

# All About Algonkian



**Juli E. Briskman** | Algonkian District Supervisor



## In this Issue

From Supervisor Briskman

Community Input Needed for Parks & Rec Master Plan

Topographical Survey Being Conducted in Broad Run Farms Community

Loudoun Family Services Expands In-Person Operations

Loudoun Launches Online Process for Building Permit, Land Development Applications

State and Local COVID-19 Trends

County COVID-19 Data Dashboard Receives Upgrade



## From Supervisor Briskman

Dear Neighbors,

Although August is a month of recess for Board of Supervisors' meetings, we have been busy with COVID-19 response, elections' planning and General Assembly measures during the August special session. As you will see in our COVID update below, the county is

holding steady with a positivity rate below 10 percent and new cases below 40 a day. However, this is not a time to let down our guard. The Governor's Executive Order 63 still is in effect, which states: "All patrons in the Commonwealth aged ten and over shall when entering, exiting, traveling through, and spending time inside the settings listed below cover their mouth and nose with a face-covering." This includes food, retail, recreation and entertainment establishments as well as public transportation and all government buildings, including schools.

While school will be fully remote starting on Sept. 8th, county officials have been working closely with LCPS, PRCS and other departments in an effort to offer affordable childcare options to county employees and

Governor Northam  
Issues Executive  
Order to Protect  
Psychiatric Hospitals

Recipients of Artist  
Relief Grant  
Announced

GO Virginia to  
Support Economic  
Recovery with \$5.5  
Million in Funding

VDH Launches  
COVID-19 Serology  
Study

Federal Court  
Removes Absentee  
Witness Signature  
Requirement

Superintendent's  
Update Regarding  
Back-to-School  
Plans

Loudoun Partners  
with Giant  
Pharmacy to  
Prevent Substance  
Misuse

Here's What's  
Happening with  
Traffic Around  
Algonkian

Governor's Updates

Federal  
Representatives  
Urge USDA to Ensure  
Children Have  
Access to Meals

teachers. The Board expects to affirm this plan at our Sept. 1 business meeting. In other COVID-19 response measures, the county held a training on the Limited Rental Assistance Program with New Virginia Majority to assist those facing eviction. In addition, the county has been working on allocation for its last infusion of CARES act funding and likely will approve another round of Business Interruption Fund financing and more contributions to our non-profits which have been assisting residents during these trying times. Please visit [www.loudoun.gov/coronavirus](http://www.loudoun.gov/coronavirus) for information and updates. You can also download the COVIDWISE app [here](#).

In election news, officials have been planning for an onslaught of voters who may choose to vote early in-person, by mail and on election day, November, 3. Hours for early in-person voting have been expanded and extended. I strongly encourage you to vote early and in-person to assure your vote is counted and you avoid any chance of COVID-19 exposure. Polling places will adhere to all COVID-19 precautions, but we want you to be as safe as possible. Please see below for the dates, time and deadlines for all of the voting options. Additionally, Governor Northam has asked the General Assembly for a budget amendment that would utilize CARES Act funding to purchase ballot drop boxes and increase registrar staff. The majority of our board supported this General Assembly special session request. *Please be sure to mark your calendars for our next town hall on Sept. 17, where we will discuss Loudoun's elections with Chairwoman Phyllis Randall and County Registrar Judy Brown.*

In other special session news, lawmakers in Richmond have taken up several law enforcement accountability measures, such as ending qualified immunity and banning chokeholds. The majority of Supervisors supported a ban on chokeholds and neck restraint tactics used against suspects. But we were not in agreement on immunity. I am hopeful that some troubling language in the bills can be worked out so the county is not exposed to risk as a result of negligence. Supervisors will affirm our support or opposition to these measures during our Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> Business Meeting.

Loudoun United  
Returns to Segra  
Field

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### BOS Meetings

The Board of Supervisors meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month. Public Hearings are held the Wednesday after the 1st Board meeting.

