 28th memo from the State Superintendent that explains the number of hours we need to teach in the core subject areas.](#) The positive news is that the state is providing all school systems flexibility on how we can meet those hours defined in the memo.

Kindergarten Pilot and Elementary Return Program

As we continue to bring more students back to school for face-to-face instruction, we will pilot a kindergarten program in five schools (Kate Waller Barrett, Hartwood, Conway, Widewater, and Rockhill Elementary) beginning on October 6th. This pilot will allow us to create best practices to implement for the return of all K-5 students on October 26th. Parents will continue to have the option of 100% virtual instruction. Your child's school will contact parents to determine interest and place students in the face-to-face pilot.

Elementary schools are also planning for the October 26th return of K-5 students. If your child is in grades 3-5, you will be receiving communication from your school soon to discuss the hybrid model in greater detail. Parents in grades K-2 should have received this information. If you have not, please contact your child's principal. Again, parents will have the option to remain in a 100% virtual learning environment. [We will also be revising our elementary schedule to include more frequent synchronous learning with your child's teacher \(from 2 days a week to 4 days a week\) and reduce the length of the current synchronous days.](#) This adjustment is based on staff and parent feedback and will begin October 26th for all students in grades K-5.

It is important to note that the Kindergarten Pilot and the K-5 Hybrid Model are both subject to health trends as reported by the Virginia Health Department and health trends specific to Stafford County Public Schools. The Virginia Department of Health uses 14 days to determine a positive, negative, or fluctuating trend. [We have also created an SCPS Coronavirus Data Dashboard that you can find on our website.](#) This will be updated weekly by Tuesday mornings. It is also important to remember that any student that participates in any of our on-site programs **must** follow all health mitigation requirements approved by the school board on July 21st and July 28th. We will continue to follow our protocol for care of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases.

School Athletics

On Tuesday, September 22, the school board approved a plan that allows athletics and activities to resume on Monday, October 5, 2020. The plan allows coaches and sponsors to hold a two hour practice, twice per week, outdoors, following the [SCPS Athletics and Activities Phase Health and Safety Protocols](#). All students who plan to participate **MUST have a current VHSL Physical (dated May 1, 2020 or later) and a signed parent consent form** on file with the school. I believe it is beneficial to the physical and mental well-being of our students to

return to activities and athletics, and we will follow all protocols necessary to ensure the safety of our students, coaches, and sponsors. It is critically important that we strictly adhere to all necessary safety procedures to mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19.

Health Information

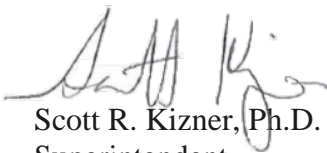
As a reminder, the SCPS face covering policy states that “All students and staff shall wear face coverings at all times on school board property as developmentally appropriate unless exempted due to a medical condition. The Centers for Disease Control provides exemptions for young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unconscious or incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. When appropriate, face shields will be utilized by staff and/or students to meet student and staff needs. Employees who work in individual offices and areas may remove the face mask when they are alone.” As a learning community, we must all understand and follow this policy to minimize the risk of spreading infection in our schools. Any parent or visitor to our schools must also follow the health requirements adopted by the school board.

Flu season is fast approaching. The CDC and VDH have stressed the importance of everyone receiving the flu vaccine this year. This is a small precaution that will help us remain healthy as more students enter our buildings. Please remember to check your child for symptoms of illness before they leave home. If your student has a cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, problems with nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, body aches, fever, chills, headache, congestion, **please keep them home**. If their symptoms persist, please see your healthcare provider for an evaluation.

Again, I want to thank everyone for their continued support and sharing successes and ways we can improve. We are all in this together and I recognize there are many diverse thoughts on what is the best approach to our teaching and learning model. [There are no easy answers but our decisions remain focused on the two goals that I have stated frequently; create a safe, return to school environment for students and staff, and ensure that every student is able to actively engage in their selected learning approach.](#)

My next letter will be sent on October 16th unless there is a need to share information prior to that date. I wish all of you a great and healthy weekend. Please remember that all of us have a responsibility in helping to reduce the COVID-19 virus spread in Stafford County. Please follow the recommended health guidelines by the [Centers for Disease Control](#) and the [Virginia Department of Health](#).

Sincerely,



Scott R. Kizner, Ph.D.
Superintendent