

REOPENING PLANS AND SCHEDULING

Per the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) **StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12)** from June 8, 2020, all public schools are directed to have three plans in place to ensure continuity of educational services should the state's COVID-19 metrics change significantly requiring additional restrictions to control the spread of the disease. These Reopening Plans will be the foundation for a successful and agile academic school year. The three required Reopening Plans are:

- **Plan A:** Minimal Social Distancing
- **Plan B:** Moderate Social Distancing
- **Plan C:** Remote Learning Only

Operationalized for all Public School Units from the most recent version of the NCDHHS StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit Pg. 3 and NC Session Law 2021-4.

No later than **April 1, 2021**, the following guidelines shall apply:

- **Kindergarten – 5th Grade Students** **shall return to in-person instruction at least 4 days a week** while following all public health protocols in the StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit with one exception: Schools serving children kindergarten – 5th grade do not need to adhere to the Six Feet Social Distancing Requirements detailed on page 6 of this toolkit. (Plan A).
- **6th – 12th Grade Students in Local School Administrative** **shall return to in-person instruction either in Plan A at least 4 days a week (no social distancing) or Plan B to the maximum extent possible (six -feet social distancing)** while following all the other protocols in the StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit.
 - **See NC Session Law 2021-4. The requirements for Six Feet Social Distancing provide an additional layer of protection in middle and high school settings, recognizing that studies indicate that younger children appear to be less likely to spread COVID-19 to others than older teens and adults. Local school administrative units that choose to return under Plan A for 6-12 students must participate in the Duke University Study required by NC Session Law 2021-4, Section 2.(1)b.2.**
 - **Charter schools specifically were not included in Session Law 2021-4; therefore, they are required by Session Law 2020-49 to follow the provisions outlined in the most current version of the DHHS StrongSchools NC Toolkit with regard to educating students in grades 6-12.**
- **Remote Learning Option:** It is expected that all schools will also offer full-time remote instruction for higher-risk students and teachers, and for families opting for remote learning for their children.
- **Local Flexibility and Planning for Different Scenarios:** Schools have flexibility in how they choose to operationally implement the public health requirements in this toolkit. Further, school leaders should continue to maintain plans for three different potential scenarios, depending on what restrictions are necessary at any time in the school year to control the spread of the disease.

- **Minimal Social Distancing (Plan A):** All public health requirements in this toolkit, except the Six Feet Social Distancing Requirements on page 6.
- **Moderate Social Distancing (Plan B):** All public health requirements in this toolkit.
- **Full Remote Learning (Plan C):** This is no longer an option for district wide or charter school wide daily instruction unless and only if full remote instruction "is needed to ensure the health and safety of students in a particular school or district." See session law 2021-4 for school systems or Session Law 2020-49, Part III, Section 2.11.(b)(3) for charter schools. If a school or school district believes it meets the criteria to remain closed or close again, it must submit documentation of that need to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, including any documentation by state or local health authorities that would require such closure. Such documentation should articulate the unique circumstances that demonstrate the inability of the school or district to provide safe in-person instruction. The Superintendent is hereby authorized to review submissions and determine whether the school may remain closed or close again.
- Exercising the Right to In-Person Instruction. Any student opting to return to in-person instruction shall be permitted to do so no later than April 1, 2021.