

**The Creativity CoLaboratory Charter School (C3)  
Reopening Plan  
September, 2020**

Creating this plan has been an inclusive process that took place over the month of July, 2020. Initially, 112 families responded to the survey we sent out. About 85 people participated in a community and parents meeting on July 20. The staff met three times, the Reopening Task Force has met three times. And, the Board met and considered all of the issues. In addition, a number of parents sent emails both asking questions and sharing advice and perspective. Through this process we reached a clear consensus to open this fall. As has been stated in several contexts throughout this process, our goal is to provide a safe and healthy school environment where our children receive a robust education that is child-centered, academically rigorous, STEAM focused, and nurtures social and emotional growth. The following paragraphs outline our plan and the way that we are addressing the triple goal of safety, a good education, and an arts-enriched fun environment.

Also it should be noted that there may be changes between now, August 25, and the beginning of the school year. The situation regarding COVID-19 is changing almost daily. And, the Governor and Department of Education very likely could issue changes in guidance or even mandates.

**Reopening Task Force/Pandemic Response Team**

At the outset of this planning process the school identified a Reopening Task force comprised of C3 staff, Appel Farm staff, and parent volunteers. The Task Force began meeting in early July and helped in the formation of this plan. The Task Force will continue to meet until the beginning of the school year. At that time, the same Task Force will become the school's Pandemic Response Team. And, in addition to the Task Force, the newly appointed school counselor, who begins work on August 18, 2020, will become part of the Pandemic Response Team.

The membership of the Task Force/Response Team is comprised of:

**Appel Farm staff**

- Two members of the Operations Team
- Maintenance/custodial
- Executive Director

**C3 Staff**

- CSA
- Lead Teacher
- Administrative Assistant
- Nurse
- Counselor (will join in August, 2020)
- 4 Teachers

**Parents**

- 1 parent per grade minimally (others have attended meetings on occasion)

**The Plan**

The basic plan is that school will reopen with full-time, in-person instruction on our campus, 5 days per week for all students on September 1. Our school hours will be the same as last year

with drop off time 8:15 to 8:25 AM. Start time is 8:30 AM in class (late bell 8:35 AM), and dismissal at 4:00 PM. We will also keep the every other Friday as a "short day" dismissing at 12:55 PM. With the support of Appel Farm, we will offer early care starting at 7:30 AM and after care until 5:00 PM.

We believe that this plan normalizes school and life as much as possible. We think that this plan will provide your children with a full curriculum and allow us to maintain our distinctive hand-on approach and emphasis on arts and STEAM.

## **An Alternative**

For those families with their children attending school in-person this Fall, we will offer the option of completely virtual schooling. **In early August will sent out an electronic form to all families in order for them to choose -- in-school or virtual-- instruction.** The caveat is that whatever option families chose will be for the entire first marking period. We want to make any changes in class configurations in an orderly and planned way that causes as little disruption to the learning environment as possible. The format and schedule of the virtual instruction is dependent on the number of students who choose this option within each grade level. A combination of synchronous live Zoom classes along with independent work is likely.

When choosing the in-person option parents are agreeing to monitor your child's health for any COVID related symptoms and to keep your child home if in doubt. And, parents are also agreeing to mask use and other health and safety measures as outlined below.

Of course, all of our plans are subject to change should the state enter into a state of emergency again. Students will bring home their chromebooks daily in the case that the school or a particular class needs to pivot to all virtual instruction quickly.

C3 provides a chromebook to every student. Last year the entire school went online in March and there were no issues with devices or connectivity. In addition we use GoGuardian, a software that enables each teacher to see what is on the screen of every student. If anyone is not showing up for class or is unable to connect, the teacher will automatically know. It should be noted that we did not have this problem last year.

## **Accommodations for those who are potentially compromised**

No staff have identified as needing accommodations. If anyone were to become ill we would follow the policy outlined in the Contact Tracing and Isolation policies (Policy CO2020-006). There are a few teachers who could be compromised. At this point no one has not asked for any accommodation. However as a precaution, we have placed them largely with virtual cohorts. That puts them teaching only two in-person classes. All have agreed that they will monitor their own health and the risk factors. If any does need an accommodation, they will teach their classes remotely. We have already identified several substitutes who would be in the classrooms should staff need to teach remotely.

