

**NOVEMBER 10 2020**

**UNOFFICIAL NOTES:**

**11/10/2020 MCPS BOE MEETING  
OPENING SCHOOLS IN RECOVERY OF  
EDUCATION PROGRESS – UPDATE**

# **MODERATELY MOCO**

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# **11/10/20 MCPS BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING - "OPENING SCHOOLS IN RECOVERY OF EDUCATION PROGRESS - UPDATE"**

## **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

**Dr. Smith began the meeting by giving a reminder of the schedule for upcoming meetings and the assessments for special education students in December. They are building out a plan for the return of small groups of students in the second week of January. He said the comments received from the public show the complexity, viewpoints, and hopes for the COVID-19 situation. He said MCPS is learning from other schools, relying on guidance from the state, CDC, and local health officials, and some of the information is conflicting and incomprehensible.**

**Dr. Smith acknowledged the social and emotional toll COVID-19 is taking on everyone in the United States and the world. He said much work has been done in the past few months. The virtual model will continue going forward, even when students return to schools. He appreciates the public comments and emails and said there are many viewpoints to consider.**

**Dr. McKnight said MCPS is considering student experiences in the choice of instructional delivery. The results of the Parent Preferences Survey are needed for planning (eg, determining instructional models, staffing, and PPE). She reiterated that the county health metrics will inform their decision, mentioned the importance of social and emotional wellness of staff, and said staff input is being considered for some adjustments to the phase-in timelines.**

## **METRICS**

**Mr. Derek Turner showed the Montgomery County COVID-19 dashboard. There are 18.1 cases/100K today, compared to 14.8 on Nov 6 and 11.9 on Oct 27. The percent positivity is 3.8% today, compared to 3.3% on Nov 6 and 3.1% on Oct 27. He mentioned sharp increases across the state and nation.**

He also showed the MCPS Health Metric Matrix. A new row of “14-day raw average of new cases” has been added.

## Health Metric Matrix for a Safe Phased-in Return to In-Person Instruction

14-Day Raw Average of New Cases		< 52	52-105	105 - 157	> 157
14-Day Average New Case Rate* (MD Calculation Model)		< 5	5-10	10-15	> 15
14-Day Average New Case Rate* (CDC Calculation Model)		< 70	70 - 140	140 - 209	> 209
14-Day Average Test Positivity Rate <5%	Student Special Populations	Expanded in-person	Limited in-person	Consider minimal in-person	Virtual
	Group 1	In-person	Consider in-person	Virtual	Virtual
	Group 2	In-person following Group 1	Virtual **	Virtual	Virtual
	Group 3	In-person following Group 2	Virtual **	Virtual	Virtual

\* Per 100,000 Residents. The models are calculated using a population estimate of 1.05 million residents in Montgomery County

\*\* If numbers are trending toward 5 then consideration for hybrid in-person can be accelerated

**Reassess if new case rate increases by 2 per 100k or if positivity rate increases by 1.5% within 2 weeks**

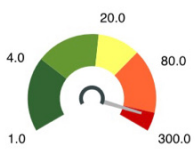
### MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

