



January 15, 2021

Dear CSI Families:

CSI is still moving forward with plans to transition to hybrid instruction (a combination of in-person and remote learning); however, no specific date has been set. You will receive a message via a robocall or from your child's classroom teacher to inform you when and how you can confirm whether or not your child will return for hybrid instruction once it begins.

Over the past four months, CSI has been considering a number of factors to determine when we will be able to transition to the next phase of reopening, which will be a hybrid mode. Factors have included positive COVID-19 cases in our area; the number of people hospitalized in our region; the New York State Department of Health directives, particularly as they pertain to conducting COVID-19 tests in schools; the rolling number of staff members under quarantine due to COVID-19; and adequate nursing care to administer COVID-19 tests to students and staff.

We have also considered how to maximize the effectiveness of instruction with some students in the building and other students learning virtually. CSI has been considering how much independent work students will have to do in a hybrid setting, since students will be required to complete independent work in order to meet grade-level standards and meet the minimum State requirements for instructional hours. In a recent survey, 50% of CSI parents stated that they would elect to keep their children in remote-only instruction until the number of COVID-19 cases in our area go down. We are concerned that in the hybrid mode students may not be in front of a teacher on days when they are not in the building, and the number of minutes of direct instruction will be reduced.

When we transition to hybrid instruction, the weekly schedule for students returning in hybrid would be two days in the building, one full day of remote learning, and two days of predominantly independent work. Students will be specifically assigned to the two days that they will be in the building, and consideration will be given to ensure that children of the same household are assigned the same two days.

At CSI we have had staff members who have tested positive for COVID-19, and this required us to quickly pivot from teachers working in the building to teachers working from home. If we had students in the building, they would have had to quickly pivot back to remote-only instruction. Adequate staffing in the midst of the pandemic has been a concern. On average, 6% to 8% percent of staff members are under quarantine daily due to COVID-19 exposure or symptoms. The rolling average of staff members testing positive for COVID-19 has been between 4% and 6%. As per health department directives, schools where more than 3% of staff and/or students test positive for COVID-19 should remain or transition to remote instruction. We are working diligently to get our staff members vaccinated, but vaccination sites are backed up and overwhelmed.

Perhaps the greatest challenge that schools face is the stringent COVID-19 testing that must be performed in school and the resources required to perform the testing. Currently, the requirements for COVID-19 testing in schools are as follows:

1. Schools in an Orange Zone must test 20% of students, faculty, and staff who are on site (participating in in-person learning) every month, with 10% tests biweekly.



2. Schools in a Red Zone must test 30% of students, faculty, and staff who are on site (participating in in-person learning) every month, with 15% tested biweekly.

Ideally, the best time to reopen in hybrid mode will be when the area is downgraded from Orange Zone to Yellow Zone, and when the number of positive cases among staff members is lower than 3% or the majority of our staff has been vaccinated.

In Buffalo, each school is responsible for developing and implementing its own reopening plan. Even though the news media is reporting that students in Buffalo will be returning on February 1st, this will only pertain to a small number of students and not the district as a whole.

We will continue to keep you updated on our progress toward the transition to hybrid mode, and you will be notified of a specific date of reopening. CSI has worked diligently to prepare our building for the safe return of our students. If you have any questions, please contact the school.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John W. Sheffield".

John W. Sheffield
Head of School