Students who are potentially medically compromised to the extent that they can not safely attend school will be encouraged to elect the virtual alternative.

## **Cohorts**

C3 has class size already limited to 12. We will treat each class of 12 as a cohort, as recommended by the CDC. Students will remain in their cohorts and we will try to minimize interaction between cohorts. This is related both to minimizing potential exposure to COVID and for the purpose of contact tracing if needed.

Students will have their majors and minors classes in their cohorts. Students will eat with their cohorts and have recess/breaks with their cohorts. The majors and minors classes are being determined within the next few weeks and will rotate quarterly, so every cohort will receive instruction in all of the same areas of STEAM and the arts. We certainly hope that things improve and we can return to multi-age and mixed cohort activities as soon as safely possible.

## **Classrooms**

We are fortunate that we have small class size (12) and plenty of space. We have enough room in all the traditional classrooms for classes of 12 with students spaced according to CDC guidelines and wearing masks. But we will also be using the outdoors as much as possible. When we send a list of school supplies we are going to suggest sending a beach towel or exercise/yoga mat for each child to keep in their cubby. That way our students will have something to sit on when outside for class time or lunch. And, we have 4 large covered outdoor spaces that we will use daily as "outdoor classrooms." So, while we will use our regular classroom as a default option, classes will move outdoors, to outdoor covered spaces and to other large rooms often. We anticipate that out of the 7.5 hour school day, students will be outdoors a minimum of 2.5 hours per day.

It should also be noted that we have no hallways. All classes open directly to the outdoors. All classrooms have their own bathrooms. We have no elevators. And, we have over 100 acres of lawn. So, by the nature of our campus we have eliminated some of the riskier places in a school. Also, our classrooms all have windows on two sides of each room, allowing us to have plenty of fresh air. As of this summer, every classroom will also be equipped with a commercial grade HEPA air filtration system to support safe air circulation.

## **Masks (See Policy CO2020-002)**

All adults will wear masks. This includes teachers, staff, volunteers, visits and outside contractors.

All students will wear masks when in school.

It is important that we all normalize the use of masks. We need to be examples of mask use, partially for our own benefit and partially for the safety of those around us. Mask use is uniformly recommended by the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the NJDOE.

At the same time, we are well aware of the possibility of "mask fatigue". To address mask fatigue we have altered the schedule to have a longer morning break, which we will use on some days for additional physical education. We also have lunch and recess and an afternoon break. Then there are always a few minutes between classes. As long as students are socially distant they can use these times as mask breaks.

Also, we plan to make use of our abundant outdoor space. To that end we are encouraging parents to send a beach towel, yoga or exercise mat with their children's school supplies to use when class can be held outdoors. Additionally there are 4 large outdoor covered spaces at AF that we will use as outdoor classrooms.

Please note that students with *bone fide* medical conditions that prohibit them from mask use will be excused with medical documentation. And, in the same way, if a student or teacher

has a *bone fide* condition that makes them more vulnerable such that they need everyone using a mask in their classes we will accommodate their needs as well.

### **Screening (See Policy CO2020-003)**

We ask that all parents screen their children for fever and monitor any COVID like symptoms before sending your children to school. And we ask that parents keep their children home when there is any doubt.

And, with regard to screening we will exceed the CDC guidelines and screen all children upon arrival. That will involve a quick temperature check and questions. We imagine this being a very brief and non-invasive process. It was interesting that 100% of those who attended our parents meeting on July 20 preferred that we screen at school rather than rely totally on self screening. So we will do both. Staff conducting the screening, will also have sensitivity training to ensure every student is supported with kindness if a screening produces a red flag and requires further dialogue with parents.

All staff will have a temperature screen and symptom check off at sign-in each morning.

All visitors and contractors will be screened prior to entry into the school.

Our nurse has written screening and isolation procedures. They will be approved by the Board on August 25, 2020.

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting (See Policy CO2020-001)**

We are adding additional cleaning staff to ensure regular cleaning and disinfecting of bathrooms, common areas and surfaces, door knobs, the lunch room, etc. during the school day. Teachers will also be regularly cleaning the classroom spaces throughout the day. And there will be a deeper cleaning every day after the students leave to ensure every surface is disinfected according to CDC guidelines.

As mentioned above we are installing a commercial grade HEPA air filtration system to support safe air circulation in all of our classrooms.

