

****Instructions for signing: CCS staff, please use this link to sign via Google Form and your name will be added. If you have additional questions please contact Shannon Gillikin or Tess Krovetz.* Link to sign: <https://forms.gle/XUke6MzqYPhf5caR6>**

Dear Dr. Atkins and members of the School Board,

We are writing to you as staff of Charlottesville City Schools to request that you reconsider opening school face to face this fall and pivot to a virtual opening.

Many states have moved forward to Phase 3 and have seen a subsequent spike in COVID cases. In our area, cases plateaued in May and once again spiked in June when we moved to Phase 2. It is likely we will see a similar or worse spike now that the governor has moved us to Phase 3. In addition, with UVa students returning mid-August, Charlottesville is at a particular risk for a rapid community spread of COVID. By prioritizing reopening businesses and social venues, the governor has put teachers and students at risk. We ask that you not follow his lead.

It is highly likely that we will return to virtual learning at some point for some length of time. We are asking you to prioritize the safety of our teachers and students as well as give us the best possible chance to teach well in a virtual environment.

We all know the March-June teaching window was a steep learning curve. We are very proud of the work that CCS has done to make those months as productive and safe as possible. We are also ready to do better. Teachers need training on Canvas, time to create and plan effective lessons with our teams, and the chance to put our creative energy towards some of the equity issues raised during the March-June period. We have the time and energy-- we need your leadership. If we pivot early to a virtual opening we can roll out the technology, train parents on platforms, invite community members to help partner with us as virtual school locations and child-care providers, and empower teachers to do their very best. We would like to plan proactively rather than be reactive in September.

As a staff we are asking you to:

1. Advocate at the state level to our legislators and governor to scale back the phases to prioritize schools becoming safe places.
2. Announce a virtual opening rather than face to face and plan accordingly.
3. Begin the conversation now with community partners about how to support families in what will be a challenging transition.
4. Define the metric that will be used to determine when it is safe to have face-to-face learning.

In addition to the request to plan for virtual learning, staff have many questions that need to be answered in order for us to feel safe returning to work. Those can be found after our signatures.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and address our concerns.

Signed,

Tess Krovetz, Jackson-Via Elementary School
Shannon Gillikin, Jackson-Via Elementary School
Kayla Terhune, Jackson-Via Elementary School
Maegan Thim, Jackson-Via Elementary School
Christen Edwards, Walker Upper Elementary
Rebecca Flowers, Johnson Elementary School
Victoria McCain, Jackson-Via Elementary School
Jen Johnson, Jackson-Via Elementary School
Bree Barns, Greenbrier Elementary School
Robyn N. Lee, Johnson Elementary School
Sarah VanGelder, Jackson-Via Elementary
Robyn Davis, Greenbrier Elementary
Megan Brockman, Jackson-Via Elementary
Jennifer Tyndall, Jackson-Via Elementary
Jessica Sokol, Jackson-Via Elementary
Bria Williams, Walker Upper Elementary
Rachel Lieb, Jackson-Via Elementary
Melanie Johnson, Jackson -Via Elementary
Sandra Hoffman, Burnley-Moran Elementary
Virginia Dawnsuir, retired, Jackson - Via
Kelsie Davis, Jackson-Via Elementary
Jill Campbell, Jackson-Via Elementary
Kristin Ullrich, Jackson-Via Elementary
Amy Peltier, Johnson Elementary
Bonnie Yoder, Jackson-Via Elementary
Tracy Hardley, Burnley-Moran Elementary
Annie Miller, Jackson-Via Elementary
Gwen Goodwin, Charlottesville High School
Lakisha Johnson, Clark Elementary School
Susan Allen, Walker Upper Elementary School
Debra Hartline, Jackson-Via Elementary
RaeAnne Caires, Burnley-Moran Elementary
Cicely Shelton- Venable Elementary
Isabel Smith - Venable Elementary
Tara Reardon, Walker Upper Elementary School
Jenna Clark, Jackson-Via Elementary School
Lily Brookman, Jackson-Via Elementary
Amy Milor, Clark Elementary
Sherry Eicher, Burnley-Moran Elementary
Laura Schaaf, Johnson Elementary
Rod Durrer, Charlottesville High School
Teresa Seto-Greenbrier Elementary School
Jacqueline Dinsmore - Jackson-Via Elementary

