

*St. Mary Parish School Board*

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September 15, 2020

RE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. Mary Schools Transition to Phase 3 Guidelines

On September 11, Governor Edwards announced that the state would move to Phase 3. Schools are now able to make significant adjustments in overall operations and return all students to campus for daily instruction. Under Phase 2 restrictions, St. Mary Schools developed virtual programming, established a hybrid schedule for grades 6-12, and adhered to strict classroom and bus capacity levels. With the movement to Phase 3, buses can now transport students at 75% capacity, and classrooms can accommodate a few more students with social distancing measures in place.

Beginning on Monday, September 28, all students in grades K-5 and those in grades 6-12 will attend school on a daily basis. The use of a hybrid schedule will be discontinued for grades 6-12 as Phase 3 parameters support a daily instructional schedule. Further, parents who have chosen an all-virtual option should contact the school to discuss possible Phase 3 alternatives that would best promote their child's continued learning.

The school system is highly considerate of special circumstances facing families during this extraordinary time and seeks to maintain instructional consistency throughout the various phases instituted in response to the pandemic. St. Mary Schools strictly follows all guidance issued by the Office of Public Health, Louisiana Department of Education, and Centers for Disease Control regarding wellness protocols throughout its schools and offices. The movement to Phase 3 still requires that students participate in a wellness screening each morning, wash hands throughout the day, and adhere to social distancing and face coverings.

The district is confident that with the expanded Phase 3 parameters, students will remain in a safe learning environment that affords a daily instructional schedule aligned to student needs. The challenges of educating children in a time of ongoing change is a formidable task, but worth every effort to ensure that all students receive an exceptional education in St. Mary Parish. We look forward to a return to a more traditional in-person learning environment on Monday, September 28, 2020.