

October 6, 2020

Dr. Brian Woodard, President
Board of Education
Carbondale Community High School
330 S. Giant City Rd.
Carbondale, IL 62902

Dear Dr. Woodard,

As most of us are parents, the faculty of Carbondale Community High School understand the desire to return to school, return to normal, and assume our old pursuits. We long for it, actually, to connect with students personally and authentically, to engage with them in and out of the classroom. In our hope to resume normal life, we can't lose sight that a once-in-a-100-year pandemic must necessarily change the way society operates. To date, we feel that the administration, faculty, and staff of Carbondale Community High School have responded to the challenges of Covid-19 responsibly and with herculean efforts to be sure that all students have access to high quality education. It's important to take the next steps carefully.

The policies and procedures Mr. Murphy outlines do a reasonable job of balancing the return of students with the health and safety of students and teachers. The administration comprehensively addresses many of the issues raised by the return of students to the building. The risks posed, however, do cause areas of concern.

- A fair number of teachers have compromised immune systems. Mr. Murphy's plan does provide for those with lower immunity to teach from home. Aides and subs would be required in the classrooms. Do we have enough staff to cover those classrooms?
- Judging from the difficulty of enforcing mask wearing among students now at the high school, we do not believe we have enough staff to monitor hallways sufficiently during passing periods, and before and after school.
- It should be noted that 47% of our student body are students of color. An article in the New England Journal of Medicine found that people of color are more likely to become ill and die from Covid-19. Yes, we are concerned for our healths, but we worry more for our students and those with whom they live.
- Students, families and teachers should be prepared for a surge in local cases. Over 200,000 citizens have died since February. Some projections suggest that number may nearly double by January.
- Teachers, administration, and students have worked tirelessly in the past months to make our remote platform and effective learning environment. We are concerned

changes will reduce its effectiveness, particularly considering 40% of students will remain remote.

Of course, if called, we will adapt as we have to the present circumstances, always doing our best to serve our wonderful students and our community. Part of the strength of this school is that we lead other districts, educationally and administratively, with best practices. We want to be sure we're leading in this case as well, rather than chasing a nostalgia for lost experience the pandemic does not allow.

Respectfully,

Membership,
Carbondale Community High School Education Association

From: Carmen Jones <carmenj71@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 6, 2020 8:11 PM
To: Steve Murphy <Steve.Murphy@cchs165.com>
Subject: Return to classroom

Our children are suffering. With most, if not all surrounding SI high schools currently in the classroom, there is absolutely no reason why CCHS cannot do the same. I am disappointed to hear that some of your teachers are “pressing” you to stay remote. Your teachers are out in the community, at grocery stores, public settings, yet afraid to return to classroom. Unacceptable. I started a Facebook petition on this matter. I have over 150 members and climbing and multiple comments from parents and community members sharing their thoughts and concerns. I have high hopes that you and the board will make the right decision. Thank you. Carmen Jones

From: Jessica Piper jpiper66@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, October 6, 2020 1:16 PM
To: Steve Murphy Steve.Murphy@cchs165.com
Subject: Return to Classroom

1:15



Jessica's Post



Jessica Piper ▶ **Petition to return to in classroom learning at CCHS**

New Member · Yesterday at 7:58 AM · 🌐

I agree that the kids need to be attending classes in person. I have two children that this is affecting differently. One of my children has had problems with getting into classes due to problems with internet and or class log ins while the other is missing all the social interactions and getting the experiences that go along with being a freshman. The have lost out so much that I think that we need to get some normalcy back in their lives. They need to be back in the classroom

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💬 Comment

➦ Share

👤 **Judy Calufetti and 8 others**

Seen by 92 people



Carmen Jones 🌐

Please please send your concerns thru an email to Mr. Murphy!!!

1h Like Reply



Write a reply...



Write a comment...



From: Kara Hartz <rudibeckia@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 6, 2020 4:53 PM
To: Steve Murphy <Steve.Murphy@cchs165.com>
Subject: remote learning-return to school

Mr. Murphy,

I completed the remote learning/return to school survey for my son, Owen Hartz indicating that we would return to school as the plan allows. While I have completed the survey with every hope that students will be able to return to school under a hybrid plan, and I continue to have reservations about allowing my son to return to school, even if CCHS deems that the plan allows it.

-The Jackson county metrics have improved only for a few weeks. This is not enough time to determine if our local response has been good enough and will remain good enough to keep the current metrics below the targets. Given the increases the state has already observed (and really, the entire nation) recently, it's unrealistic to expect these metrics to stay low for long. More time is needed to determine if a safe return to in-person instruction can occur.