Check out the [BOS Calendar](#) for upcoming meetings

Want to speak?  
[Visit the county web page for information.](#)

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### QUICK TIPS

Can't find time to get to DMV? No problem. They will come to you with DMV2Go!!!

Apply for or renew your ID or driver's license, take road and knowledge tests and much more.

Check the [DMV2Go calendar](#) for

Also, at the Sept. 1 Business Meeting, I look forward to receiving a report on gun sense measures that was requested through my [board member initiative on May 19](#). Staff was asked to examine the impact of gun safety measures passed by the General Assembly in January, such as the option to prohibit guns in public and governmental buildings and extreme risk protection orders. I am also proudly bringing an initiative in partnership with Vice Chair Koran Saines to document confederate and segregationist symbols in our county, such as road names, signage, and building identifications for their potential removal. I look forward to making Loudoun a place where all feel welcome and we continue the healing process 400 years in the making.

Stay well,

*Guli*



### Community Input Needed for Parks & Rec Master Plan

The Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) has contracted for a

upcoming dates  
and locations

Loudoun County  
Health  
Department  
hotline  
(703) 737-8300

## SCAMS

IRS Issues Warning  
about  
Coronavirus-  
Related Scams;  
Watch Out for  
Schemes Tied to  
Economic Impact  
Payments

The Virginia  
Coronavirus Fraud  
Task Force and  
Internal Revenue  
Service-Criminal  
Investigations are  
warning taxpayers  
to be alert about  
possible scams  
relating to COVID-19  
economic impact  
payments.

Virginia Coronavirus  
Fraud Task Force

Eastern Virginia  
Coronavirus Fraud  
Coordinator,  
Assistant U.S.  
Attorney Email  
Kaitlin F. Cooke or  
804-819-5416.

strategic master planning process with the goal of creating an environment for providing exceptional facilities, recreational opportunities and community services that enhance the health and well-being of Loudoun residents. Input from residents is critical to the success of the master plan. The department and PROS Consulting, Inc. will host a series of virtual public meetings.

The first meeting will be held Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2020, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The purpose is to present an overview of the process that will be taken to create the strategic master plan and provide an opportunity for input on the current use of PRCS resources and where opportunities for improvement should be focused in the next 10 years.

Details about the project and how to join meetings will be available at [www.loudoun.gov/prcsmasterplan](http://www.loudoun.gov/prcsmasterplan). Loudoun residents can also provide input directly by emailing [prcsmasterplan@loudoun.gov](mailto:prcsmasterplan@loudoun.gov) starting September 10.



## Topographical Survey Being Conducted in Broad Run Farms Community

Loudoun County has been working with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Broad Run Farms community for several years to resolve the contamination issues at the Hidden Lane Landfill Superfund site. The EPA has an ongoing project to extend the Central Water System to the impacted lots. The waterline project, which is led by Loudoun Water, includes portions of Broad Run Farms not covered by the EPA. As part of these efforts, engineers have been conducting topographical surveys throughout the

To report fraudulent activity to the Virginia State Police, Virginians can [Email Virginia Fusion Center](#).

To report a COVID-19 fraud scheme or suspicious activity, contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) by calling the NCDF Hotline at 1-866-720-5721 or [send an email](#).



**VIRGINIA'S  
HEALTH  
IS IN YOUR  
HANDS.**

Do your part,  
stay at home.

Broad Run Farms Community. You can read the notification letter sent to Broad Run Farms residents by clicking [here](#).



## Loudoun Family Services Expands In-Person Operations

The Loudoun County Department of Family Services (DFS) has expanded in-person services at two locations, the Eastern Family Services Center and the Workforce Resource Center, with the following COVID-19 prevention measures in place for visitors:

- Face coverings are required; if you do not have one, a face covering will be provided to you.
- Stay 6 feet apart from others.

**The Eastern Family Services Center**, 21641 Ridgetop Circle, Sterling, is now offering in-person services, Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Reception area capacity is limited to one individual at any given time; limit the number of individuals in your party to the extent possible.