#### School Reopening Benchmarks

Source MD iMap | Last Updated: 11/10/2020

CDC Calculation: New Cases per 100K last 14 Days



218.2

CDC Calculation: Percentage of Tests Positive last 14 Days



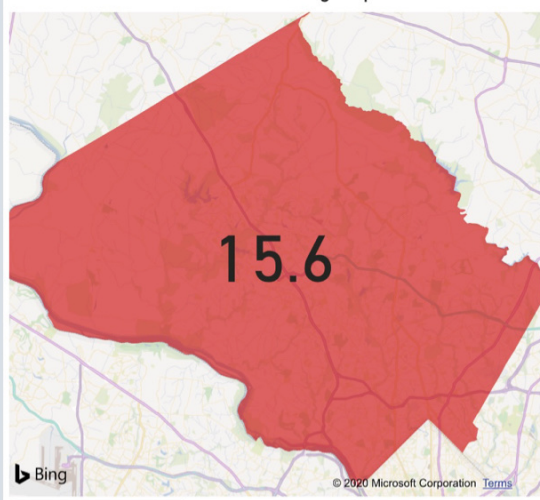
3.1%

Implementation of Mitigation Strategies



4

MD Calculation: 14D Case Rate Avg Map



Case Rate    Pos %    Cases By Zip Code

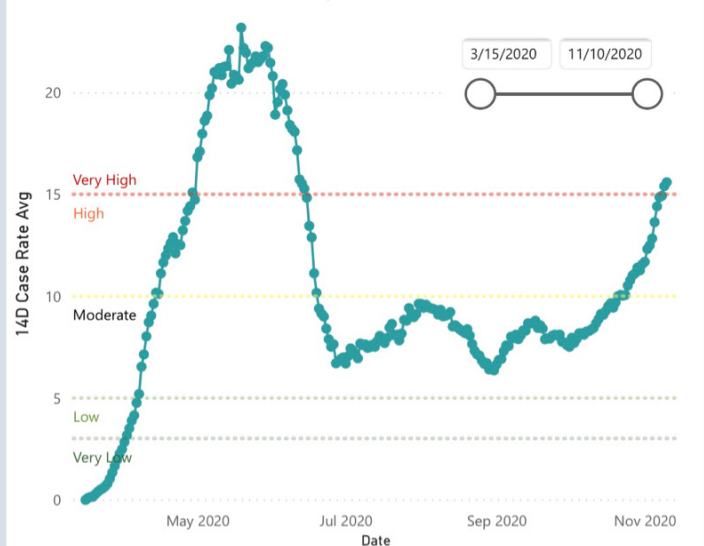
COVID Positive Staff Cases Reported

120

COVID Positive Staff Currently Quarantined

12

MD Calculation: 14D Case Rate Avg Chart



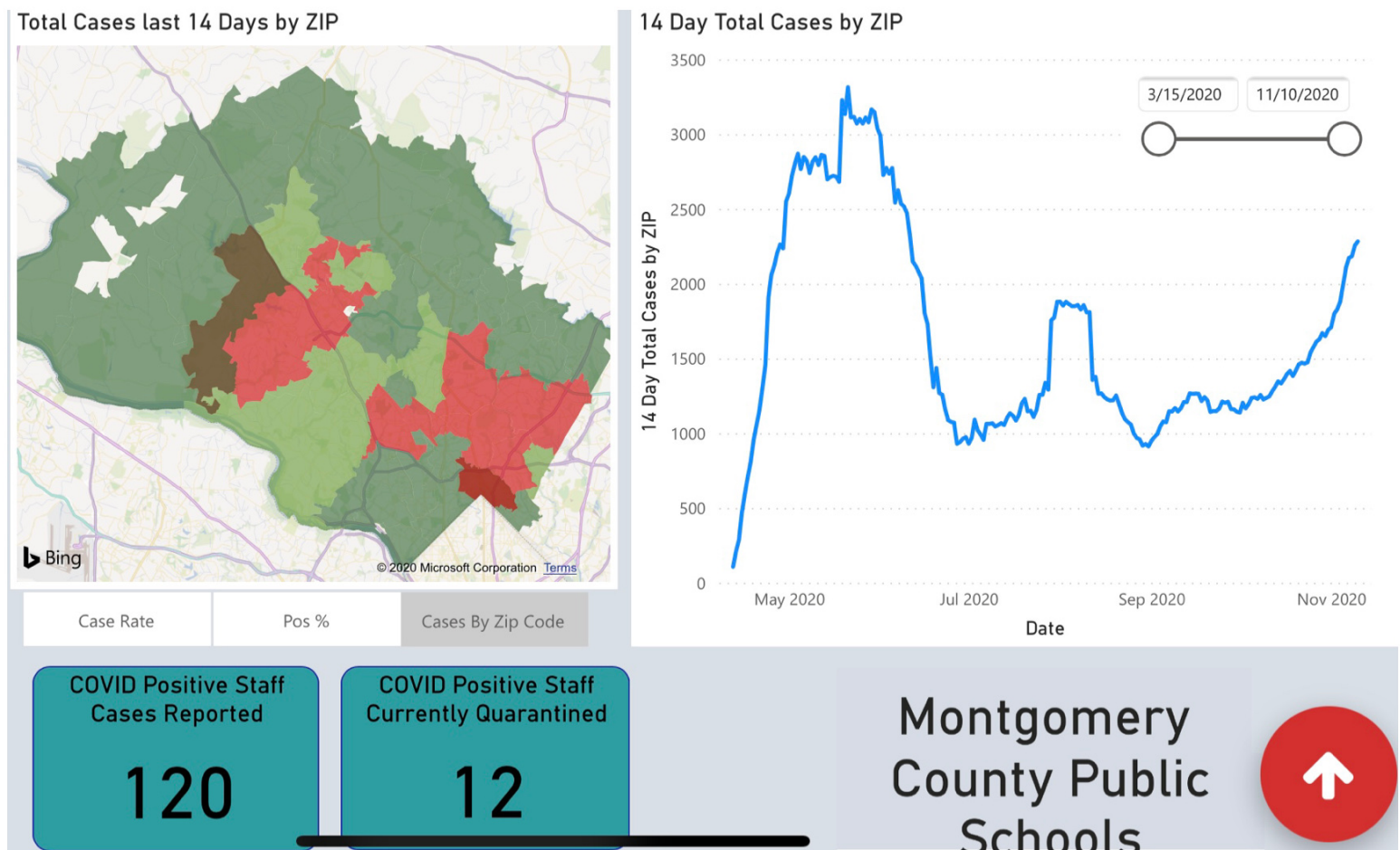
Montgomery County Public Schools



Additionally, MCPS has added a new “MCPS COVID-19 Dashboard” to their website. <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/coronavirus/dashboard/> (see image above)

It will be updated twice a day. It includes color-coded information on information on **case rates, percent positivity, and cases by zip code**. Data are presented according to **CDC-based and MD-based calculations and are color coded**. It also shows **COVID-19 cases among staff; currently 120 employees have tested positive and 15 are currently quarantined**.

### DASHBOARD HIGHLIGHTING ZIP CODE DATA



### Q AND A FOR THIS PORTION

Ms. O'Neill mentioned the **controversy that MCPS metrics are too conservative. She asked that given NIH and the large number of health professionals in the area, could a stakeholder advisory group of health professionals and scientists be assembled.** Dr. Smith said he will take that under advisement.

Ms. O'Neill **reiterated that CDC guidance speaks to local indicators and standards.**

Ms. Silvestre **said that school is an essential service and we have to learn to live with the pandemic and suggested learning from other countries.** She asked about the **request from the last meeting for MCPS to provide a comparison of its metrics with comparable jurisdictions.**

