



Committee: Directly to Council

Committee Review: N/A

Staff: Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst

Essie McGuire, Senior Legislative Analyst

Purpose: Receive briefing and have discussion – no vote expected

Keywords: Coronavirus, COVID-19

REVISED

AGENDA ITEM #2(A)

January 18, 2022

Discussion

SUBJECT

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Health Planning; Montgomery County Government

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Brenda Wolff, President, Montgomery County Board of Education

Dr. Monifa McKnight, Interim Superintendent, Montgomery County Public Schools

James D'Andrea, Chief of Staff, Office of the Superintendent, MCPS

Dr. Raymond Crowel, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

Dr. James Bridgers, Acting Chief Health Officer, (DHHS)

Dr. Earl Stoddard, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer

Sean O'Donnell, Program Administrator, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (DHHS)

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- Council sitting as Board of Health to receive updates.

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

The Council will receive an update on the public health data and response to COVID-19. The Council's discussion today will focus on the impacts of current COVID 19 conditions on MCPS operations and the collaboration between MCPS and DHHS public health leadership to support COVID-19 planning and response in the schools. DHHS will also provide a brief overview of public health data.

Background Information

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

On January 9, 2022, MCPS issued a community message with updated guidance for quarantine and isolation protocols. The most recent comprehensive community message on this issue is at the link below:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/publicinfo/community/school-year-2021-2022/Community-Update-20220109-final.html>

MCPS is experiencing operational impacts due to staffing shortages in critical areas as well, including substitute teachers and school bus operators. The Board of Education received an update on MCPS operational impact of COVID-19 on January 13, 2022. The information that was presented to the Board of Education is attached to this report.

As reference, the following is a link to the MCPS Dashboard:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/coronavirus/dashboard/>

MCPS Health and Safety Procedures:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/coronavirus/safety.aspx>

State and County Data on January 13, 2022 (Maryland.gov website)

	Confirmed Cases	Confirmed Deaths	Probable Deaths
Maryland	871,936	12,234	246
Montgomery County	141,272	1,764	53

On January 13, 2022, the Maryland.gov website reported the State's positivity rate was 25.45%.

On January 6, 2022, the CDC COVID¹ Tracker by county, showed that Montgomery County was in **HIGH** Community Transmission with a case rate of 1,892 cases per 100,000 population for the last 7 days and a positivity rate of 25.02%.

The January 13, 2022, CDC COVID Tracker reports:

89.7% of the County population aged 5 years old and older is fully vaccinated.

84.2% of the TOTAL County population is fully vaccinated.

44.3% of the fully vaccinated population has a booster.

Montgomery County Case Metrics (from Montgomery County website)

Montgomery County continues to monitor metrics regarding the spread and prevalence of COVID-19 in the community. The primary indicators follow the CDC Tracker which classifies metrics by Low, Moderate, Substantial, and High. The secondary metrics are classified as the county as Very High, High, Moderate, Low, or Very Low risk of transmission/utilization. Indicators can be viewed at:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/data/>

Primary Indicators

Number of cases per 100,000 residents in the past 7 days. As of January 13, 2022, the County website reports 1892.0 cases per 100,000; which was a **HIGH** level of transmission.

¹ Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID Tracker https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view?list_select_state=Maryland&data-type=Risk&list_select_county=24031

Test positivity rate – 7-day average percentage of tests administered resulting in a positive case. As of January 13, 2022, the positivity rate is reported to be 25.1%; this was a **HIGH** level of transmission.

Secondary Indicators

Percent change in new cases per 100,000 population during the last seven days compared to the previous seven days. As of January 13, 2022, the percent change in the new case rate was 13.6%; a **HIGH** risk of transmission.

Percent of hospital inpatient beds in the community that are occupied. As of January 13, 2022, 72.7% beds were occupied which is a **LOW** rate of utilization. (It has been noted in previous updates that it is not just the number of beds that a hospital has available but also availability of staff to allow the beds to be occupied by patients.)

Percent of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds in use. As of January 13, 2022, 85.1% of ICU beds were in use which is a **MODERATE** rate of utilization.

Percent of inpatient beds in the community occupied by patients with COVID-19. As of January 13, 2022, 36.1% of beds were occupied with COVID-19 patients which is a **HIGH** rate of utilization.