**The Workforce Resource Center**, 102 Heritage Way, NE, Leesburg (first floor, rear entrance), is now offering limited in-person services by appointment only, Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and Tuesday/Thursday, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. To schedule an appointment, please call 703-777-0150.



Information about how you can access remote services is available [here](#).

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**Building Permits  
and Land Development Applications**

**[loudoun.gov/bdapplyonline](http://loudoun.gov/bdapplyonline)**

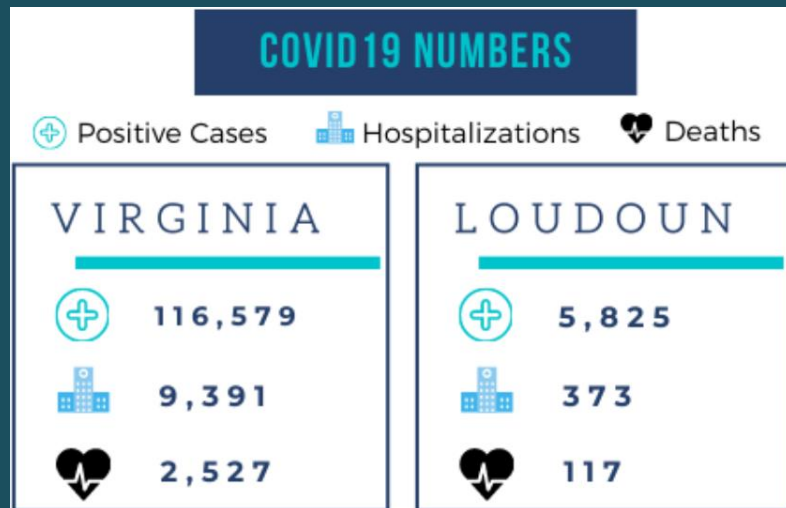
## **Loudoun Launches Online Process for Building Permit, Land Development Applications**

Loudoun County is now accepting building permit and administrative land development applications electronically. Homeowners and residential contractors can submit their completed application form and supporting documentation, including drawings and plats, in PDF format for most residential construction projects to the Department of Building and Development through the Loudoun County government website.

Developers, builders, engineers, and architects can also submit most permit and administrative land development applications and plans to the Department of Building and Development online. Accepting applications and project files online is the first step in the county's multi-phase project to implement electronic review and mark-up of land development plans using cloud-based platforms.

Customers may still submit paper applications and plans, but are encouraged to use online services to

reduce the number of visitors in the Government Center and reduce the risks associated with COVID-19. More information about the online submission process and requirements is available [here](#).



## State and Local COVID-19 Trends

A model used by the Loudoun County Health Department estimates that cases are expected to increase an average of 27 cases per day over the next six days. Overall, Virginia is experiencing a steady decline in the 7-day moving average of cases. Both Loudoun County and Virginia are moving in the right direction.



## County COVID-19 Data Dashboard Receives Upgrade

The County's [Key Measures dashboard](#) has been updated to offer additional options to filter the data by three, four, and five months. To change, select the "Time Frame" drop down menu in the upper right corner of each dashboard. The default will continue to reflect the complete ("ALL") COVID-19 data set.

Both Inova Loudoun and HCA StoneSprings have given Loudoun permission to post their hospitalization data on the County's dashboard. There are 6 hospitalized patients who are confirmed COVID-19 (a decrease of 1 since Friday) and 5 patients who are pending test results (a decrease of 9 since Friday). For more information, visit [Loudoun County COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

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## Governor Northam Issues Executive Order to Protect Psychiatric Hospitals

Governor Northam issued an executive order to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 at Virginia's state-operated psychiatric hospitals and ensure the safety of patients and staff during the ongoing health crisis.



Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commonwealth's psychiatric hospital system averaged 95 percent or more of total bed capacity and many have experienced an increase in admissions, at times exceeding operating bed capacity, through the month of July. The need to isolate or quarantine patients with confirmed or suspected diagnoses of COVID-19 has placed increased demands on state-operated psychiatric hospitals and further reduced bed capacity. The Code of Virginia requires these facilities to admit individuals under emergency custody for a mental health crisis who meet the criteria for temporary detention when no other inpatient bed can be identified.

