



Board of Education

FRANCES H. BOOMER, *Chairman* • KIMBERLY R. SMITH, *Vice Chairman*
NAOMI E. CLARK • VICTOR J. DOVE • CARROLL G. IPOCK, II • STEFANIE KING • KELLI S. MUSE
DR. WENDY A. MILLER, *Superintendent*

August 2, 2021

Board of Education Votes on Safety Protocols for Return to School

New Bern, NC- Today, during the Special Called Board of Education Meeting the Board of Education took action on the COVID safety protocols, specifically the wearing of masks for the upcoming school year. The following was approved:

- Students and Staff in Grades K-8 will be required to wear masks,
- Students and Staff in Grades 9-12 will be recommended to wear masks but will not be required, and
- If parents in Grades 9-12 require their child to wear a mask to school, they can send a letter to the school sharing this information. The school will contact the parent if the student does not comply with their desire.

The Board of Education came to this decision based on multiple data points and references to include the recommendations of the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics. The Board of Education did discuss that the mask requirements can be updated if the trend data for the county moves in a positive direction and encourages those eligible to get the vaccination if they haven't already done so.

The following district safety protocols will also be in effect for all schools for the 2021-2022 school year:

- **All passengers (PreK-12) and drivers** must wear a mask on school buses per the order of the CDC under Section 362 of the Public Health Service Act.
- Isolation at the school is required for all presumptive or confirmed cases of COVID-19. A designated sick room will be used for this purpose until the student is able to be picked up from school. Staff with symptoms or diagnosis will be sent home immediately.
- School Contact Tracing for those exposed to a confirmed positive COVID-19 case.
- Quarantine is required for an individual who has been a close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes cumulatively over a 24-hour period) of someone who is determined positive with COVID-19 either through testing or symptom consistent diagnosis, UNLESS the contact has been fully vaccinated or if masks were being worn appropriately and consistently by both the person with COVID-19 and the potentially exposed person.
- Maintain a minimum of three feet of distance between K-12 students who are not fully vaccinated within school settings to the greatest extent possible without excluding students from full-time, in-person learning.
- Maintain a minimum of six feet apart between adults and students who are not fully vaccinated within school settings to the greatest extent possible.

The following safety protocols will no longer be in effect for all schools for the 2021-22 school year:

- Mass Screenings: Mandatory temperature checks for all students and staff will no longer be required. Temperatures will only be taken when there are symptoms or suspected fever.
- Attestation forms: This form will no longer be required. We ask that any students and/or staff experiencing symptoms remain at home and contact the school nurse to report symptoms so next steps can be discussed.
- Student Cohorts: Students will no longer be required to remain in student cohort groups and will be able to travel in the building.
- Social Distancing on Buses: Students will no longer be required to socially distance on the bus or have an assigned seat. All riders will have to wear a mask.
- One Way Traffic in Hallways: students will now be able to travel down both sides of the halls.
- Limit Non-essential Visitors: Visitors will be allowed in schools if they follow all the safety protocols and expectations as required for students and staff.
- Student Personal Items: A student's personal items will no longer be required to be kept separate.

It is the goal of the Board of Education to have all students and staff safely return to in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year with the recommended safety protocols put into place to help limit the transmission of COVID-19. It may be necessary for the Board of Education to update the safety protocols anytime during this school year if the data and trends move in the wrong direction potentially jeopardizing the health and safety of all students and staff.

(*Please note as of today, the General Assembly has not required school districts to offer a virtual learning option this year for students so Craven LIVE is not available for the 21-22 school year. If the Governor mandates a virtual learning option for all students, this will be an option Craven County Schools will offer for our students. This school year Craven County Schools will launch Craven Virtual Academy for students in grades 3-12. This is an application-based program and the deadline to apply has already passed. Enrollment in the academy is not a temporary response to COVID or masks policies.)