Mr. Turner responded that **each jurisdiction has its own standards, and it is difficult to compare apples to oranges. He said jurisdictions around us have not returned to school. The situation is evolving. He also said that compared to other large districts in the state, MCPS is not more strict or less strict. It is in the middle.**

Dr. Smith responded **that other considerations include the geographic location of counties, MCPS clusters being the size of other counties, and differences among zip codes.**

Mr. Turner said that **MD uses a 7-day new case rate and 7-day positivity, while the CDC uses a 14-day new case rate and 14-day positivity.** Therefore, he said the numbers look different and there is **no consistent template from the state.**

Dr. Smith reiterated that **MCPS considers guidance from the state, CDC, and local health officers.** The state provided a metric with a range of 5 to 15/100K cases per day, and schools are considering numbers in that range.

Ms. Silvestre reiterated that schools provide essential services. She said we don't shut down our police force, so we shouldn't shut down schools.

Dr. Smith said MCPS has 24,000 employees, and the senior staff feel the urgency of returning to school.

Mr. Asante asked if the county averages met the metrics, would the schools in zip codes with high case rates not be able to open. Dr. Smith said they are looking at that with experts.

Ms. Smondrowski reiterated that schools are essential and asked if schools in some zip codes could open instead of keeping the whole county closed, for example for an outbreak. Dr. Smith said they have spent a great deal of time planning and need guidance from the state. However, outbreaks in any county in the state should be handled the same way. He said the state recommends using county averages, but things are evolving.