Board of Health Order – Masks – January 4, 2022

On January 4, the Board of Health adopted an amended Board of Health regulations regarding the wearing of masks that became effective at 12 a.m. on January 5, 2022. The new Board of Health regulation continues indoor mask requirements at any location accessible to the public in Montgomery County until at least Jan. 31, 2022 at 11:59 p.m. In addition, the Council will meet as the Board of Health every two weeks to evaluate the public health data associated with community transmission of COVID-19 to determine if the indoor mask mandate should continue.

The following is a link to the Order that became effective on January 5, 2022:

https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccllims/DownloadFilePage?FileName=10331_1_18958_Resolution_19-1120_Adopted_20220104.pdf

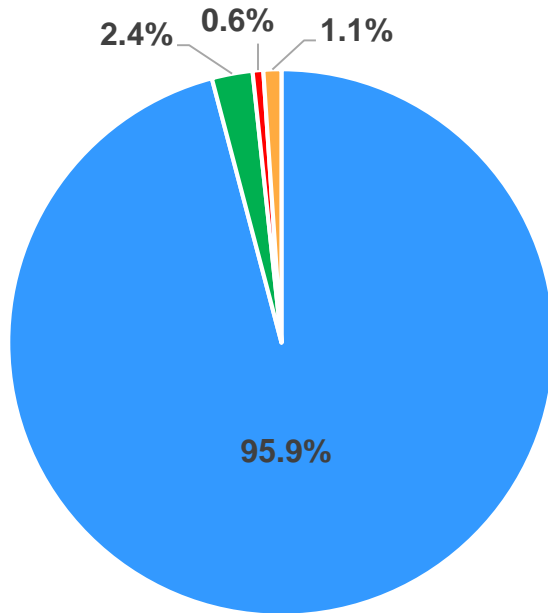
Alternative format requests for people with disabilities. If you need assistance accessing this report you may [submit alternative format requests](#) to the ADA Compliance Manager. The ADA Compliance Manager can also be reached at 240-777-6197 (TTY 240-777-6196) or at adacompliance@montgomerycountymd.gov

MCPS Operations Update

Montgomery County Board of Education
January 13, 2022

Staff Vaccinations and Staff Vacancies

Staff Vaccination Data



■ Vaccinated

■ Unvaccinated without exemption

■ Unvaccinated with exemption

■ Unattested

Substitute Teacher Requests

Date	Absences as of Jan. 12	Filled Jobs	Unfilled Jobs
Jan. 13	889	364 (40.9%)	525 (59.1%)
Jan. 14	948	419 (44.2%)	529 (55.8%)
Jan. 18	411	256 (62.3%)	155 (37.7%)
Jan. 19	280	184 (65.7%)	96 (34.3%)
Jan. 20	293	189 (64.5%)	104 (35.5%)
Jan. 21	362	255 (70.4%)	107 (29.6%)

Current Vacancies (MCEA)

<i>As of Jan. 10</i>	Full-Time	Part-time	Total
Elementary	102	31	133
Middle	25	8	33
High	44	11	55
Special	4	4	8
Virtual	0	1	1
Total	175	55	230

Elementary Quarantine Instruction

Framing the Context

Background:


- In August 2021, we launched a support plan for elementary students in isolation or quarantine.
- Current Features:
 - Live instruction in literacy and math
 - Recommendations for independent activities
 - Opportunities for students to check in live with school staff
- All schools were provided with the same design guidance, but were permitted to either serve students as a local school or participate with shared staff and students from all other elementary schools in a regional model. (70 local model, 65 regional model)
- As the pandemic and positive case rates have increased, the number of students in isolation and quarantine, combined with demands for school staff to provide coverage for in person learning, have exceeded the model capacity and a revision is required.




Revised Model for All Elementary Schools

Some features of the systemwide model includes the following:

- ✓ Utilizes existing MCPS Canvas Sites (no Zoom)
- ✓ Provides On Demand Video Screencasts (Can access at the time each day that works for each family)
- ✓ Continues to prioritize Literacy and Math Only
- Continues to use an existing quarantine pacing guide.
- Opportunities for students to continue to interact with the learning objectives at their grade level during their short term absence due to COVID safety protocols.
- There will be no homework, no assignments, no grading, and no direct interaction with the instructors.
- Will apply to all elementary schools and launch on Tuesday, January 18, 2022.


Sample Interface for Students & Families

**KINDER
COURSE**




Welcome to the Kin


To get started select M


 Math


▼ Reading

Week


 R

 R


 R

 R


Math/Reading, Date, & Lesson# (ex Math 5/6 , Jan 18, Lesson 12)

 Objectives

Write your lesson objectives here....

 Screencast Instruction

Link to screencast video here.

