

What metrics are being used to determine having students in school?

CFCI is using state and local metrics as part of the guidance for whether it is safe for students and staff to return to the physical building. These include: positivity rate in NHC, as well as the 14 day trend in cases. Guidelines have been set by the CDC outlining risk when certain protocols and procedures are in place including: Health screenings, mask wearing, social distancing, hand washing and thorough cleaning. Addition metrics include academic as well as social emotional data.

In what event will these metrics change or will they be consistent?

Metrics may change as more research and information is provided by the CDC with guidance from the governor and local health officials.

If there is a rise in numbers in New Hanover County or state-wide will CFCI close again?

Depending upon trending and guidance from the state and local health officials there is a possibilities schools could close. As our community spans over three counties, we are monitoring the metrics in Brunswick and Pender as well as New Hanover county.

Is there any possibility or circumstance in which CFCI will not reopen campus?

The goal of school administration, teachers and the board is to reopen our school. We beleive that face-to-face instruction is the most effective instructional strategy. We are working towards that goal every day. In the event that state and local guidelines change, we will follow those guidelines.

What is the CFCI plan to help children whose threat is not physical but mental health?

CFCI has surveyed families and will continue to reach out to determine the need of our children and families. Teachers and their relationships with their students and families our the first point of contact for determining a students' ability to learn and acclimate in this remote environment. Our school counselor, Michal Cohen and school social worker, Jenny Campbell have reached out to our families and students to provide support and guidance as needed. These are extremely difficult times for our students and their families, for our entire community. We need everyone working together to get our children and families what they need.

If remote learning is not working for kids, and CFCI refuses to reopen, can those children take a leave and retain their spot to relieve pressure at home?

Unfortunately, Charter Schools do not offer this as an option, as difficult as these decisions are. If a child leaves the school, it is considered an unenrollment and the child would need to be entered back into the lottery for the following year. The lottery takes place in February and all paperwork is submitted in January 2021.

What steps have other schools taken in order to safely re-open?

Different charter schools and schools have done different things to re-open, when they re-open. Some schools have had success with little or no instances of Covid transmission and some have opened and had to close back down because of Covid contact. CFCI is taking similar steps to most schools to identify and follow safety protocols that minimize risk. In addition, we have hired a health consultant to help us determine best practices to keep students and teachers safe. We have been in contact with several other schools in our area that have opened for students and also work with DPI to adapt suggestions to meet our student's needs.

What do their classrooms look like and can we do the same?

We have been following guidelines from state and local officials and following the "Lighting our Way" document (available on our website). We have been following health protocols, social distancing, mask wearing, cleaning, hand washing, and sanitizing listed in that document. Our teachers have also been arranging their classrooms in order to meet those guidelines.

Has someone reached out to them to discuss what is working and not working for them?

Mrs. McCormick attends weekly call-ins with charter school leaders from across the state to talk about re-opening plans and success stories. In addition, she has reached out to local charter school leaders to see how they are doing hybrid and plans moving forward.

Can you please advise if we may elect to remain virtual for the second trimester ending February 24th and when such an option may be made available?

Yes, the most recent survey that went out gave February 24th as the next option to stay remote through the end of the 2nd trimester.

Has there been any discussion about allowing families to opt into virtual-only for the remainder of the school year into June?

The option has been discussed but we will decide once we know more about our plan moving forward. Our goal has been to get all students back in face-to-face instruction, but we understand that some families would like to take a more cautious approach. As we continue to listen to state and local guidance about next steps for schools, we will adjust our plans accordingly, up to and possibly including the option for students to stay fully remote through trimester 3.

Will it be a half or full day?

At our September board meeting, the board approved a motion move into a hybrid (Plan B) model which included an abbreviated day, from 8:00am-12:30p.

Can we see a sample schedule?

There are several different sample options for each grade level. The school team continues to work through the pros and cons of each possible schedule and a decision will be made and shared with our community once a final selection is made.

Will teachers be expected to teach in-class students and remote students simultaneously?

Some teachers are opting for this for lessons but it does not suit every teaching situation. Teachers are making decisions for learning based on the needs of each student. For example, a teacher may start off with a group lesson synchronously and then break off into smaller groups, focusing on the students in front of them while sending the remote students off to work independently.

Will we start in November or later?

The board will make a decision at the October 20th meeting regarding which Plan CFCI will be in beginning November 13th.

What happens if a student or staff gets Covid?

CFCI will follow CDC and Strong Schools guidelines. Our Covid contact person (Mallory Hickey) will immediately consult with DHHS for next steps. Based on that guidance, we will communicate with the student's guardian.

Why do none of the surveys include plan A as an option?

The surveys do not include Plan A as an option because until the end of September, it was not an option and because we need to maintain social distancing to minimize risk. Our classrooms are small and require about a 50% reduction to accommodate. Additionally, we want to make sure that we are keeping all students safe and secure at all times. Since we have not had students in the building on a regular basis, we felt it was prudent to verify our procedures were sufficient to keep students safe using smaller groups of students (Plan B- hybrid) before moving into a Plan A scenario. We will continue to discuss the Plan A option with the goal of moving into it as soon as it is safe to do so.

What steps are you taking to move toward plan A?

Our goal is to bring all students into the building as soon as possible while reducing/mitigating risk. The biggest obstacles to getting to plan A are metrics and space for reasonable social distancing. We have rented space in order to remove extra items which gives teachers and students more space to spread out. We are also planning to utilize our outdoor spaces as other options for teaching which allow for social distancing and fresh air.

