



## COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Update June 5, 2020

Friends,

I know there are a lot of issues and concerns on everyone's mind right now beyond just the coronavirus pandemic. 2020 has been an extremely challenging year, and the recent events in Minneapolis underscore yet again how much progress our nation needs to make to address racial inequality. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on minority and lower income communities also demonstrates the significant work that needs to be done to address access to healthcare and opportunities. Members of the Board of Supervisors, including me, addressed these issues during our [Board comments](#) earlier this week.

I'm sure you've heard by now that Northern Virginia did not enter Phase 2 today. This decision was made by Governor Northam. This time, he did not ask for input from local leaders. He did suggest that NOVA will enter Phase 2 next Friday, on June 12, so we'll be watching that closely. One of my frustrations at the County level has been the lack of clarity on gating criteria for Phase 2, as well as a lack of understanding of what exactly Phase 2 entails. I'm not sure it is always understood at the state level, but the restrictions and rules outlined in the Governor's

### Matthew F. Letourneau

Dulles District Supervisor,  
Loudoun County Board of  
Supervisors

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Executive Orders have to be implemented at the County level, and frankly the guidance is often vague. Now that the rest of the state has gone to Phase 2, we do have more detail on what to expect when we get there, which we will share when the Governor makes a decision on our status.

In the meantime, several County departments have given updates on their operating statuses, and I'm sharing those in this email today. I also am including a new update (below) from our School Board Representative, Jeff Morse. There has been a great deal of discussion and questions about school status in the fall. This is obviously not my area. Whether or not to open in person will be the School Board's decision in concert with the Commonwealth. I rarely venture into details on school operations, but I am going to make a request to all of us (I'm a parent too!) that we give the School Board and LCPS some "running room" as they work through this. I know there are (very) strong feelings on different sides about what they should do, and they do want input from the community, but they're also trying to figure out basics like what the state requirements are going to be. This is truly an unprecedented situation and the school staff has been giving the School Board a number of scenarios and ideas - as they should. I'd hate to see that dialogue get stifled - we will be better served by having them examine all options. So let's try to show some patience and respect as they work through all of this.

### **Status of COVID-19 in Loudoun, Healthcare & Testing**

According to the official numbers released today by the Virginia Department Health, there are 2,837 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Loudoun County. 67 individuals have died from the virus in Loudoun. Virginia now has 48,532 confirmed cases with 1,453 deaths.

The number of hospitalized patients in NOVA has continued to decline. However, we saw a spike today

## Contact Me

### **Mailing Address**

1 Harrison Street S.E.  
P.O. Box 7000  
Leesburg, VA 20177-7000

### **E-Mail**

[matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov](mailto:matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov)

### **Office Phone**

(703) 771-5069

### **Legislative Aide**

[Tom Parker](#)

### **Staff Aide**

[Jared Midwood](#)



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in Loudoun (a net increase of 8 admitted patients) so we'll need to watch that. It does bear repeating that a relaxation of rules should not mean throwing caution to the wind. Both face masks and social distancing remain important.

You can see these numbers yourself at the Loudoun County COVID-19 [GeoHub](#). This is a really well done portal and gives you great insight into our numbers. I do see frequent complaints about confusion on numbers, so make sure to share this with anyone looking for solid information.

The Loudoun testing task force is continuing to meet. The group has issued the following statement about antibody (serological) tests: "At this time, we do NOT recommend antibody tests, also known as serology testing, for COVID-19. The antibody tests that are currently available are NOT specific enough for COVID-19 and FALSE POSITIVES are a strong possibility. Remember, about 1/3 of all common colds are in the coronavirus family, and we have all likely been infected with a coronavirus at some point. Therefore a positive test does not mean you have COVID-19 immunity. There is also no evidence to suggest that past infection with COVID-19 is protective against re-infection with COVID-19. In addition, we do not have enough data about how human antibody patterns behave to COVID-19, so we could be seeing false negatives as well, depending on how long people make antibodies. As more specific COVID-19 strain antibody tests are developed, these guidelines may likely change, but again, at this time, COVID-19 antibody testing is NOT recommended."

### **Update on PRCS and LCPS Fields**

The County's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services is beginning to reintegrate Loudoun's athletic fields into public use. Athletic fields are now available for use by permit for conditioning drills. No competition or games will be allowed at this time. The ten person gathering limit is

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[COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)

still in place. PRCS will set time slots for teams or leagues that request field use via [email](#). In addition, County parks are open for trail and leisure use, including fishing. Tennis and pickleball courts are open with a four person per court limit. Visitors to PRCS sites must follow proper social distancing protocols.

Community and senior centers are still closed. Other continued closures include basketball courts, volleyball courts, playgrounds, pavilions, and any athletic fields not hosting affiliated local teams.

PRCS is also postponing the start of weekly summer camps until July 6 or later. Families registered with the FEST or DAZE camp sessions will receive a refund via direct mail.

Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) will allow public use of its facilities, with limitations, beginning today.

LCPS walking tracks, fields and basketball and tennis courts will reopen for individual public use on Friday, June 5. Those using LCPS facilities individually must maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet at all times.

Through its partnership with Parks, Recreation & Community Services (PRCS), the school division will allow PRCS to use outdoor fields and property. PRCS will manage all outdoor field allocations for LCPS.

Religious organizations that use LCPS facilities are allowed to reconvene in these facilities with a reservation approved by LCPS staff. These organizations must submit a compliance plan to use LCPS facilities, as outlined in Gov. Ralph Northam's executive order governing the easing of temporary restrictions in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic.

LCPS custodial staff will conduct cleaning before, during and after religious services. The cost of this required cleaning will be paid by the religious organization using the LCPS facility.

