



**St. Mary's County Public Schools**  
**Central Administration**

Office of the Superintendent  
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**Dr. J. Scott Smith**  
Superintendent

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Dear SMCPs Staff and Families:

We are finishing a busy week which comes at the end of a *very* busy summer. Teachers and support staff have been in schools these past five days getting their virtual and actual classrooms ready for students. We want to thank all those parents and community members who welcomed them back and showed them how much they are appreciated and respected. We also want to thank all the parents who picked up materials and devices at their children's schools in preparation for the first day of school.

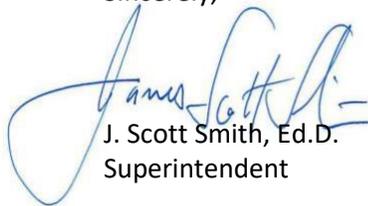
Yesterday, August 27, 2020, Governor Hogan and State Superintendent Salmon announced the guidelines necessary for communities to safely reopen schools for in-person instruction. As the Governor referenced, there are several school systems, including SMCPs, whose plans focus on moving students from virtual to in-person learning and outline how that will be done in a measured, methodical way that adheres to all CDC guidelines and is driven by local, real-time data. Our plan addresses how we will identify and move special populations of students to in-person instruction in the first quarter of the year, and ultimately return cohorts of students until we fully realize our hybrid model in the second quarter.

If you are not familiar with the work we have done over this summer, two resources, the [BOE Recovery Plan presentation](#), and the [SMCPs Recovery Plan](#) provide details. In this presentation and related document, the process for returning students safely to in-person instruction is more fully explained as well as what a hybrid schedule will look like - with students learning in-person for two days a week and learning online for three. This is the only way SMCPs can meet CDC guidelines for social distancing - both on buses and in the classroom.

Recognizing that online learning is an integral component of our plan, we are beginning with all students starting virtually so we can all become comfortable with our new Learning Management System, [Schoology](#). Teachers will interact directly with students on the Schoology platform and everyone will spend the first week of school learning to navigate the program and interact virtually with their teachers and peers. Resources, tutorials, and supports are available on our website at [www.smcps.org](http://www.smcps.org)

Monday will be the first day of the 2020-2021 school year for 18,000 students and we are committed to reconnecting and making it a memorable start. We have many days ahead and they will be challenging. Each day will be an opportunity to be better than we were the day before - and if we can stay focused on how best to support our students and each other, we will find our way through this and be stronger for it.

Sincerely,



J. Scott Smith, Ed.D.  
Superintendent