

# Next Step

A report on Board action  
Cumberland County Board of Education  
Virtual Regular Meeting  
**June 9, 2020**

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## Superintendent Updates the Board

Superintendent Dr. Connelly opened his comments by complimenting Cumberland County Schools (CCS) premier professionals and committed community partners for their ‘tremendous work’ in successfully closing out the 2019-2020 school year. In spite of COVID-19, he noted that everyone ‘jumped into action’ providing various services to meet the needs of students, employees and the community-at-large:

- 1,094,432 meals served from March 17 – May 22
- Community partners gave away approximately 5,100 meals and 1,000 boxes of groceries to families
- 6,127 devices were distributed to students who needed a laptop
- Hotlines set up through Cumberland@Home received nearly 5,000 calls for inquiries about technology, student work and the social/emotional needs of students Over the seven-week period, the district hosted 267 professional development sessions and attendance numbers totaled more than 9,000

Dr. Connelly shared that he and Board Chair Alicia Chisolm recently released a joint statement reaffirming the district’s commitment to racial justice and zero tolerance for racial discrimination in CCS. He said the district will remain committed to promoting diversity, equity, inclusion and excellence in education. Also, in light of the proposed School Resource Officer (SRO) agreement with the Cumberland County Sheriff’s Office, Dr. Connelly shared that great strides have been made and will continue in the new school year to distinguish school disciplinary matters handled by building administrators from law enforcement matters handled by SRO in order to keep schools safe.

Dr. Connelly offered words of congratulations to CCS’ approximately 3,500 graduates for the resiliency they have shown during modified instruction, the loss of senior prom and other senior events, including modified graduation ceremonies scheduled to take place in the coming days. He also asked for a moment of silence in response to the death of Mr. George Floyd during this time of racial and social unrest.

## Board of Education

Alicia Chisolm  
Chair  
District #1

Greg West  
Vice-Chair  
At-Large

Judy Musgrave  
At-Large

Charles McKellar  
At-Large

Deanna Jones  
District #2

Carrie Sutton  
District #3

Donna Vann  
District #4

Susan Williams  
District #5

Joseph Sorce  
District #6

Superintendent  
Dr. Marvin Connelly

## **Board Receives School Closure Survey**

Associate Superintendent of Data and Accountability Ron Phipps shared with the Board findings from the recent school closure survey. Students, parents, school- and district-level staff were asked to complete. Designed and administered by Hanover Research, the survey gathered feedback from stakeholders regarding school closures because of COVID-19.

It focused on how well the district supported students' academic successes and social-emotional well-being, whether students and staff had access to the tools and technology to support online learning, and what additional resources and supports could have been useful during the closure. According to Phipps, there were 9,473 respondents during the three-week survey period. Each person completed a survey appropriate to their role as a student, parent or staff member (school level or district level). Click [here](#) to see the survey results.

## **Re-Entry Task Force Information Shared**

Assistant Superintendent of District Transformation and Strategic Initiative Melody Chalmers shared with Board members information about the work of CCS Re-entry Task Force. The Task Force has been formed to guide the district's plan for reopening school for the 2020-2021 school year while examining factors that need to be considered to safeguard the health of students, staff and the community. Chalmers said that district staff, principals and representatives from CCAE, CCSATA, District PTA and the Cumberland County Health Department make up the task force. These individuals have been divided into two groups: Work Groups (Cabinet members, Principals and District Staff) and Focus Groups (Certified and Classified Educators, Students and Parents). Moving forward, Chalmers shared that those in the Work Groups have been broken into smaller groups for the purpose of examining how school operations, support for the whole child, support for personnel and communications should be conducted for the reopening of school. Task Force members will meet again to discuss input garnered from the focus groups and review the guidance on school reopening provided by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

## **Board Approves K-12 Virtual School**

The Board approved the establishment of a K-12 Virtual School that will 'open its doors' to students for the 2020-2021 school year, pending the approval of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). According to Dr. Jane Fields, the assistant superintendent of Secondary Curriculum & Instruction, the Virtual School is geared toward (1) offering an alternative learning approach for families that may not wish to return to a physical classroom environment because of the COVID-19; (2) attracting private, homeschool, and charter school families flexible learning options and experiences through the curricular choices within CCS; and (3) offering learning opportunities for students and staff who are medically fragile and could benefit from alternative options. Dr. Fields said that while the school is primarily virtual there will be opportunities for students to come together for educational and social programs. They will engage in online instruction and use interactive offline materials, textbooks, and other instructional materials with the guidance and support of licensed teachers. According to Dr. Fields, the Virtual School will offer advanced course offerings, specialized services for EC, ESL and AIG, Individualized Learning Pathway, social-emotional supports, and extracurricular offerings. Also, the Virtual School will be held to the same district and state testing standards. Plans are for the school to open to students on August 17.

## **Remediation and Summer Jump Start**

Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Curriculum & Instruction Dr. Mellotta Hill shared with the Board [Cumberland@Home Summer Edition](#) for K-12 students throughout the district. According to Senate Bill 704, all schools will develop a Remediation and Summer Jump Start Plan for the upcoming school year to provide a supplemental summer learning program for students whose learning has been negatively impacted because of school closure due to COVID-19. Targeted reading and math interventions will be provided to those students in grades K-4 who were not on track to meeting year-end expectations. The goal of our Cumberland@Home Summer Edition will be to provide extended learning opportunities for all students in grades K-12. The Jump Start program will promote continuous student learning and offer optional suggested learning activities.

## **Board Approves 2020-2021 Calendars**

The Board approved Cumberland County Schools 2020-2021 Calendars. Each calendar represents new requirements as passed into legislation with Senate Bill 704 in May 2020.

All of the calendars represent the following to comply with legislation:

- 5 remote learning days
- 5 additional instructional days; instructional hours equivalent to 5 days.

Click [here](#) to see the approved calendars.

## **Administrative Recommendations**

### Principals

William H. Owen Elementary School: Latreicia Allen

Armstrong Elementary School: Bianca Carter

Ireland Drive Middle School: Cornelius Felder

Cumberland Mills Elementary School: Tyson Johnson

Ferguson-Easley Elementary School: Eric McLaurin

Eastover-Central Elementary School: Vernon "Lee" Spruill

Lucile Souders Elementary School: Chickia West

Elizabeth Cashwell Elementary School: Niesha Witherspoon

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