



SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Patrik D. Williams, Superintendent

January 14, 2022

Dear Smyrna School District Families,

As I craft this letter to you, we are all acutely aware that whole industries, businesses, both large and small, hospitals, and even schools are facing relentless challenges in their efforts to remain open and provide a full slate of services to those who need them. The Smyrna School District is no exception, and even though we continue to exercise every effort to provide transportation, nutrition, student activities, and in-person instruction, we know that during certain phases of this pandemic, the challenges may temporarily dictate a change in course. We are entering one of these periods now.

Our commitment to in-person instruction for students this year from North Smyrna Elementary's Early Childhood Program through Smyrna High School's senior class is unwavering. However, as we enter mid-January, still clenched in the tight grip of this pandemic, confronted daily with scores of close contact cases, challenged by quarantining, and faced with a host of seasonal illnesses such as the flu, we constantly struggle with systemic operational challenges. Specifically, our COVID-19 case numbers have risen dramatically over the past week, mirroring what is happening throughout our state, our country and our world. Unfortunately, these numbers are beyond our capacity to overcome them, if even for short interval. ***As a result, due to significant operational challenges, we must pause in-person instruction next Tuesday, January 18th and pivot to live, virtual learning in all of our schools, with the exception of our Early Childhood and Kindergarten programs whose teachers will coordinate instruction with our students' families.***

We share this letter today so that you have advance notice to make necessary preparations for your child(ren) to remain home on January 18th and log in on their district-issued devices for live instruction according to their typical schedules. Our teachers in grades 1 to 12 will conduct live virtual instruction from either their classrooms or their own homes and will communicate their plans to you prior to January 18th. While we are steadfast in our plan to resume full in-person instruction on Wednesday, January 19th, there exists the real possibility that we may be forced to maintain our virtual model until we are able to safely and effectively operate our buses, our schools, our cafeterias, and our classrooms. While COVID-19 will make this determination for us in the coming days, we ask you to continue to do your part to help us re-open our schools to in-person learning by wearing face coverings faithfully, getting tested regularly and considering vaccination. Because our decision is not based on health concerns associated with in-person instruction, extracurricular activities such as athletics will continue uninterrupted. We turn to virtual instruction on January 18th strictly because of insurmountable operational challenges at this time.

As always, we thank you for your patience and grace during this pandemic. We understand that this temporary change creates challenges for you. And we are grateful that you recognize we all face obstacles over which we sometimes have little control.

In Appreciation,

Patrik Williams
Superintendent

The Smyrna School District does not discriminate in employment, educational programs, services or activities based on race, color, marital status, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or any other protected category or status in accordance with state and federal laws.

Inquiries should be directed to the District Superintendent.