

August 3, 2020

Dear Montgomery County Council,

I write in opposition to provision of County Executive Order 87-20 closing nonpublic schools for in-person instruction until at least October 1, 2020. While I understand the unprecedented health emergency that has been created by SARS-CoV-2, and the importance of maintaining community guidelines to prevent the continued spread of the virus, I feel that the nonpublic school closing provision of Executive Order 87-20 is overly broad and creates arbitrary and unnecessary closings of educational facilities.

For example, my daughter's Montessori school was allowed to open June 8, 2020 for in-person instruction as a "childcare" facility. The school has implemented numerous guidelines to maintain a safe environment such as limiting the number of people in a classroom to 10, wearing masks at all times, temperature checks upon arrival, etc. To date there has not been a case of SARS-CoV-2 at the school and the school will be allowed to continue in-person instruction through August as a "childcare" facility. However, on August 31, 2020, the school's academic calendar will begin and the school will no longer be allowed to conduct in-person instruction as it will now be considered a nonpublic school. This closure is now mandated even though there would be no change in number of students or safety procedures at the school. The only change is the type of instruction being provided.

Therefore, as the County has maintained that all decisions are being made under the guidance of science and data, I would like the County to provide the science and data that suggests this change in instruction and the classification from a childcare facility to a nonpublic school creates an unsafe environment as it pertains to the spread of SARS-CoV-2.

Sincerely,

Jeremiah Mitzelfelt

Silver Spring