Ms. Wollf asked if there have been outbreaks in the equity hubs (learning hubs). Ms. McGuire said there have been some positive cases in the group of children less than 5 years old and in the school-age group. They have worked with the county health department to determine if they close a room or the center and how to proceed with the quarantine of the individuals involved. Dr. Smith wanted to remind everyone that the hubs are through the county government, not MCPS, and have a small number of students.

Dr. Docca said we need to look at all zip codes and think countywide. We can't close schools in one part of the county and keep others open because kids and staff travel all over.

## **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

Dr. Reuben discussed the social and emotional support and psychoeducational lessons in quarter 1. This was to help students with the trauma and emotions of the current pandemic, racial issues, and political discourse.

**School psychologists provided training to staff on stress management, provided coaching on integrating the lessons into their daily instruction, and provided modeling to teachers on how to instruct students on social justice.**

**Well-being videos are being created by staff for staff.** She showed an example of a work-life balance video with tips for making a schedule for the day.

**Dr. Reuben recapped Mental Health Week. 800 students received up to 5 SSL hours. There were 20,000 website visits and 100 questions submitted.**

**Counselors are currently helping 2020 graduates and class of 2021 students with college and career planning.**

MCPS is currently studying student participation and engagement with the SEL lessons.

## **Q AND A FOR THIS PORTION**

**Dr. Docca praised Dr. Reuben, Ms. Evans, and Ms. O'Neill for their recent presentations to the state Board of Education.**

**Ms. Silvestre said there was MCCPTA feedback about the SEL lessons being more consistently implemented in elementary school than secondary school and asked if videos were being developed.**

**Dr. Reuben said the videos are popular and built into the elementary school schedule.** The goal is an integrated model where the lessons are built into the content.

**Mr. Asante suggested that a psychologist could come in and talk to students. He said the lessons are not being well-received because they feel contradictory to everything else going on in students' lives right now.**

Ms. Smondrowski **suggested making peer to peer student videos** and putting flyers with SEL information into the lunches being handed out.

## **HYBRID LEARNING MODELS**

Dr. Moran reviewed the slides from the previous meeting showing hybrid models (**support, simultaneous, and direct**). The choice of models will depend on the results of the Parent Preferences survey. Other districts, such as Palm Beach County, with 169,000 students, have found that a **“one size fits all” approach to the simultaneous model did not work well**. School to school differences will be reflected in the Parent Preferences survey, and the models will be customized for each school.

Dr. Webster said there will be more discussion on the in-person experience at the **Nov 17 meeting**. She reiterated that the **Parent Preferences survey will be open from Nov 11 to Dec 3, and the results will drive what models are used in person**. The models will be **customized for the individual school**.

**Student demand needs to be aligned with staff support. There is not one particular ideal model.** The **individual school** will provide information on how that school will look in **January 2021**. Multiple models may be used at a school.

- **SIMULTANEOUS** – REMOTE AND IN PERSON LEARNING OCCUR AT THE SAME TIME WITH THE SAME TEACHER
- **SUPPORT** – STAFF SUPPORT WITH CURRENT VIRTUAL LEARNING (SIMILARITIES WITH LEARNING HUBS – STUDENTS ARE IN PERSON AT THE SCHOOL AND RECEIVING VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION)
- **DIRECT** – PRIMARY INSTRUCTION IN PERSON, LIMITED VIRTUAL SERVICES (MORE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS)

Dr. Smith said **MCPS needs to continue to build out an all virtual model, there will be a long-term need for some students**. He said to think of a



hybrid (combination) model being used in the short-term and some type of virtual model being used in the long-term.