-I'm concerned that our return-to-school plan doesn't have guidance for going back to remote instruction that is protective enough. To my knowledge, the return-to-remote plan is the reverse of the return-to-school plan (i.e., the county metrics are a switch, and above the metrics, we switch to remote, and below we switch to in-person). If this is the case, then this fails to take into account an important factor: the lag time it takes for positive cases to be reported in a population after infections have occurred. The lag time occurs for several reasons, including the 1-2 week incubation period, that asymptomatic individuals contribute to infection spread without detection, and the time for test results to be measured, reported, and then figured into a 7-day average. Because of the lag time, using a return-to-remote plan based on the same metrics as the return-to-school would allow CCHS to remain in-person for two to three weeks after the increased infection rates have occurred, causing CCHS students to advance the spread in the community. For these reasons, we need to consider a return-to-remote plan that has stricter metrics and enables faster responses than the return-to-school plan.

In addition, I would also like information about how the CCHS plans to address mitigation measures for students in school, including improving air circulation the school, a plan for how the CCHS will respond to positive cases in students and faculty and their family to limit spread, including notification plans, contact tracing, and isolation and quarantine requirements, and how the school plans to enforce these measures (such as social distancing, self-reporting, and mask wearing). The July 30th 2020 plan was especially detailed regarding temperature checks, hand hygiene, and school sanitization. However, we now know that asymptomatic individuals will not be detected by routine screens and that air circulation is at least as important as direct and indirect surface contact. These are important parts of a successful remain-in-school plan, and I'm concerned that there has not been enough time to develop responses.

It's my hope that CCHS is in the process of addressing these challenges, but I understand that this is a considerable task and quite difficult. For this reason, I don't think that in-person instruction should occur at this time.

Sincerely,
Kara Huff Hartz

From: Erin Puffer <e.puffer13@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 6, 2020 12:29 PM
To: Steve Murphy <Steve.Murphy@cchs165.com>
Subject: Return to School

Mr. Murphy,

My name is Erin Puffer and I am the mother of a Junior at CCHS.

When first given the option, our household opted for remote learning. We both had high hopes of this being an excellent learning opportunity, as well as an opportunity to be removed from the typical drama that comes with being in high school. However, my daughter has expressed frustrations on how overwhelmed she is with her classes and is struggling to keep up with assignments. I know everyone is struggling, including teachers and admin. And I in no way want to risk our teachers, but our students need to be in school. My daughters' grades are suffering and Junior year is a big one for high school students. She has been utilizing the open gym and grades have been slowly improving, but she, like many other students, needs the face to face interactions with their teachers and classmates. Many other schools in southern Illinois have returned to school or have adjusted attendance for students to be on campus. Please consider letting students return to CCHS campus, even just part time, as was outlined before deciding to go fully remote.

Thank you for your time,
Erin Puffer

From: Amy [REDACTED] <amy[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 5, 2020 3:18 PM
To: Steve Murphy <Steve.Murphy@cchs165.com>
Subject: Petition to send our kids to school

I believe it would be more beneficial for our children to return to school because remote learning has been such a struggle especially with my oldest son. He's a senior. He is in IEP and really needs the in classroom setting. He has been confused on assignments and how to turn some assignments in. He's too embarrassed to ask for help with all the students right there listening. We have also had a lot of internet issues at times that really interferes with his classroom time. I really believe that parents should have a choice to send their kids to school. I understand that there are parents with underlining health conditions or there are grandparents that raise their children. They should definitely have a choice to keep kids home but with my kids, if they caught covid and brought it home and exposed us to it, we would be fine. Give us a choice please! I want my son to pass and graduate high school. I want his confidence back. He's in football. Football is the one thing he loves the most and if gets kicked off the team it would tear him up. Thank you for allowing us parents a voice.--

Amy [REDACTED]

From: crchance@frontier.com <crchance@frontier.com>
Sent: Monday, October 5, 2020 3:48 PM
To: Steve Murphy <Steve.Murphy@cchs165.com>
Subject: Return to school

Well, parents are posting Marion's schedule and that looks disastrous though Friday remote would be nice. Please give them consistency as much as is possible. Our 2 are thriving now in remote learning and want to come back but as soon as I see other schools shut grades down for positive tests, I have to ask if you can do it safely and commit to structure and predictability for them. Ours may stay home regardless but I do believe, socially, they need to see other students. Thank you all for your efforts to balance their safety while pushing for continued academic excellence.

Christine Chance

From: ajzieba@hotmail.com <ajzieba@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 5, 2020 7:33 PM
To: Steve Murphy <Steve.Murphy@cchs165.com>
Subject: Open school

Mr. Murphy as a guardian to [REDACTED], a taxpayer to CCHS, and an alumni Class of 1986, I strongly recommend that we open up the school and quit cheating us out of an education for our children. [REDACTED]'s grades are suffering and mental state is also suffering. These kids need interaction with teachers and students. Also we pay a real estate tax that funds an open public school. The portion that we pay to 165 guarantees our kid an education with a physical campus. We pay for the education and our kids are going to get the education we have been promised.

Respectfully yours
Andrew J. Zieba,
Parent/guardian and taxpayer