### **Hand washing and Sanitizing (See Policy CO2020-001)**

All regular 5th and 6th grade classrooms have a bathroom and sink. There are two bathrooms in the 7th and 8th grade area and each grade will have a dedicated bathroom and sink. Regular hand washing will be encouraged. Specially students will be asked to wash their hands minimally after recess, before and after lunch, after using the bathrooms, after coming in from outdoor breaks, and at other times as seems appropriate to the teachers in charge.

Additionally every classroom and the dining hall has a hand sanitizing station installed near the doorway. Students will be encouraged to sanitize their hands upon entry into the rooms.

### **Contract Tracing (See Policy CO2020-006)**

We developed a policy and procedure for contact tracing. Three of our staff completed contract tracing training. One of the reasons for students to remain in their cohorts is to facilitate contact tracing. We will be working the Salem County Health Department and will follow their lead should contact tracing become necessary.

### **School Supplies**

This year, we will ask each student to use their own supplies. We do not want to share classroom sets. As much as I believe that sharing is important, at this time it poses too much risk. So students will use their own supplies. Teachers will have some pencils, pens, etc to give to students when absolutely necessary. We will not loan such items and will not reuse them with other students. You will receive an email in the near future about school supplies. And, as I mentioned earlier, please include a beach towel or mat with your child's supplies this year, along with their typical "weather" outdoor gear like rain jacket, rain boots, coat, snow gear, etc. so we can utilize the outdoors as much as possible.

### **Lunch**

Our dining hall has a capacity of 320. We have created a schedule with three separate lunch periods this year, so there are only 48 students ever eating at the same period. There is ample room for students to eat lunch in the dining room socially distanced at 6 feet, again remaining in cohorts spaced apart at separate tables. At the same time, we encourage classes/cohort groups to eat outside in nice weather and/or to eat in their classrooms if they choose. We will provide lunch for those who want it and those who qualify for free or reduced lunch. Breakfast and lunch service will be altered in accordance to the CDC guidance to ensure safety. As much as possible, we want lunch to feel normal and fun for our students.

Food will be served plated by cafeteria staff. There will be no family, cafeteria, or buffet style food service.

Food service is contracted to the Camden Charter School Network. They have policies in place. In short, all food will be plated in the kitchen and food service staff will hand plated food to individual students who will approach the service window, one at a time, appropriately socially distanced. There will be no cafeteria style service nor will there be any buffet style service. We are also installing a plastic barrier between the kitchen and dining hall.

Cafeteria staff will follow all best practices that promote health and safety. They will wash hands before beginning to work in the cafeteria and will wash hands before and after handling food items and after removing gloves.

### **Transportation**

Transportation is the responsibility of the home school districts. Interestingly, in response to our survey question, we learned that about half of our families plan to transport their own children to school this year rather than relying on district bussing.

If children do take district bussing we urge families to support their children in wearing masks on the busses. And, of course, we want all of our families to adhere to whatever health and safety guidelines are put in place by the local districts regarding bussing.

Field Trips, Co-curricular Activities, and Use of facilities outside of school hours

All off-campus field trips, co-curricular activities, and use of facilities after school hours have been suspended until they can be done safely and in accordance with current guidance.

## **Policies**

On August 25, the Board of Education will consider and adopt the following policies:

Cleaning (Policy CO2020-001)

Mask use (Policy CO2020-002)

Daily screening (Policy CO2020-003)

Isolation of children who have symptoms of COVID (Policy CO2020-003)

Staff time off (Policy CO2020-004)

Student absenteeism (Policy CO2020-005)

Contact tracing (Policy CO2020-006)

## **Some articles of interest**

New Jersey Department of Education

<https://www.nj.gov/education/reopening/NJDOETheRoadBack.pdf>

CNN article about the latest CDC guidance about reopening schools:

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/23/health/cdc-coronavirus-school-guidelines-new/index.html>

CDC Guidance from their webpage:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/prepare-safe-return.html>

CNN article about a preschool in New York for children of essential workers that remained COVID-free. (A short summary is: screening, hand washing, masks, social distancing)

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/20/us/child-care-for-essential-workers-lessons-wellness/index.html>

I am very happy to say that our plan meets or exceeds the CDC guidance, addresses all the issues raised in the NJDOE The Road Back document, and incorporates the best practices that we currently know.