 Resources and Materials

Provide Resources and Materials to support the lesson. Suggestions for this include:

Students with Disabilities in Discrete Programs

The Office of Special Education will provide virtual instruction supported by central office staff members to schools as a result of the impact of COVID-19 on staff and students in the following specific programs and services:

- ❑ Pre-K special education programs

Grades K-12

- ❑ Autism
- ❑ Carl Sandburg Learning Center
- ❑ Extensions
- ❑ Learning for Independence (LFI)
- ❑ Longview School
- ❑ School Community-based (SCB)
- ❑ Stephen Knolls School

Secondary Quarantine Instruction

Secondary Quarantine Instruction

Based on multiple stakeholder collaborative engagement, secondary quarantine includes:

- The option for teachers to zoom students into the class for live streaming **or** meet with them during a non-instructional period of the day.
- Secondary teachers will choose, based on the content and circumstances, which option makes the most sense for their students in quarantine.

Secondary Quarantine Instruction

What It Is

- Teachers can decide individually which method matches the day's lesson and their preference for how best to support quarantine students. Teachers need to communicate the method of support to their quarantine students.
- A support to students using Canvas assignments/information to keep up with class.
- A livestream of the class activities that day.

What It Is Not

- Required of all teachers for every class, every day.
- Simultaneous instruction where the teacher has to plan interactive strategies with the students who are live streaming.
- The only method of supporting quarantine students (They still will have counselor contact and use of the Canvas page work.)

Access and Supports for Students and Families

Student Supports, Updates and Commitments

- MCPS will **support students** whose parents have communicated their desire to keep their students home due to current **COVID-related safety concerns**. This will extend through January 31, 2022, with the possibility of an extension.
- Schools will leverage their **well-being teams** to determine if students/families need this **temporary support on a case-by-case basis**.
- OTLS will **engage with schools** in alignment with existing MCPS and State attendance policies and regulations to determine how a student's attendance will be documented.
- In **collaboration** with our employee association partners and our school leadership teams, we will **develop appropriate opportunities** for students to access instruction.

