



CORNERSTONE CHARTER ACADEMY

WWW.CORNERSTONE.TEAMCFA.ORG

October 13, 2021

Dear Cornerstone Families,

This letter is intended to provide you with information on the ESSER III funding that Cornerstone Charter Academy is eligible to receive. It provides you with some background on the law as well as detailing the steps that Cornerstone has already taken in order to return our students to school.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL RELIEF FUND (ESSER III)

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) signed into law on March 11, 2021, provided nearly \$122 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund (ESSER). ARP ESSER, also known as ESSER III, funds are provided to State educational agencies in the same proportion as each State received under Title 1-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in fiscal year (FY) 2020. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) published Interim Final Requirements (IFR) on April 22, 2021 requiring Public School Units (PSUs) receiving ESSER III funds to submit an PSU Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services. If an PSU had already developed a plan for safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services prior to the enactment of ARP that meets the statutory requirements of section 2001(i) but did not address all of the requirements in the IFR, the PSU must revise and post its plan no later than six months after receiving its ESSER III funds. This applies even if a PSU has been operating full-time in-person instruction but does not apply to fully virtual schools and PSUs.

The IFR issued by ED outlines several requirements for all PSUs that receive ESSER III funds, including that PSUs have in place a plan for ensuring safety during in-person instruction (either in-progress or planned) as well as ensuring continuity of services should the PSU or one or more of its schools be required to close temporarily for COVID-19 related public health reasons in the future. PSUs who had a plan in place by March 11, 2021, which incorporated opportunity for public comment and was posted publicly have six months from the date their ESSER III Assurances were completed to update and revise the plans to meet those requirements. Examples of previous plans that may be allowable would be a completed Cal/OSHA or Assembly Bill 86 Plan, as long as it meets the requirements previously stated. PSUs which did not have a statutorily compliant plan in place as of March 11, 2021, must create and post this plan within 30 days of completing their ESSER III Assurances. Plans are required for all PSUs, regardless of operating status, unless an PSU is fully virtual with no physical

location. All plans must be reviewed, and, as appropriate, revised, at least every six months to incorporate new and revised CDC guidance and other changed factors.

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Masks

- We are returning to school with masks required for students and staff. This decision reflects the quarantine requirements set out in the North Carolina Strong Schools Toolkit ([NCSST](#)) as well as the current Guilford County mask mandate. This decision will continue to be reviewed monthly in board meetings to determine when a change can be made. The policy for appropriate masks will remain the same as last year. It can be found here.
- Masking will be required for indoor athletics.
- Mask breaks will be incorporated during the day when students can be separated by at least 6 feet. They will also be utilized when students are outdoors.
- Masks will not be required at lunch and snack time, but teachers will work to maintain appropriate distancing during that period of time.
- Cornerstone will purchase all necessary masking supplies for specialty classes like band and chorus.
- Cornerstone will review all requests for mask accommodations individually when requested. These requests should be accompanied by documentation from a medical doctor detailing the need for an accommodation as well as the reason why.

Distancing

- Classrooms will be arranged to support distancing of a minimum of three feet as outlined in the [NCSST](#).
- Teachers will monitoring distancing during mask break and meal times.
- Cornerstone will continue to maintain one directional stairwells when feasible in order to support appropriate distancing.
- Cornerstone will schedule and arrange class change times in order to reduce unnecessary contact with other students.

Visitors

- Cornerstone will eliminate any unnecessary visitors to the building.
- Visitors to the building will be required to wear masks.
- Cornerstone will regularly evaluate its COVID numbers in order to gradually reinstitute traditional activities such as assemblies and lunch parents.
- Visitors from opposing schools during athletic events will be expected to follow all the Cornerstone mitigation policies.

Cleaning

- Cornerstone has increased the number of day porters from one to two in order to increase the frequency of cleaning and sanitizing the school.
- Cornerstone will continue its regular rotating misting schedule in classrooms, main office, bathrooms, and other high traffic areas.
- Cornerstone will continue to supply hand sanitizer and approved for school use virus killing spray to all teachers to use regularly.
- Desks will be cleaned at all class changes
- Publically available hand sanitizer will be placed at all accessible areas.

CONFIRMED AND SUSPECTED CASES OF COVID-19 AND EXPOSURE TO COVID-19

Confirmed Cases

- Cornerstone will abide by all the required quarantining guidelines provided in the [North Carolina Strong Schools Toolkit](#) for both students and adults in the building.
- Cornerstone will communicate to families any time a student met the bar according to the [NCSST](#) for exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case while at school.
- Cornerstone will communicate to families any time a student was in a class with a student who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 even if the other students did not meet the bar for exposure.
- Cornerstone will provide a publicly accessible document which tracks the number of confirmed cases and quarantines required due to COVID-19 for both students and staff.

Suspected Cases

- Cornerstone will abide by all the required quarantining guidelines provided in the North Carolina Strong Schools Toolkit for both students and adults.
- Cornerstone will provide a publicly accessible document which tracks the number of confirmed cases and quarantines required due to COVID-19 for both students and staff.

Exposure

- Cornerstone will abide by all the required quarantining guidelines provided in the North Carolina Strong Schools Toolkit for both students and adults in the building.
- Cornerstone will communicate to families any time a student met the bar according to the NCSST for exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case while at school.
- Cornerstone will communicate to families any time a student was in a class with a student who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 even if the other students did not meet the bar for exposure.
- Cornerstone will provide a publicly accessible document which tracks the number of confirmed cases and quarantines required due to COVID-19 for both students and staff.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Student Assemblies

- Assemblies are on hold for the time being until we gather more information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on our current school year.

Arrival and Dismissal

- Students will arrive directly to their classrooms and dismiss from their last period class of the day.
- There will be no parent walk-ups for the time being.

Athletics

- Our athletic program will abide by any directives provided from the North Carolina High School Athletic Association.
- Barring directives to the opposite, students will be required to wear masks while on the bench during any indoor sport.

Hot Lunch

- Cornerstone will resume hot lunch during this school year.
- Hot lunch volunteers will be required to comply with all school mitigation requirements.

Public comments regarding this ESSER document can be submitted [here](#).