Executive Order Seventy directs that when state hospitals are operating at 100 percent of their total bed capacity, they will not serve as the facility of temporary detention for individuals who are not under emergency custody. The order encourages law enforcement to ensure a bed is available before taking a new admission to a state hospital and requires a medical screening for COVID-19 and other acute medical conditions before transferring a patient to a state hospital. The executive order also requires timely updating of the statewide acute psychiatric bed registry and establishes clear expectations for communication regarding state hospital discharges.

Executive Order Seventy will remain in effect throughout the COVID-19 state of emergency. The full text of this executive order is available [here](#).

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# Grants Awarded

## Recipients of Artist Relief Grants Announced

40 Virginia artists who will receive \$5,000 grants through a special program to help visual artists impacted by COVID-19. The Virginia Artist Relief Fellowship Program, which launched in June, will distribute a total of \$200,000 in funding.

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) received more than 350 applications for this program. Recipients were selected by a jury made up of three VMFA staff members: Valerie Cassel Oliver, Sydney and Frances Lewis Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art; Natasha Campbell, head of the museum's fellowship program; and Jeffrey Allison, head of statewide programs.

A list of the grant recipients is available [here](#).

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## GO Virginia to Support Economic Recovery with \$5.5 Million in Funding

Growth and Opportunity for Virginia (GO Virginia) will award more than \$5.5 million to support projects that will help address economic and public health challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The four regional projects and one statewide competitive project receiving funding are focused on strengthening the health sciences workforce pipeline, advancing new renewable energy ventures, and developing a regional services network for entrepreneurs.

Three of the approved projects were funded through the new GO Virginia Economic Resilience and Recovery Program, which is designed to support activities that mitigate the economic impact of the ongoing public health crisis, create or sustain much-needed capacity to support business and industry, and facilitate safe reopening strategies.

The nine GO Virginia regional councils have developed Growth and Diversification plans and strategies organized around their own unique resources and assets. Initiatives that advance these strategies are key in strengthening each region's economy and provide critical framework for each region's response to the economic effects of COVID-19. The grant awards will leverage an additional \$7,732,043 in non-state sources to assist with economic diversification and recovery efforts throughout Virginia. The board also approved a new policy that defines the permitted use of Tobacco Regional Revitalization Commission Funds as matching funds for GO Virginia projects. This new policy will go into effect for projects submitted between July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

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## **Virginia Department of Health Launches COVID-19 Serology Study**

Interim results from Virginia's ongoing adult serology study show an estimated 2.4 percent of adults statewide have antibodies to COVID-19. The new pediatric study, completed in collaboration with Inova Health System, will measure the proportion of children and teens with antibodies to COVID-19.

Northern Virginia was selected for this project due to the number of confirmed COVID-19 pediatric cases reported in the region. Northern Virginia's population is also diverse in terms of ethnicity, socioeconomic status and race, which provides an important comparison to the rest of the Commonwealth.

Inova Children's Hospital will recruit up to 1,000 participants aged 0-19-years-old who live in Northern Virginia and seek care at participating clinical sites. Participants' blood samples will be tested for COVID-19 antibodies, which indicate that a person had a COVID-19 infection in the past.

VDH will use the information collected from this project to estimate the total number of children and teenagers that have been infected with the COVID-19 virus in Northern Virginia and statewide, including those who may have had mild or asymptomatic infections. VDH will also analyze children's risk factors for COVID-19 infection, including age, underlying health conditions, sociodemographic characteristics, history of COVID-19 infection within households and childcare exposures. Preliminary results are expected by mid-September.