Events for non-profit organizations - excluding religious services - remain postponed or canceled.

Organized LCPS activities remain postponed or canceled until further guidance is provided by the Governor's Office.

### **LCPL Curbside Pickup Service**

As of Monday, Loudoun County Public Libraries are now offering curbside pickup service for patrons who have placed holds on books at their local branch. If you place a hold on a book or other library material, you will receive a notification by text, email or phone once your items are available. To arrange a pickup time, please call your local branch. You can also return previously checked out items during curbside pickup hours (LCPL no longer charges late fees).

Curbside pickup is now underway at all LCPL branches except the law library. Hours are Monday through Thursday, 10 AM - 8 PM, and Friday & Saturday, 10 AM - 5 PM. Curbside pickup is contactless and library staff will be following social distancing guidelines.

To obtain a library card or reserve materials for pickup, click [here](#).

### **A Message from Dulles District School Board Representative Jeff Morse**

"Friends/Neighbors: As you can see from the thousands of comments on social media, how to open schools this fall is the largest, most contentious issue I have faced in my nearly 10 years on the School Board. Although I am completely unable to respond to the onslaught of concerns/ideas being generated, I have been actively monitoring the news from Richmond, the federal government, and local health officials (and of course social media).

The Scenario Planning Process: The process to prepare LCPS for the fall began two months ago. LCPS has over 280 parents, teachers, medical experts, business owners, mental health experts, and members of special needs and EL communities participating. Parent focus groups include over 36 elementary, middle, and high school parents.

The Scenarios have provided some interesting insights, and in my eyes, some of the plans are unlikely to be viable. The single most critical aspect of the way forward is the direction coming from the Governor's office and the Virginia Department of Education (VDoE).

The Superintendent for LCPS has kept the School Board up to speed on the fall opening scenario prototypes, and the latest brief given to the School Board can be found at:

<https://www.lcps.org/Page/226240>. Go to the meeting agendas and documents tab on the left, select Tuesday June 2nd School Board Meeting, click on Agenda, and then find Information Item 4.03.

Ambiguous information on the health, economic, morbidity, transmission, and social/emotional aspects means that we need to plan for multiple scenarios. We must also be able to pivot should another massive outbreak occur. We may be able to pivot at the classroom, school, or division level depending on circumstances and our ability to quickly and thoroughly test populations. I was pleased to have Dr. John Farrell, a South Riding Pediatrician working with County staff on COVID responses, reach out to discuss such concerns.

From the Superintendent, I have asked for the last month the precise date that a go/no go decision must be made in order to allow our teachers and families to prepare. I anticipate we will have such a date announced no later than June 26

The logistics of any scenario will require planning and resources that have not yet been identified and for

which we have not budgeted. Last week we removed \$75M from the LCPS budget as a "budget freeze": a risk mitigation to the anticipated blow to our county and state tax collections. But the resources needed to execute our plan will be first in line, and may require cuts in other areas to properly fund a transition back to a safe educational environment. PPE for teachers and modifications to classrooms, bus transportation, etc: all of these are critical to getting our children back into school.

As you may have seen on social media the Fairfax Education Association (FEA) appears to be recommending remote learning in the fall to protect their teachers. LEA has not yet weighed in (that I am aware of), but I imagine they will be similarly inclined.

Our special education families appear overwhelming to support a path forward that provides as much teacher-student live interaction as possible. Our economically disadvantaged students often receive their only meal at school, so this needs to be considered.

We have worked hard to provide meal service even during the pandemic to families that need it. So this is a long-winded way to say there is no easy solution. I will consider all of the facts, ideas, and circumstances identified through this process before voting on anything.

To speak at our next board meeting June 9th, (via WEBEX), you will need to [register](#). To reach me via Email: [Jeff.Morse@lcps.org](mailto:Jeff.Morse@lcps.org). To reach all board members: [LCSB@lcps.org](mailto:LCSB@lcps.org).

Again, I will continue to monitor all news sources, and appreciate the civil discourse. All of our families want what is best for them: of course, this differs significantly from family to family. Please keep the dialogue with each other respectful."

**Business Interruption Fund**

An important reminder that applications for Round Three funding are due tomorrow at noon. Round Three (\$2 million) is for businesses under 3 employees, which were excluded from the first process. For eligibility requirements and the application form, please visit this [site](#). Here are the details on how to obtain Round 3 funding: Round 3 funding will provide 400 randomly selected applicant businesses with a \$3,000 grant. Applicants must demonstrate the following criteria:

- Have between zero and two W-2 employees (no limit on 1099 contractors);
- Have less than \$2.5 million in gross annual receipts;
- Have at least a 25% loss in revenue that can be attributed to COVID-19;
- Be a licensed and operational for-profit business in Loudoun County, Va.
- If the applicant business received a grant from the COVID-19 Business Interruption Fund in the first or second rounds, they are not eligible to apply again.

Applications will closing at noon on June 6, 2020. All submissions will be accepted based on the time stamp that the application was received, verified by county employees, and placed into a pool, where businesses will be randomly selected until the funding has expired.

### **Upcoming Blood Drive**

According to the Red Cross, the blood drive being held at John Champe High School on June 15 is now full. I encourage you to check the Red Cross [site](#) for other local drives that are happening in the near future, as blood donations are more necessary than ever. Due to COVID-19, appointments are required and drop-in donations will not be allowed.

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Supervisor Matt Letourneau, 1 Harrison Street, S.E., 5th Floor,  
P.O. Box 7000, Leesburg, VA 20177

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Sent by [matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov](mailto:matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov) in collaboration with



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