



Dr. Yolanda Cargile, Superintendent  
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Dear Center Community

During the Board of Education's meeting on Monday, October 26, we announced that we will transition to Phase 2 of our CENTERed On Learning plan. Kindergarten through 5th Grade will start face to face instruction on Monday, November 30, 2020 and for 6th - 12th Grade, Monday, January 4, 2021. Following the Board of Education meeting, our team has received numerous correspondence with questions, concerns and feedback. To best honor those who have been reaching out, I want to share my thinking behind this decision with the entire community.

We have discussed in great detail the long-term impact of COVID-19 on children in the Center School District and across the nation, which is why we are planning to transition to Phase 2 of the CSD CENTERed On Learning Plan. Our goal is focused on providing the best possible educational options based on the factors we have at this time, all in the best interest of students and staff.

Virtual learning is not by any means the desired format we would have imagined for school age children, but based on the factors thrust upon us, District Leaders felt confident about the plan we released in July that included a virtual learning framework and some in-person learning for small groups.

We made the recommendations to the Board of Education with extreme care and caution. I, admittedly, have been hesitant to transition to Phase 2 of the plan, because the COVID-19 regional metrics are not decreasing as quickly as any of us would like. However, we are overwhelmingly hearing that some of our scholars are struggling in the virtual format.

We have continually asked our community to be flexible, and we have also committed to being flexible to meet the needs of children. As a result, we quickly changed course based on feedback during the October Town Hall. Following the questions posed during the Town Hall and review of the feedback, I asked the CSD District Level team to explore options for our elementary scholars because the number of confirmed cases has been lower among that age group. We were able to finalize those plans Monday, October 26 prior to the board meeting. Once plans were finalized, we began communicating changes and were fully transparent by following steps to update stakeholders, including notifying Principals, Board of Education, Center Education Association Chair, COVID-19 Task Force members, staff and parents/guardians and students.

Mid-America Regional Council, MARC, modified the school gating criteria to include the District's mitigating measures to align with the CDC indicators. For background information, MARC, serves the nine-county Kansas City metropolitan area, which includes 119 separate city governments. They worked with local public health departments across Kansas City to provide a general framework for districts to meet its community's individual needs.

The ability of schools to implement five key mitigation measures is now included in the criteria:

- Consistent and correct use of masks
- Social distancing to the largest extent possible
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Contact tracing in collaboration with local health department

### **Additional Gating Criteria**

- Gating Criteria Primary Criteria Number of new cases per 100,000 persons within the last 14 days
- Trend in new cases per 100,000 persons over the last 14 days
- % of Persons Testing Positive (Positivity rate) for the 2-week period

Please know, this is a decision that we do not take lightly. As Superintendent, I have tried to find balance during this pandemic of educating students and maintaining a safe environment. My goal has been to collaborate with others, seek feedback, review data and then present the best possible plan that allows us to educate children, meet their needs so they are able to be successful and keep students and staff safe.

We understand, there are some community members that may not agree with the extreme care and caution that we have acted upon during this time, while there are others who do not believe we are ready to transition to Phase Two. **An extreme point of pride is that we are able to offer you as parents/guardians a choice to select the best learning option for your family.**

We realize each family situation is uniquely different. We fully understand your varied concerns about health and safety, virtual learning, the importance of face-to-face instruction, parents needing to work, the economy, and all of the other unexpected consequences of not being in school or being in school in a traditional method.

The reason we are asking all staff to return to work beginning November 23, 2020 is to help smooth the transition to Phase Two. We will have greater ability to support technology needs, allow for collaboration and partnership and better support our students.

Please know our decisions are based on our genuine concern for the safety of your children, the other CSD scholars, as well as our staff. Our goal will remain to keep students and staff safe while also providing a high quality, equitable education for all students. It is our hope that parents and community members realize that we want ALL children in school now, but there are factors beyond our control in the KC metro area that currently prevent that from occurring.

