Dear King George County Schools Community,

Since January of this year, we have been monitoring the novel coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) in close consultation with our local and state public health experts and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). To date, there have been zero cases of COVID-19 in King George County. Accordingly, our schools remain in the “preparedness” response phase. Specifically, the CDC has advised the following:

“Closing schools early in the spread of disease for a short time (e.g., 2 weeks) will be unlikely to stem the spread of disease or prevent impact on the health care system, while causing significant disruption for families, schools, and those who may be responding to COVID-19 outbreaks in health care settings. It may also increase impact on older adults who care for grandchildren” [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/considerations-for-school-closure.pdf]

I believe it best to allow our response to COVID-19 to be guided by three primary goals: 1) safeguarding the health of students, faculty and staff, 2) providing instruction and learning resources as continuously as possible, and 3) joining the national effort to slow the spread of COVID-19.

To do our part, KGCS will be operating on the following staggered school schedule until spring break:

Monday 3/16/20 and Tuesday 3/17/20, schools will be closed for cleaning.

Beginning Wednesday 3/18/20, schools will be open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays until spring break. Schools will be closed for re-cleaning on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

“Staggering” our schedule is in line with the CDC’s strategy for combating the spread of the virus, and will allow for educational services and access to school lunches to continue, albeit in a modified fashion. I believe this approach in the short-term to be in line with our three goals.

I am very aware that there are strong opinions in our community for closing and for not closing. If you believe it is safest for your student to remain at home, we respect your decision and only ask that you provide written notification to the school indicating your decision is due to COVID-19 related concern. Documenting unusually high student absenteeism may be required later for the purposes of school accreditation.
We have already suspended the use of our school facilities by outside organizations and continue to employ best practices related to student and staff hygiene and cleanliness in our schools. Other steps such as: limiting field trips through spring break to local trips only, and disallowing assemblies or events that require large groups to congregate during or after school will begin Monday, March 16th.

I understand this is a difficult time given the uncertainty of COVID-19 and its impact on our community, region and nation. This is our plan based on the factors we know today. This is obviously a rapidly changing situation for our country and should new events require an alteration to this plan, we will of course act accordingly. King George County is a resilient and caring community. I am confident that our cooperation, understanding and compassion will be needed in the coming days and weeks. Thanks in advance to everyone as, together, we do our best to navigate the challenges associated with COVID-19.

With great appreciation,

Robert Benson, Superintendent
King George County Schools