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## Federal Court Removes Absentee Witness Signature Requirement

Attorney General Mark Herring announced that a federal court has approved a consent decree negotiated by his office that will promote public health and participation in elections by encouraging safe absentee voting by mail in the November election. Under the terms of the approved consent decree, the Commonwealth will accept absentee ballots without the signature of a witness "for voters who believe they may not safely have a witness present while completing their ballot." The order was approved by Judge Norman K. Moon despite the objections of the Republican Party of Virginia, which intervened in the case and opposed the proposed agreement.

Another option for residents who wish to cast their vote before Election Day is to **vote early in-person**:

- All registered voters are eligible to vote early in person.
- Early voting will be available at the Office of Elections in Leesburg starting September 18, 2020 during normal business hours, with extended hours beginning October 17, 2020.

- Additional early voting sites open - Saturday, October 17, 2020. [View all early voting sites and hours.](#)
  - Social distancing measures will be in place at all locations and face coverings are required when entering county facilities.
  - Curbside voting is available for individuals who have mobility issues.
  - Last day to vote early in person - Saturday, October 31, 2020
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## AFTER SCHOOL HISTORY EXPLORERS

SEPTEMBER 10 – NOVEMBER 5, 2020  
THURSDAYS FROM 2:00 – 4:00 PM

### Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum to Host After School Programs

Join Claude Moore Park, the Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum and the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association for their weekly after school enrichment club. Become an explorer and uncover stories that happened in Loudoun and the Virginia Piedmont all while having fun. Activities will take place both inside and outside. The nine-week program has weekly themes such as mapping, Native American history, and technological innovation.

#### Cost

- \$10 / week or \$90 for all 9 weeks
- \$15 / week for registering 2 children
- You may register for 1 week, the entire 9 weeks or any number of sessions.

Register on [www.heritagefarmmuseum.org](http://www.heritagefarmmuseum.org)

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## Superintendent's Update Regarding Back-to-School Plans

On August 19, Loudoun County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Eric Williams released a statement regarding recent School Board action is it pertained to back-to-school planning. The following is an excerpt from Dr. Williams's statement:

*The School Board directed LCPS to expand the 100% distance learning plan to include additional hybrid, in-person learning for certain groups of students:*

- *LCPS is to begin providing up to 2 days per week of hybrid in-person learning for students with disabilities that receive instruction through the Aligned Standards of Learning (ASOL) curriculum and those served in self-contained programs beginning in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) through age 22. This instruction is to begin by October 13 for students who choose hybrid learning, and who do not have medical conditions or intensive needs that present increased safety risks to self and others that cannot be sufficiently mitigated as determined by the student's IEP team.*
- *LCPS also is to begin providing hybrid in-person learning for English Learners of Proficiency Level 1.0 – 1.9 and for preschool and pre-kindergarten students who choose to participate in hybrid*

learning and who do not have medical conditions or intensive needs which would preclude participation. Staff will present recommendations to the School Board on Sept. 8 for when to begin hybrid in-person learning for these students, with a start date no later than October 27.

These expansions of hybrid in-person learning are in addition to in-person instruction that LCPS will provide to students enrolled in Monroe Advanced Technical Academy (MATA) courses, many of which require hands-on experiences. The School Board authorized that expansion of instruction at its August 11 meeting. MATA instruction will involve approximately 900 students receiving one day of instruction each week, beginning September 8.

LCPS staff members have begun revising plans based on the School Board's guidance last night, and will share additional information with the families of the students who will participate in these expanded hybrid learning experiences and the community as soon as possible. We will assess data relating to implementing hybrid in-person learning for the students referenced in this email as we work toward including additional groups of students in future stages of implementation of hybrid in-person learning, as conditions permit.

LCPS' highest priority remains the health and well-being of students, staff members, their families and the community, and we are working to operate our schools in compliance with all Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Virginia Department of Health (VDH) recommended mitigation measures. As recommended by the CDC, VDH, Executive Order, and School Board requirements related to face coverings, employees, students, and visitors to LCPS buildings are required to wear face coverings at all times. The [LCPS Protocol for Face Coverings](#) outlines this requirement and approved exceptions.

