



November 24, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Staff of Kate Collins Middle School:

Our school division had planned to open Kate Collins Middle School on a hybrid learning model (2 days in-person instruction/3 days remote instruction) following the Thanksgiving Break on Tuesday, December 1st. The school division, in consultation with the local health department, has determined:

- the current number of staff COVID-19 positive cases presents significant staffing challenges;
- there are a large number of staff who are quarantined because they were identified as “close contacts” to the COVID-19 positive staff members which creates significant staffing impacts;
- there is not a feasible plan to open Kate Collins for all students until January 2021; and,
- the small number of students who have been attending school since early in the school year are still eligible to attend after Thanksgiving Break.

I am disappointed that our reopening plan for Kate Collins is not able to begin the week after Thanksgiving or during the month of December. I need your continued vigilance over the next several weeks. You can take several actions this holiday season that will slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community and, in turn, allow us to welcome your children back to in-person instruction after the holiday season. Those actions include:

- wearing a mask;
- practicing proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette;
- staying at home when you are not feeling well;
- practicing social distancing by maintaining a 6-foot distance from people not living in your home;
- considering the community levels of COVID-19 and whether it is safe to travel during the holidays; and,
- limiting your time with small and large groups of people who do not live in your household.

Please remember that we’re in this together. Each individual’s actions during the holiday season can directly impact our community, and our ability to reopen for all Kate Collins students in January. I will continue to monitor health data with the Central Shenandoah Health Department to determine the most appropriate course of action for our school division.

Thank you for your vigilance, support, and commitment to the health of our community. We wish you and your family a safe and happy holiday season.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey D. Cassell, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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