



St. Mary's County Public Schools Central Administration

Office of the Superintendent
23160 Moakley Street, Suite 109
Leonardtown, Maryland 20650

Phone: 301-475-5511 ext. 32178; Fax: 301-475-4270

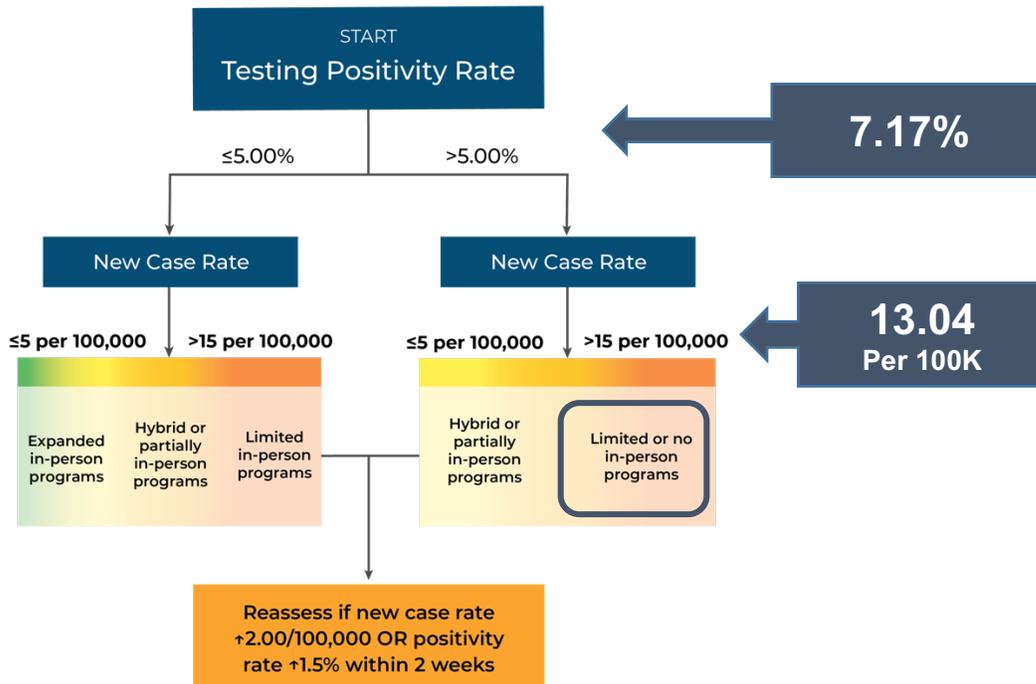
Dr. J. Scott Smith
Superintendent

November 13, 2020

Dear SMCPS Families:

Throughout this past week, we have been closely monitoring two data points for COVID 19 - the **Percent Positive** and **New Case Rate per 100k**. The data for St. Mary's County continues to move in the wrong direction - as it has across all counties in Maryland and our neighboring states. As of Friday morning, St. Mary's County is on track to record the largest number of new cases in one week and a comparably high percent positive rate, as calculated by the St. Mary's Health Department. The state-wide New Case Rate per 100K is over 22, the highest rate on record. Clearly, we are not in a spike; it is a surge.

On Tuesday and again Thursday, Governor Hogan held press conferences to sound the alarm and announce renewed restrictions in response to the surge across our state. With continued community spread, each of us must do everything possible to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. St. Mary's County and the entire state of Maryland are now outside of the acceptable ranges for in-person instruction, as outlined by Governor Hogan's office in the [COVID 19 Guidance for Maryland Schools](#). As of Friday morning, St. Mary's County had a Percent Positive of over 7% (as calculated by the SMCHD) and a New Case Rate over 13 per 100K.



Therefore, **St. Mary's County Public Schools will continue to deliver all instruction virtually for the next three weeks, November 16 - December 4, 2020.** The third week, November 30 through December 4, will be critical to understand what the impact Thanksgiving gatherings may have on the county COVID 19 data and whether we will be able to resume in-person instruction.

St. Mary's County Public School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, or disability in matters affecting employment or providing access to programs.

We remain committed to getting and keeping our kids in school. Pausing in-person instruction and delaying our return plan is the last thing we want to do. We are incredibly concerned about our students' mental health and their academic needs but the surge we see around us must be addressed. Everyone in our community must wear masks, maintain social distance, wash hands frequently, and avoid high risk gatherings. We are all in this together and all share the responsibility to keep each other safe. We remain hopeful that our community has heard the Governor's message and that our numbers will improve. Together, we can move forward with our return to school plan in December.

Meals will continue to be available for students, with pickup times on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 11 to 1 at each school. In addition, effective today, we are suspending after school athletics and in-person extracurricular activities through December 4. During this time, all schools and offices will continue to be open by appointment only.

Please be safe and may you and your loved ones stay healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Scott Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "S".

J. Scott Smith, Ed.D.
Superintendent