Stacy Diaz, Walker Upper Elementary
Siobhan Saul, Charlottesville High School
Jessica Taylor, Clark Elementary
Mary Craig, Clark Elementary
Leslie Scally, Johnson Elementary
Alicia Tobin, Buford Middle School
Dorothy Carney, Buford Middle School
Michael Allen, Buford Middle School
Michele Yeaton, Greenbrier Elementary
Kavita Kumar, Greenbrier Elementary
Kelsey Bechtle, Greenbrier Elementary
Rachel McLaughlin, Charlottesville High School
Maggie Pfuntner, Walker Upper Elementary
Becky Goodwin, Burnley Moran Elementary School
Marcia Johnson, Clark Elementary School
Ariel Bruner, Clark Elementary School
Leslie Hunter, Venable Elementary School
Barbara Brannock, Venable Elementary
Gabrielle Spencer, Clark Elementary School
Tamara Showalter, Charlottesville High School
Derek Hartline, Jackson-Via Elementary
Matt Caduff, Burnley-Moran
Pamela P. Brown, Charlottesville High School
Anne Etten, Burnley Moran Elementary
Tom Connaughton, Greenbrier Elementary
Laura Lindemann, Greenbrier Elementary
Timothy Johnson, Charlottesville High School
Rebecca Baber, Burnley-Moran Elementary
Edna Harris, Buford Middle School
Mary Ann Weir, Buford Middle School
Anne Kinsley, Buford Middle School
Emily Axelbaum, Jackson-Via Elementary School
Jo French, Venable Elementary School
Nathaniel Williams, Charlottesville High School
Sheryl Perrin, Greenbrier Elementary
Margi Roache, Buford Middle School
Brenda Payne, Retired, Venable Elementary School
Lori A. Lawson, Venable Elementary School
Whitney Gatesman, Former Teacher Burnley Moran Elementary School
Stella Kleinschmidt, Venable Elementary School
Thomas William Gore, Charlottesville High School
Marcy Wisbauer, Buford Middle School
Diane Graves, Clark Elementary
Hannah Helm, Charlottesville High School
Margaret Hostettler, Buford Middle School

April Brown, Walker Upper Elementary School
Elena Kryzhanovskaya, Walker Upper Elementary School
Loretta Randle, Buford Middle School
Lauren Smith, Greenbrier Elementary
Zach Laird, Greenbrier Elementary
Samantha D'Alessio, Buford Middle School
Amy Gawtry, Charlottesville High School
Brittney Mawyer, Burnley Moran Elementary
Shari Scudder, Venable Elementary School
Kaitlin Goodwin, Burnley Moran Elementary School
Mary Watson, Burnley Moran Elementary
Jeanne Machen, Johnson Elementary
Crystal Beasley, Buford Middle School
Doraine Perry, Venable Elementary School
Latoya Brown, Buford Middle School
Kelly Walters, Johnson Elementary School
Lynne Herman, Greenbrier Elementary School
Gemma Furman, RN, former Burnley-Moran Elementary School
Myrtle Houchens, Venable Elementary School
Linda Thornton, Greenbrier Elementary School
Ellen Sadler, Greenbrier Elementary School
Lisa Utz, Jackson-Via Elementary School
Felicia Furst, Greenbrier Elementary School
Michele Bambury, Buford Middle School
Kellie Keyser, Greenbrier Elementary School
Belinda Bullock, Jackson-Via Elementary School
Clare Konizeski, Greenbrier Elementary
Juanita Eddy, Clark Elementary
Jessica Pedersen, Burnley-Moran Elementary
Martha Dix, Jackson-Via Elementary
Meghan Sibbald, Buford Middle School
Susan Muse, Buford Middle School
Traci Martin, Venable Elementary
Laila Abbas, Johnson Elementary School
Meaghan Fenton, former Jackson-Via Elementary
Lisa Shook, Venable Elementary School
Kathryn Salem, Jackson Via Elementary School
Sarah Hathaway, Greenbrier Elementary
Susan Mahone, Greenbrier Elementary
Kelsey Cary, Lugo-McGinness Academy
Beth Easter, Greenbrier Elementary School
Lorena Bower, former Johnson Elementary teacher
Sarah Dagen, Lugo-McGinness/Charlottesville High School
Vickie Burruss-Jones, Clark
Nicholas Yates, Buford Middle School

Stephanie Powers, Buford Middle School
Htoogay Paw, Johnson Elementary School
Pam Paige, Johnson Elementary School
Dot Walton, Retired, Walker Upper Elementary
Anne Ernst, Charlottesville High School
Shaun Walters, Buford Middle School
Cynthia Malinowski, Buford Middle School
Ariel Nash, Johnson Elementary School
Jillian Smith, Johnson Elementary School
Lisa Wallace, Walker Upper Elementary School
Lisa Bearman, Greenbrier Elementary School
Jessamy Bower, Walker Upper Elementary School
Jason Bower, Walker Upper Elementary School
Gregory Ochsenschlager, Jackson-Via Elementary School
Matt Resnick, Buford Middle School
Violet Blakey, LEAP Instructional Assistant
Rachel Caldwell- Venable Elementary
Solene Thomas-Blatt- Greenbrier
Patricia Luke, Buford Middle
Kendra Gray- Clark Elementary School
Ashley Riley, Clark Elementary School
Christopher Spencer, Clark Elementary School
Georgia Watts, Johnson Elementary School
Christopher Shuma, Walker Upper Elementary School
Kristi O'Brien, Venable Elementary School
Andrew Manning, Charlottesville High School
Ida Cummings, Jackson-Via Elementary School
Najwa Tatby, Clark Elementary School
Rachel Phillips, Walker Upper Elementary School
Tracy Goolsby, Jackson-Via Elementary School
Jennifer Horne, Charlottesville High School
Paul Rosner, MLK PAC, Charlottesville High School
Molly Feazel-Orr, Burnley-Moran Elementary School
C'Aira Davis, Burnley-Moran Elementary School
Joshua Early, Charlottesville High School