As we look to the start of the new school year for all students on September 8, LCPS teachers and staff members are making final preparations to ensure that every opportunity for student learning and support is maximized as we begin the year in the 100% distance

*learning mode for most students, which is described in more detail in the [Reopening in Stages: 100% Distance Learning Model](#) document. LCPS' goal is to maximize in-person learning, as long as we can provide learning experiences safely and in accordance with the requirements and recommendations of state and public health officials. We appreciate your continued support as we work to achieve that objective.*

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## **Loudoun Partners with Giant Pharmacy to Prevent Substance Misuse**

Customers of Giant Pharmacy locations in Loudoun County are provided a drug deactivation bag or medication lock box along with an informational flyer on how to prevent medications from getting into the wrong hands. Clients of the Department of Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Developmental Services (MHSADS) also are being provided these resources upon request and while supplies last.

Medication lock boxes may be used to store opioids and other medications out of reach of children, family, pets and guests. Drug deactivation bags may be used to properly dispose of unused medications and reduce the impact on the environment. The program is funded by the State Opioid Response grant program, which supports services that prevent opioid misuse.

According to the Northern Virginia 'Know the RxSK Use with Caution' ([knowrx.org](https://knowrx.org)) campaign, nearly 12,000

opioid prescriptions are filled every day in Virginia. Prescription opioids often go unused, unlocked and undisposed. Seventy-three to seventy-seven percent of patients reported that their prescription opioids were not stored in locked containers. Most people who misuse opioids get them from a friend, relative or single prescriber.

To receive a free drug deactivation bag or medication lock box while supplies last, visit your local Giant Pharmacy or [email Loudoun County](#).

There are several drug collection units located in Loudoun County where residents may dispose of unused or expired medications. More information is available at [loudoun.gov/drugdisposal](http://loudoun.gov/drugdisposal).



## Here's What's Happening with Traffic Around Algonkian

- The George Washington Boulevard Overpass project's stormwater management strategy and drainage report are currently under review. The project remains on schedule and VDOT expects to begin construction in spring 2021.
- The extension of Riverside Parkway from Loudoun County Parkway to Lexington Drive also remains on schedule while the detour road on Smith Circle East is nearing completion. The latest construction activities for the road extension include earthwork, water line installation, storm sewage, and curb and gutter installation.
- County transportation staff will also be collecting vehicle speeds at the intersection of Lowes Island Boulevard and Saulty Drive. The intention of this

data collection effort is to use the speed and car volume information to provide direction as to the need for possible improvements.



The Virginia Department of Transportation began a road diet project on Whitewater Drive earlier this summer that resulted in brand new bike lane being added to Whitewater Drive! This addition will help increase connectivity throughout the district and provide residents with opportunities for alternative transport and recreation.

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## Governor's Update

Governor Ralph Northam announced proposals to expand access to voting for the November 3rd General

Election amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The measures were unveiled by the Governor during a virtual Joint Meeting of the House Appropriations, House Finance, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees, and will be considered by legislators during the special General Assembly session set to begin this afternoon.

Governor Northam is putting forward three proposals aimed at addressing challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring all Virginians have safe and fair access to the ballot box for the November 3rd General Election.

- **Prepaid postage:** Governor Northam's proposed budget sets aside \$2 million for prepaid return postage on all absentee ballots sent out for the November 3rd General Election.
- **Drop off boxes and drop off locations:** The Governor's proposal includes language expressly permitting localities to use drop boxes or implement drop off locations for Virginians who choose to vote absentee, under security standards to be set by the Virginia Department of Elections.
- **Absentee cure process:** This measure will ensure Virginians' voting rights are protected by allowing them to fix an error on their absentee ballot. Currently, Virginians who make an error are not able to fix that error and therefore their ballot may be discarded. Many Virginians will be voting absentee for the first time this November, and this language will help ensure Virginians' votes are counted.

The Governor's proposed budget also includes funding for measures to reform policing; teach a more accurate version of Virginia history; expand safe, affordable housing; increase access to high-speed broadband; provide resources for urgent dam safety; and support Virginia's public Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Additional information and presentations on the Governor's proposed amendments to the 2020-2022 Biennial Budget can be found [here](#).

