August 9, 2021

Dear SJCSD Parents and Guardians,

The 2021-2022 school year is upon us and we look forward to the return of students to our schools. Before starting the new year, I would like to thank our families and employees for their work and support last year. Academically, St. Johns County schools excelled on Florida State Assessments (FSA) this past spring. This would not have been possible without the commitment of all stakeholders in the school community and the outstanding academic skills of students. While our community continues to be impacted by COVID, we look forward to the excitement and enthusiasm of a new school year.

This year we will continue to implement our COVID safety protocols as communicated on May 14, 2021 and Board approved in July 2021. The most notable adjustments include optional face masks, no longer having daily temperature checks, and reduction in the use of classroom dividers based on specific needs. Due to the most recent increase in COVID virus spread in our community, I **highly recommend** the use of face masks as the school year begins. This is an important consideration in our elementary school environments in which the parents of students 12 years old and younger do not have the option for their children to be vaccinated. Ultimately, we are expected to follow Governor DeSantis Executive Order 21-175 which acknowledges the parental right to make decisions for their own children related to face masks. This order has been followed by emergency rules of the Florida State Board of Education and the Florida Department of Health.

Our schools will begin the year limiting visitors and parents during the school day to support a healthy and safe school environment. Student and staff quarantining will continue to be a strategy this year to minimize the opportunity for the spread of COVID within the school building and in the community. While we understand that quarantining is disruptive to classrooms and families, it is a necessary prevention strategy. We are committed to maintaining campus sanitation and health protocols that were introduced last school year. Please refer to our website for comprehensive COVID protocol information at [www.stjohns.k12.fl.us](http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us).

A new school year brings new families, staff, and students, and new learning experiences. I hope that your family enjoyed a memorable summer and is looking forward to the return to school.

Together,

Tim Forson