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SUPERINTENDENT
Dr. Michael Gwatney

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August 11, 2020

Dear FCSS Community:

The 2020-2021 school year is off to a great start! We have been thrilled to welcome our students, as well as our faculty and staff, back to school. To say that we have missed everyone would be an understatement; people need people, and being back together has made many hearts and souls happy.

As we develop a routine during this uncertain time, it is important to know how the school system is handling COVID-19 illness and exposure. COVID-19 is present throughout our community's homes, businesses, and churches, and it is likely that you or someone you know has been directly affected by it. Since our schools mirror our community, we are not immune to its presence.

The FCSS will manage cases of those who are exposed or test positive (and/or show symptoms) using guidance from various sources, including Executive Orders from the Governor, as well as guidance from the Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH). The definition of an "exposure" currently includes:

- Living in the same household as a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19;
- Caring for a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19;
- Being within 6 feet of a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more; and
- Being in direct contact with secretions of a person diagnosed with COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed on, kissing, sharing utensils, etc.).

DPH guidelines currently require a student or an employee who has any COVID-19 symptoms – or has been exposed to someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 – to quarantine. If no symptoms develop during this time, the individual may return to school once the quarantine ends. The following website provides more information on symptoms: <https://dph.georgia.gov/health-topics/coronavirus-covid-19>.

If your child, a household member, or an employee meets the guidelines for exposure, please begin the quarantine period immediately and notify the school of the exposure. Once the school is notified, DPH will be notified, and they will initiate contact tracing. Please know that we have already experienced some confirmed exposures. All of the affected persons have been contacted, and these cases have required quarantine based on DPH guidance.

I am thankful for our community, especially our people – both children and adults. Along this line, we are faced with an issue that requires our community to work together. This is a fluid and rapidly evolving

situation, and more changes will likely be needed as both circumstances and guidelines change. Just like the rapid changes that occurred in society last March, people everywhere are learning new processes as things reopen. As additional guidance is received, it is reasonable to expect more changes this school year, including updates to routines that seem newly established.

My leadership team and I will continue to share updates as soon as possible. In the meantime, please know that the FCSS is working hard to keep all of our students, families, and employees healthy and safe by following the procedures described in the restart document currently posted on our website (available at this link: <https://rb.gy/xcs0y3>).

Your confidence and cooperation as we navigate these uncertain waters is greatly appreciated. Be sure to contact your child's school or my office if you have questions. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Gwatney".

Michael Gwatney, Ed.D.
Superintendent