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## **Federal Representatives Urge USDA to Ensure Children Have Access to Meals**

Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton (D-VA) along with several colleagues sent a letter to USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue requesting that USDA extend and approve a number of waiver requests made by the Commonwealth that would help deliver food to Virginia children during the COVID-19 pandemic. The group is pressing to ensure that children in Virginia have access to healthy foods during the pandemic, when they may be participating in distance learning from home and therefore unable to easily access school-provided breakfast and lunch.

Throughout the pandemic, Virginia's 132 school divisions have continued to provide meals for students through a number of meal service options. However, this shift has increased costs for schools, who are also facing decreased revenues due to diminished levels of participation in meal programs, as well as increased costs related to the need for more shelf-stable foods, packaging, and personal protective equipment. Specifically, participation in the school breakfast program has decreased by 35 percent and the number of school lunches served has dropped by 60 percent.

In order to ensure the uninterrupted and safe distribution of meals to Virginia's students, the members of Congress requested that USDA extend waivers for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) until at least June 30, 2021 so that all students can have safe and efficient access to breakfast and lunch.

A copy of this letter is available [here](#).

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## **Loudoun United Returns to Segra Field**

Professional soccer has returned to Segra Field on Wednesday with a focus on fan safety, as Loudoun United FC took the "Loudoun Is Ready" business pledge at LoudounIsReady.com.

The pledge, a collaborative effort launched by Loudoun Economic Development, Visit Loudoun and the Loudoun Chamber of Commerce, encourages businesses to follow the latest COVID-19 preventative measures, as determined by the CDC and Virginia Department of Health.

Loudoun United FC is one of nearly 700 Loudoun businesses that have taken the pledge, and the club has detailed its health and safety standards at LoudounUnitedFC.com/Safety. Among the new protocols, fans attending games at Segra Field can expect:

- Attendance will be limited to 1,000 people per match;
- Only clear bags will be allowed inside of the stadium to allow for contactless searches;
- Mandatory use of face coverings for all fans over the age of 2, except when eating or drinking;

- Social and physical distancing signs and markers visible throughout the concourse.

To ensure social distancing, ticket sales are limited to four with exceptions for larger families. Fans will be seated at least six feet from other groups, and entry and exits will be done in intervals to control fan traffic at Segra Field. Loudoun United has five remaining home games at the following dates:

- Saturday Aug. 29, 6:30 pm vs. New York Red Bulls II
- Saturday Sept. 12, 6:30 pm vs. Philadelphia Union II
- Saturday Sept. 19, 6:30 pm vs. Pittsburgh Riverhounds SC
- Wednesday Sept. 30, 7:00 pm vs. New York Red Bulls II
- Sunday Oct. 4, 11:00 am vs. North Carolina FC

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Please share any messages of hope you see.  
Submissions may be sent to Zachary Harris at [zachary.harris@loudoun.gov](mailto:zachary.harris@loudoun.gov) and we'll share them in our updates and newsletter.

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# ATOOSA REASER

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## School Board Snippets

### Welcome to the 2020-21 school year!

It is hard to believe we are less than three weeks away from the start of a new school year. Despite this year being so different than we all envisioned, I hope we are able to move in the right direction and take care of EVERYONE in our community.

### **Affordable Connectivity and Technology for All**

LCPS remains committed to helping all students get connected to the internet. I am working with Senator Warner and Congresswoman Wexton in seeking permission to use certain restricted funds to help families who cannot afford internet access, with a temporary lifting of restrictions, during the pandemic.

As you may know, the schools and libraries universal service support program, commonly known as the E-rate program, helps schools and libraries obtain affordable broadband, with discounts that range from 20 percent to 90 percent of the costs of eligible services. The E-rate program is administered under the direction of the FCC.

