



CHIP JONES, Ed.D.  
Division Superintendent

## CUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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July 29, 2021

Dear CuCPS Families,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome parents and students back to school for the 2021-2022 school year. The past two school years have been extremely challenging for everyone, and we hope that this will be a better year.

As you know, school for students will begin on August 9, 2021. The VA General Assembly approved [Senate Bill 1303](#) which requires all VA Public Schools to offer in- person learning to the maximum extent possible and for at least the minimum number of required instructional hours. Therefore, Cumberland County Public Schools will be open on a regular schedule five (5) days per week.

The Governor's executive orders and all emergency orders expired on June 30, 2021, and the Health Commissioner's order for Pre-kindergarten through 12 schools to use masks inside expired on July 25, 2021. Governor Northam has announced that localities would be responsible for setting policies for face coverings in schools. Currently, the identification of positive COVID-19 cases in Cumberland remains low, but the division realizes that this could change at any time. We will continue to consult with our local health department. CuCPS has decided to implement a three-tiered system.

- **Tier I: New Normal**

The division will begin school in Tier I. The division will continue to implement mitigation strategies, including encouraging hand hygiene, frequently sanitizing high-traffic areas, providing alternative grouping and scheduling, and social distancing to maintain the 3-foot minimum distance as much as possible with everyone returning to school. Parents will still be asked to screen their children at home and to keep students who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 at home. The division will continue to quarantine students and to contact trace. This could result in the quarantining of close contacts who have not been vaccinated. The division will engage in deep cleaning as often as possible, especially of rooms or areas where COVID-19 cases have occurred. Vehicles will continue to be cleaned as well. In Tier I, masks in school buildings will be optional, although they are recommended by the CDC for those who are not vaccinated and for children too young to be vaccinated. However, federal law still requires face coverings on school buses.

- **Tier II: Increased Mitigations**

If case counts start to rise in the locality and/or there are incidents of COVID-19 in the schools, additional mitigation strategies will be added. This may include a potential return to the mask mandate for certain schools. The division will continue to quarantine students and to contact trace. This could result in the quarantining of close contacts who have not been vaccinated. The division will engage in deep cleaning as often as possible, especially of rooms or areas where COVID-19 cases have occurred.

- **Tier III: Full Mitigations**

If numerous cases of COVID-19 are identified, the division will implement Tier III. This will mean a return to daily temperature checks at school, an increase in social distancing to the greatest extent possible, a potential mask mandate division wide, the re-institution of the “no visitor” rule, and more frequent cleaning and sanitizing. In the extreme, this may require a return to a hybrid schedule or to all remote learning.

The division has other plans in place for the upcoming school year. These include the following:

**Academic Recovery:** We know that recovering from the loss of instructional time since the spring of 2020 will be a long process and we have a very clear plan to provide intensive and strategic remediation, intervention, and support for our students' academic, social, and emotional needs. This began with a most robust Summer School Program in June, providing students with opportunities to participate in remediation, intervention, and credit recovery. The division also plans to hold after-school programs for the fall and spring to promote academic acceleration and enrichment.

**Transportation:** Transportation remains a challenge and we are continuing to limit the flexibility for multiple stops and bus changes. Students will need to get on and off the bus at the same place because space on the bus is limited. Due to bus driver shortages and the need for social distancing, some bus drivers may need to make multiple runs. This could result in students arriving at school late or returning home late. We hope that you will be patient until these issues have been resolved. Once again, parents are reminded that, pursuant to federal law, students must continue to wear face coverings while on a school bus.

**Virtual Learning:** Cumberland County Public Schools has decided to continue remote learning for students whose parents chose to keep them at home for good and sufficient reasons. Students will be using an on-line platform through Virtual Virginia. A main difference in this program is that our local teaching staff will not be providing the instruction. This program maintains a much stricter class schedule which students will be required to attend online.

We thank you for your unwavering support of our schools, our students, and our efforts to return to learning together in the safest way possible. Your flexibility and patience will be much appreciated.

Sincerely,



Chip Jones, Ed.D.

Division Superintendent