Why is it that it seems as though CFCI is the most equiped to go back to in person learning when in comparison to others in the county (ie. already eating in classrooms, parents are already in charge of bringing their child to and from school and with less students as a whole) BUT we are most likely going to be the last to go back this year (if at all??)?

These are extraordinary times and although CFCI does have much of what is needed to bring students into the building on a regular basis, there are still obstacles, including metrics. It has been a thoughtful process, and while not everyone may agree, we hope the community feels supported and heard.

What is the difference that CFCI compared to other schools receives in regards to both money and additional staffing?

CFCI is a public school and receives the same funding and opportunities as any public school which is based on the number of students enrolled in the school. As an independent school, we are able to use funding and resources to specifically benefit our students. However, it also limits our options because we aren't able to share high costs among multiple schools. Regarding COVID funding specifically - we have received about \$95,000 thus far. The money has very specific uses: Mental health and health professional staffing, student devices, digital curriculum and cyber security. There has been no additional funding for staffing.

What help is available for kids who need mental, emotional, or academic support?

If you have a student in your home that is struggling emotionally, socially, or academically, please reach out to your child's homeroom teacher, Michal Cohen or Jenny Campbell. They are in the best position to assist with any child needing help and/or support.

What is the protocol for mask wearing if and when the kids return to school?

All students and staff are required to wear masks at all times while in the building. The only time that masks may be removed is during snack when students are socially distancing.

Will there be 100% mask wearing by all students and staff?

That is our plan. Any exceptions would have to be approved by our health consultant and would require a Drs note.

Will there be any exceptions for masks as far as reasons not to wear them?

We have been vigilant on our requirements regarding mask wearing. To date, we have not had anyone unable to wear a mask. We have additional protocols of Plexiglass and face shields.

Is there a testing protocol in place to protect the school community and if not, do you believe it is safe to open the school without one?

The school does not have a testing protocol in place. DHHS has not advised that we implement testing at our school.

What are the safety protocols that are planned for school re-opening?

Health Checks including Temperature checks for everyone; mask wearing; hand-washing/sanitizing (touchless stations at each classroom door); social distancing including signage at 6 ft intervals; cleaning protocols and cleaning equipment, etc.

Is there anything else parents can do to help the school be ready to safely welcome students back to school?

The most helpful tasks the parents can complete to support the school is to share with their students the importance of wearing a mask, maintaining social distancing, and washing their hands regularly and often. We are also asking parents to be flexible and know that we are working to get students and staff back in the building safely.

What does remote look like for those remaining off campus?

The school team is currently building the plan for our fully remote learners. Our goals include having regular access to a teacher as well as direct instruction as often as possible through Zoom and pre-recorded videos.

Will fully remote students keep their same teachers?

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Will the level of support drop with teachers trying to juggle on-campus and off campus students?

Teachers will have essentially three different groups of students on any given day. Support will not necessarily drop but how students are accessing new material and learning will have to look different.

What would a typical middle grades day consist of?

The Middle grades schedule is still being finalized. However, our goal is to include 4 core classes, advisory block, interventions/enrichment block.

How will we provide an equitable education to all of the students without exhausting our teachers?

We are looking at several different options to support our teachers including an abbreviated day or shifts in staffing to give teachers time to teach students remotely. Wednesdays are days when teachers will work with all students both remote and hybrid as well as plan and record videos.

How can we expect teachers to keep up with students in group A, students in group B, and students who remain 100% virtual?

We have been looking at various models for hybrid and will present two options to the board in October. Students who are in-person will have the teacher's full attention. Students who are remote for three days will have instruction from video lessons. Students who are fully remote will have instruction on Wednesdays and learning check-ins for different subjects on different days. There are opportunities for feedback everyday. Students will have independent practice and learning time throughout their remote days.

Has there been any consideration with regard to Hybrid Plan B that bringing students back to the school just prior to Thanksgiving and Winter Break may not be the most wise decision?

There has been discussion around this idea during committee meetings and board meetings. In smaller groups, it may be a great time to transition back as well. We need families working with us to keep sick children home and staff staying home when they are not well during flu and cold season.

Why bring students together for a week, then out for a week, then back for 2 weeks, then out for 2 weeks?

If the board decides that the school will reopen in Plan B after November 13th, the transition will include a week open, one week closed and then 3 weeks of reopening prior to the winter break. It may not be ideal but it will give us the opportunity to begin the plan and get students in the building.

Is the 9 weeks mark so critical that any return to school decision must be tied to 9 weeks, or are other timeframes an option?

The first two votes were for one month increments extending first through the end of August and then through the end of September. The last vote would have been through the end of October but the thought process was that we should continue through November 13th which is the end of the first trimester. So 9 weeks has not been one of our markers as we are on trimesters.

Is it possible to use after Christmas break as the next possible school opening date rather than the end of the 2nd trimester, because that's so far away?

The planning that goes into remote vs. hybrid is extensive. If someone elects to go remote we need a commitment on the part of the family so that we can best utilize staffing and funding.

As far as the remote learning survey goes(the longer one that was sent out a week or 2 ago), were you able to finally get 100% participation?

The participation rate of both surveys was very good although not 100% for either. 91% for the first or longer survey (mid September) and 95% for the last or second survey (end of September).

When we go to hybrid, will any of the classes have cameras for synchronous learning for the students at home?

CFCI has purchased cameras for every teacher. This will enable teachers to teach synchronously if they choose this mode of instruction. It also allows for taping of the lesson which can be posted for remote students.