Questions Regarding Reopening

Safety and Health

1. Will all students and adults be required to wear a mask or shield? If so, how will this (and social distancing) be enforced and what will the policy be if enforcement attempts fail?
 - a. [Executive Order 63](#) states that children aged ten and older must wear a mask at all times in public spaces. Children over the age of two are encouraged to wear a mask when possible. An exemption is in place for K-12 students in the learning environment

- b. Masks and social distancing, in addition to hand-washing, [work](#) to prevent the spread
2. What is the protocol when staff or students have a [symptom](#) that could be COVID?
3. Will staff and students have access to regular, scheduled COVID testing with a short turn-around?
4. If a teacher needs to quarantine due to exposure or a positive COVID test, will we receive paid leave outside of our accrued sick leave? What plan is in place to find coverage until a long-term sub can be found, given that COVID recovery requires a significant amount of time? And will we know the policy before we start work?
5. At what point will the city schools revert to virtual? Number of community cases? A percentage of positive testing rate? A certain number of cases in a school? The number of times school has been disrupted due to mandatory 14-day quarantine?
6. What process will teachers rely on in the event they feel their safety has been compromised at school?
7. How will you address ventilation, or lack thereof, in classrooms without windows or doors to the outside, or spaces with windows that do not open (or are not allowed to be opened)? (This is an issue at Walker, Buford, Clark, CHS, and Jackson-Via in particular)
8. Will more nurses be hired to account for increased need in symptom monitoring? If not, who is expected to handle the additional workload?
9. What symptoms will mandate a student or staff member to be sent home for quarantine?
 - a. From a WHO [document](#) regarding international travel and screening for COVID: "Temperature screening alone, at exit or entry, is not an effective way to stop the international spread, since infected individuals may be in the incubation period, may not express apparent symptoms early on in the course of the disease, or may dissimulate fever through the use of antipyretics; in addition, such measures require substantial investments for what may bear little benefits."
10. Will we hire more custodial staff to ensure detailed cleaning of schools? And exactly what cleaning procedures will be required, both of the custodial staff and of teachers?
11. What constitutes high-risk conditions (for teachers and immediate family)? How will medical privacy be protected for those who qualify?
12. If a teacher or student tests positive, what is the protocol regarding their return to school, given that we do not yet know if exposure or infection guarantees future immunity? How will the district support a staff member with the long-term complications from COVID? (<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/diagnosed-with-covid-19-what-to-expect>)
13. If a staff member tests positive for COVID, what is expected for the rest of the staff who may be possibly infected?

4 Day Plan Questions

1. Will we have a protected 30-minute lunch break? Will there be any other break for teachers throughout the day?
2. How will special teachers be protected from increased exposure/as a vector for the virus when they are being asked to rotate to over 20 classrooms to teach?
3. How will children receive Tier 2 and Tier 3 support when all interventionists have been repurposed as classroom teachers?

4. How will you compensate IAs and teachers fairly? Will they qualify for hazard pay if they are in-person?
5. What is the plan to protect IA positions when we go virtual?
6. What services will be provided for students who demonstrate emotional distress due to being confined to the same room for the majority of the school day? How will we serve those students who are unable to physically take a break due to Covid restrictions but rely on the break (especially those who have movement breaks as part of a 504 or IEP)? What is in place to support the students who no longer receive TDT services through Region Ten?
7. What services/compensation will be provided to teachers as we take on more responsibility and it contributes to the already demanding stress which causes teacher burnout?
 - a. Considering the substitute population was in a high-risk category, and/or already hard to obtain, how will we handle substitutes if the building IAs and other non-teachers are now filling the role of a “lead teacher”?
8. When & how will families be informed as to each staff member’s new role? For example, if an IA becomes a classroom teacher, how will parents be informed?
9. How will the plan for distance learning (for those who opt-in and for when we have to switch to that model) ensure equity of access for working families or those with limited internet access? Is there a plan in place to garner community support to provide childcare for families during distance learning days?
10. What is the division’s response to teachers who don’t feel safe returning, but do not have a qualifying high-risk condition? What if we have a high-risk spouse?

Articles for your consideration:

NYT piece on studies regarding risk in reopening schools:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/05/health/coronavirus-children-transmission-school.html>

Johns Hopkins article regarding what to expect from a COVID diagnosis:

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/diagnosed-with-covid-19-what-to-expect>

NYT article on how airborne transmission is a significant factor in the pandemic, especially in crowded spaces with poor ventilation, and that just wiping things down may not be sufficient

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/04/health/239-experts-with-1-big-claim-the-coronavirus-is-airborne.html>