## **MR. TURNER DISCUSSED 6 ANECDOTAL COMMENTS AND CONCERNS FROM THE 500 RESPONSES TO THE FEEDBACK FORM (THERE IS STILL AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK).**

1. MCPS prioritizing the youngest learners and high school seniors returning to school
2. Metrics – some thought they were too restrictive, others thought the vaccine should be fully distributed
3. Offer exclusive virtual model
4. Details of instructional model need to be known before the parent preference survey
5. Viability of the simultaneous model
6. Strategies for teachers who want to return but have younger children

## **Q AND A FOR THIS PORTION**

Dr. Docca suggested the wellbeing committees get the survey out to respondents who are difficult to reach. **She liked the idea of the long-term remote learning so that students in different schools can take more specialized courses, such as Russian or an advanced math course, not offered at their school.**

Ms. Silvestre said parents (Silver Spring advisory group) have asked about how to respond to the survey **if they want to send their children back for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, but not the third.** Dr. Smith said they can't save spots. It is easier to switch from in person to full virtual than vice versa. However, he said those parents should select full virtual and then MCPS would try to accommodate them 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

**Mr. Asante asked about the instructional time and school hours for the simultaneous hybrid model.** Dr. McKnight said MCPS has to stay in

compliance with the state for the number of hours. Dr. Wilson said there have been concerns with pacing and covering material raised by middle school and high school teachers currently.

Ms. Dixon asked if **more teachers would need to be hired depending on the survey results. Dr. Smith said yes.**

**Dr. Nixon will present at the November 17 meeting about how they are securing more staff. Principals need to know how many students are returning in person to determine staff.** Dr. McKnight said they are putting together the **advantages and disadvantages of each model.** There will be all hands on deck for the in person support model.

Ms. Wolff asked if there was CARES money left over for students wanting to return in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. **Dr. Smith said they are continuing to spend CARES funding and mentioned a cooperative venture (?).**

Ms. O'Neill said it was **important to communicate models clearly to parents. She said it needs to be in plain English and acknowledged that “we continue to muddy the waters.”** She said there is a disconnect for people thinking school will look like it did before March 13. Dr. Smith said a guide will come out with the survey. Dr. McKnight said there will be a **November 12 Q and A session.**

**Ms. Silvestre asked if parents select an in person option, but not the specific model (simultaneous, support, direct).** That is correct, and Dr. Smith said **all 3 models will likely be in the same school.**

Dr. Wilson said the simultaneous model works best with a teacher and a paraprofessional in the classroom and a staff member helping virtually. This model gives the students cohesiveness.

Ms. O'Neill asked if they **can meet staffing needs. Dr. Smith said they have been making plans for the last 2 months to hire more teachers.** Ms. O'Neill

asked if there has been a **survey of staff members** (virtual or in person selection). Dr. Smith said they are **starting that soon**.

**There was also an update to the ordering of return per a comment made by SMOB Nick Asante last meeting requesting to bring in 11,12 graders before 9,10 graders. He posted this image on Instagram:**



nickasante\_



## REOPENING

### UPDATED SECOND SEMESTER PHASING IN

**\*ORDER IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE - PHASE 1 STARTS FEBRUARY 1**

ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
<b>PHASE 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KINDERGARTEN/1ST GRADE</li> <li>• SPECIFIC SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS</li> </ul>	<b>PHASE 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6TH GRADE</li> <li>• SPECIFIC SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS</li> </ul>	<b>PHASE 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STUDENTS NOT ON TRACK TO GRADUATE (12, 11, 10, 9)</li> <li>• SPECIFIC SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS</li> <li>• CTE STUDENTS (12TH GRADE PRIORITY)</li> </ul>
<b>PHASE 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRE-K, 2ND, AND 3RD GRADE</li> </ul>	<b>PHASE 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7TH GRADE</li> </ul>	<b>PHASE 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11TH AND 12TH GRADE</li> </ul>
<b>PHASE 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4TH AND 5TH GRADE</li> </ul>	<b>PHASE 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8TH GRADE</li> </ul>	<b>PHASE 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9TH AND 10TH GRADE</li> </ul>

**\*STUDENTS WILL CHOOSE WHETHER OR NOT THEY'D LIKE TO RETURN**

## VOTE ON RESOLUTION

A resolution was read. The **BOE** voted to tentatively approve a framework for a **phase-in return to school** and to direct the superintendent to present a final plan on **December 3, 2020**. The **BOE** voted **unanimously** in favor of this resolution.