Discussion

Transportation Update

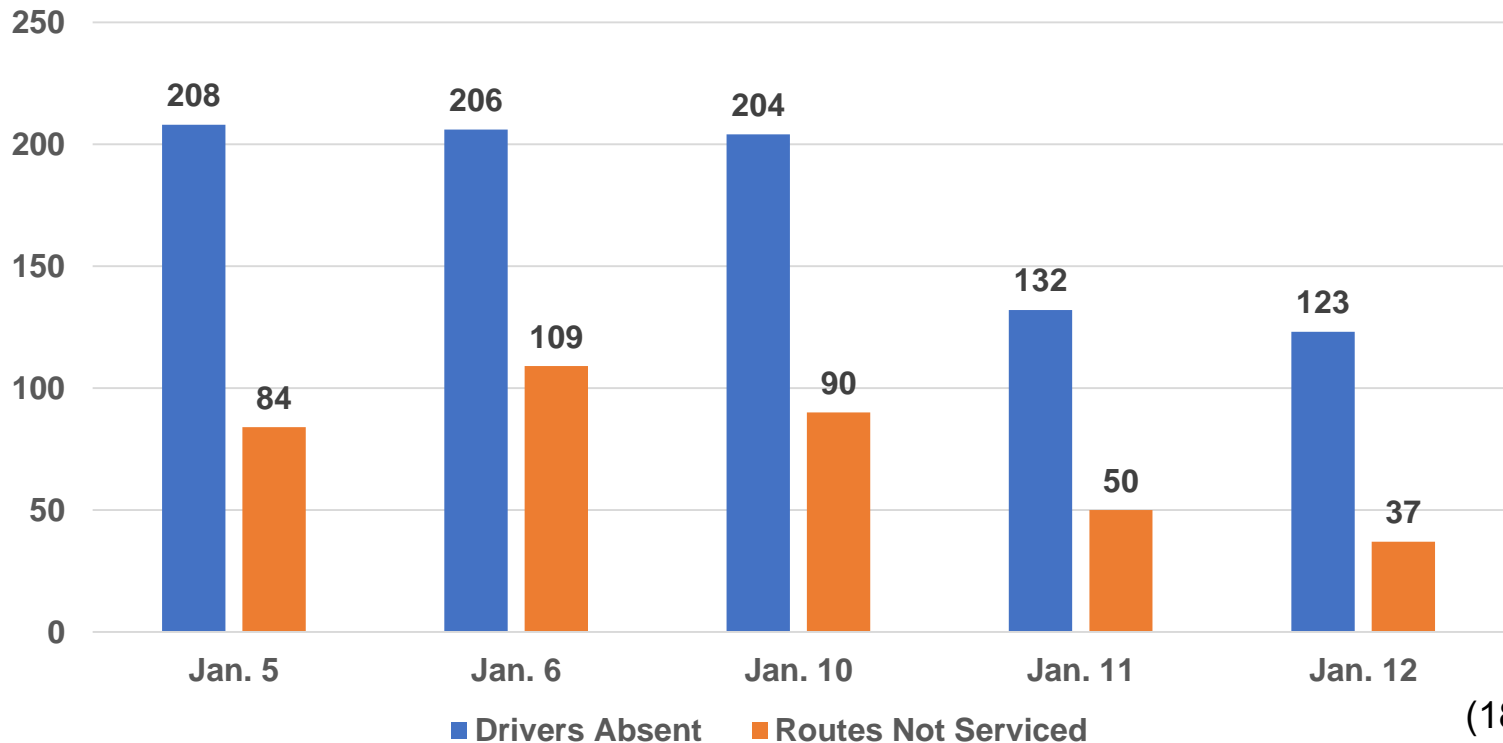
Transportation Update

Driver Shortages and Context

Like others in transportation and neighboring districts, MCPS Department of Transportation (DOT) has experienced many vacancies (140 at the height)

- Vacancies reduced by 40% by November; but increased to more than 100 by winter break due to retirements and other transitions
- Recently, we have experienced unprecedented absences: personal, sick, and COVID leave
 - We reached a point the week of January 3 when we were unable to service 8% of our routes

Bus Routes Impacted



Transportation Update

Routing Priorities

- Coverage for special education students
- Routes transporting students to the four holding schools (Burnt Mills, Stonegate, South Lake, and Woodlin elementary schools)
 - Prioritized due to the distances the holding facilities are from the neighborhoods in the school catchment area
- Other special programs such as vocational programs at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology
 - Prioritized due to hour requirements for student learning

Transportation Update

Our Plan Going Forward

- Communicate specific routes and affected schools through updates on the DOT page and the MCPS homepage
 - The initial list for each day will be posted by 7:00 pm on evening prior;
 - Additions may be included each morning.
- Schools will also share directly with families
- Continue to use available staff to drive and cover routes
- External outreach– National Guard, County, Fire and Rescue
- Internal outreach– retirees, MCPS staff, and hiring pipeline

Individual School Transitions to Virtual Instruction

Transition to Virtual Instruction

MCPS leadership in consultation with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and individual school leaders will examine schools on a case-by-case basis and determine whether a school needs to transition to virtual learning for a designated period of time for health and/or operational reasons.

Transition to Virtual Instruction

Review of School Operations

Multiple factors will be considered to inform a decision for an individual school to transition to virtual learning.

- Positive case rates for students and staff spanning a 10-day period
- Student absences
- Staff absences
- Unserved bus routes
- Unfilled substitute requests
- School perspective on ability to safely and effectively operate

(Note: the numbers associated with these data points will be examined for trends over time and higher averages. No one data point is considered as a threshold for decision making).

Transition to Virtual Instruction

The trends from these factors will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis.

Considerations are made for how daily operations impact:

- School
- School programs
- Grade levels

Transition to Virtual Instruction

Collaborative Discussion of School Operations

- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- Principal
- Elected Supporting Services Representative
- MCEA Building Representative
- Parent Community Leadership
- Central Office Staff

Recommendations to move to virtual instruction will be forwarded for approval to the interim superintendent's cabinet.

Transition to Virtual Instruction

Final decisions will also be informed by discussions about:

- health and wellness impacts in consultation with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- school leadership assessment of operational readiness, and
- any impacts to school specific programs.

Transition to Virtual Instruction

Notification to Staff, Students, and Community

- Communication and Outreach
 - Email
 - Connect Ed
 - Website notification
 - Other social media
- After a school is identified, the process will take no more than two business days.
- The length of the transition to virtual learning will be 10 calendar days.

Supports Offered During Virtual Instruction

Students	Staff	Families
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Live instruction• Meal kits provided• Equity Hubs• 1-1 Devices and MiFis as needed• Targeted support for special education students• Student Well-Being Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Zoom professional development sessions to prepare for virtual pivot• Social and emotional supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Email containing technology resources, support, and individual student login information• Enhanced supports and connection to community resources

Discussion