Parents/Guardians, please take the time to fill out the Learning Mode request and choose between the Hybrid/Fixed Blended model or the Full Virtual model.

Important to note, students whose parents/guardians do not complete and submit a Learning Mode Request on their student's behalf by 5 p.m. on Friday, November 6, will be assigned to the Hybrid/Fixed-Blended Option.

### **Learning Mode Preference Survey Link:**

<https://forms.gle/QU7u8a14a5PbsdA89>

The survey will close at 5:00 p.m. on November 6, 2020. Since staffing needs will be determined based on the data received from the requests, we are asking families to commit to a learning mode preference while the District remains in Phase 2. If families encounter unique or justifiable circumstances that may require changing the request after the deadline, we will work to accommodate needs to the best of our ability.

I encourage our parents to frequently visit our webpage and follow our social media for up to date and accurate information: <https://www.center.k12.mo.us/covid-19>

I also want to remind you of scheduled avenues to connect with me.

**This month, we will host the scheduled virtual office hours on Thursday, November 12, 2020.**

- Schedule Virtual Office Hours with Dr. Yolanda Cargile on the 2nd Thursday of the month
- Dr. Cargile will host 15-minute to 30 -minute virtual office visits on the 2nd Thursday of each month from 3:00-5:00 p.m. The purpose of these meetings is to allow Dr. Cargile the opportunity to hear directly from District stakeholders. To schedule a meeting please email Senior Executive Assistant to the Superintendent Ms. Stephanie Archie at [sarchie@center.k12.mo.us](mailto:sarchie@center.k12.mo.us) or call 816.349.3310.

**This Month, we will host the scheduled virtual coffee chats on Friday, November 20, 2020.**

- Join a Virtual Coffee Chat with Dr. Yolanda Cargile on the 3rd Friday of each month
- Dr. Cargile is hosting Virtual Coffee Chats from 7:30 a.m. 8:00 a.m. on the 3rd Friday of each month. The purpose of these informal gatherings is to provide an opportunity for community stakeholders to provide input, ideas, and their perspective about our schools. To join the meeting and receive a virtual invite, please email Senior Executive Assistant to the Superintendent Ms. Stephanie Archie at [sarchie@center.k12.mo.us](mailto:sarchie@center.k12.mo.us) or call 816.349.3310.

We will continue to hold monthly meetings with our COVID-19 Task Force. Please note, I worked with building leaders and administration to ensure parents, staff; classified and certified, students and community were represented on the task force. For a full list of Task Force members, visit the COVID-19 page under Task Force:

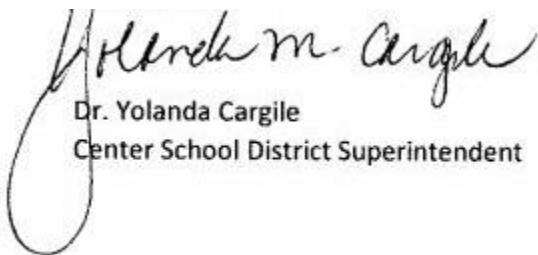
<https://www.center.k12.mo.us/covid-19>

We will continue to monitor regional COVID-19 tracking metrics as we prepare to transition to Phase 2. If there are significant changes in confirmed positive new cases between now and the Phase 2 implementation dates in November and January or once we have transitioned to any portion of Phase 2, we may need to modify plans. I am asking the Center School District community to be understanding of changes that may seem last minute but are necessary as it relates to the safety and well-being of students and staff.

We will work through the Learning Mode Survey requests and share staff and teacher placement decisions for Elementary students and staff by Monday, November 16 and Secondary students and staff by Monday, December 11.

Thank you again for your partnership. I am honored and humbled to serve as your Superintendent. I will continue to strive to do what is best for ALL of our students and employees during these challenging times.

A pleasure to serve,



Dr. Yolanda Cargile  
Center School District Superintendent