



**Oakland Mills Community Association**  
**The Other Barn • 5851 Robert Oliver Place**  
**Columbia, MD 21045**  
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December 15, 2021

Dear Dr. Rossman, Dr. Martirano, and members of the Howard County Board of Education:

I am writing on behalf of the Oakland Mills Community Association regarding the substantial increase in positive COVID-19 cases in Oakland Mills High School as well as other schools throughout the system. While we appreciate the frequent e-mail updates provided by school Principals, we also share questions and concerns raised by our residents and would appreciate if you could clarify a few items:

- The emails sent by Principals sharing positive COVID-19 cases in the school and the HCPSS COVID-19 dashboard do not seem to align. In addition to daily or weekly totals not aligning, we have also noted that the emails state they cannot share whether these are students, teachers, or others, while the dashboard does break out this data. We would appreciate a better understanding of the sources of data behind the dashboard versus the notification emails and an explanation for why numbers don't align. This would help parents, guardians, and concerned citizens have a better understanding of not only what is happening in their immediate schools but also across the system.
- The state has guidelines defining what constitutes an outbreak, but it is difficult to determine from the emails and tables whether Oakland Mills High School or any other school is experiencing an outbreak. Furthermore, the state dashboard lags real time statistics by up to a week. We would like to know what steps will be taken to inform the community of an outbreak and what the thresholds for positive cases would be before there must be deviations from normal learning within a specific building or across the system.
- Based on the dashboard, schools within the system are experiencing different trends, although the overall positivity trend is moving upward. How are factors such as individual school statistics, building layout and condition, student and staff vaccination rates, etc. considered when determining next steps if numbers continue to increase? Are these factors considered at the school level or system-wide?
- With larger groups of students in isolation recently, which may be approaching 5 percent of the student population in some schools, what measures will be taken to ensure substantial proportions of the student body don't fall behind while they are isolating for at least 10 days at a time?

- What considerations are in place for the return from winter break, given the trends we've seen both locally and nationally following holiday gatherings during the pandemic?

We appreciate any information you can provide to the Oakland Mills community specific to schools within our cluster as well as to the county at large. We also appreciate the challenges you must be facing each day as we navigate through an unpredictable pandemic. Providing updates on the items above would address many of the questions we are hearing as families become more anxious with each email announcing another batch of positive cases in their school buildings.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon. L. Edelson".

Jonathan L. Edelson  
Chairperson, Oakland Mills Community Association Board of Directors