Currently, the use of these discounted funds is conditioned upon certain parameters, including a limit on how far schools may extend their Wi-Fi bubble (limited to the boundary of the school grounds). If this restriction is temporarily lifted, school divisions could use the funds to expand their Wi-Fi footprint, set up remote sites, deploy additional hot spots, leverage cellular sites, and more, to ensure all students can access distance learning during the pandemic.

Schools will be reaching out to families starting next week to evaluate need, with distribution of hot spots resuming on September 1. Additionally, Temporary Cellular on Wheels antennas will be deployed to help improve coverage with service providers. Finally, Chromebook distribution has begun for all grades including K-2 this week.

### **Special Session of the General Assembly**

As Chair of the Legislative and Policy Committee, I am keeping a close eye on the special session currently underway. There are several bills related to education and schools. I will share an update as they develop. We are also developing our legislative agenda, which is our Board's way of asking our delegation of General Assembly representatives to pass laws to help support our school division. If you have ideas, please send them my way.

### **In-Person Learning and Leave Without Pay**

During our summer meetings, the School Board continued to work on ways to start some in-person learning for families that chose the Hybrid option. We are hopeful that success in the first stage of this implementation will lead to expansion of in-person learning, with a comfort level for everyone.

The School Board voted to start the following students in the Hybrid Model during Stage 1: MATA will start on the first day of school, September 8; Special Education students in ASOL and self-contained classrooms will start in October. In addition, we asked staff to provide a plan to start English Language Learners, Pre-School, and Pre-K in October, as well.

The Board also voted to implement a program which allows employees to request Leave Without Pay while the Phased Guidance for Virginia Schools is in effect, which includes job protections.

### **SAT and ACT**

I know that many high school students are disappointed about the cancellation of SAT and ACT exams since March. LCPS is working with the College Board to provide exclusive test opportunities for LCPS seniors at their schools on September 23 and October 27 (which are school days). Additional dates have been proposed over the entire school year at our LCPS high schools for ALL high school students.

#### **SAT**

- 9/26 - Broad Run, Dominion
- 10/3 - Freedom, Independence, Woodgrove
- 11/7 - Dominion, John Champe, Potomac Falls, Tuscarora
- 12/5 - Independence, Loudoun County, Potomac Falls
- 3/13 - Briar Woods, Dominion, Independence, John Champe, Woodgrove
- 5/8 - Broad Run, John Champe
- 6/5 - Broad Run, Park View

#### **ACT**

- 9/12 - Broad Run
- 12/12 - Briar Woods, Dominion and John Champe
- 2/6 - Briar Woods, Dominion and John Champe

### **Academies Admissions**

The Algonkian District had only one student from each middle school accept admission to AOS, and only 10 combined from both middle schools into AET, which is far less than proportionate representation. The Academies should be more accessible to ALL of our students, so I supported the staff recommendations to make the following changes:

- Reducing two days of testing to one by removing the standardized tests that are designed for young adults, not middle school students, and are shown to have disparate impact on students of color. We will keep the STEM Thinking Test (surprisingly; 29 of 30 students NOT admitted actually scored higher on this tool, than those who accepted admissions.)
- Continuing the minimum grade C required in middle school, but not counting this year's 8th grade report cards due to COVID
- Requiring Algebra 1 and not Geometry for AET as enrollment in Geometry varies too greatly across the division
- Profiles to be reviewed by a diverse panel of educators with training (ad hoc committee may evaluate further criteria)

- Additional recruitment efforts including field trips for various levels, and support for families and applicants

### Support Hotline for Tech Issues

If you have technical issues, call the support line at 571-252-2112, Mon.-Fri. 7:30 AM-5:00 PM. Or, if your computer is physically damaged, you can book an appointment at the DDI Repair Depot: <http://bit.ly/DDI-REPAIR>

Please continue to contact me with your feedback, questions, or concerns. I am listening and reading **everything** you send my way.

The next School Board meeting is scheduled for September 8<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you,



**Atoosa Reaser**  
**Vice Chair and Algonkian District Member**  
**Loudoun County School Board**  
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