

August 2021

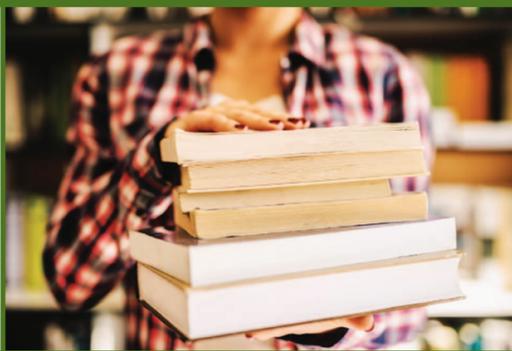
A Special Supplement to

THE SAMPSON

INDEPENDENT

Making sure our students are

READY FOR SCHOOL



YOUR GUIDE TO THE 2021 FALL SEMESTER

Clinton teachers ready for 'normal'

Sampson schools gearing up

Help students improve their focus

Information you need to know

HCA kicks school off in style

Mintz students return to classroom

Clinton teachers ready for 'normal' school year

Information parents need to know offered

By Michael B. Hardison
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As a new school year inches closer, members of the Clinton City School system are steadily taking steps to get their students prepared for a successful return. This school year is one many hope will bring back a sense of normalcy as everyone returns to full in-person learning.

"Oh we are just excited and we're preparing for all the new changes, and hopefully we can stay in school the whole time and not have to do distance learning," noted Savannah Anders, LC Kerr teacher.

"I'm just excited and we are just ready for the kids because we are ready, ready, ready, and we are looking forward to a new year," LC Kerr teacher Angela Williamson said.

"I'm just excited for a new year and I'm hoping to have a positive, healthy and safe school year," Amanda Allen from Butler Avenue reiterated. "We really hope to see more of the 'normal'

thing in our classrooms again."

It was a sentiment that rang true from one city schools campus to another.

"Oh yeah I'm excited, I'm so glad that we'll be back in-person with everybody and we won't have any virtual," Butler Avenue teacher Jessica Royal said. "We should have more normalcy back compared to last year so it should be a good year."

While it's true that CCS is back to face-to-face learning five days a week again, there are still many protocols and information about this year regarding transportation, food/nutrition or classroom safety which parents and students may not be aware.

Here are important guidelines and need-to-know information that all involved with Clinton City Schools can find useful involving the previously mention areas and more.



A finished classroom just waiting to have its empty seats filled.

Photos by Michael B. Hardison | Sampson Independent



Jennifer Bland making tweaks to her classroom.

Kindergarten enrollment

• Parents of Kindergarten students may contact the school at 910-592-3066 for more information about scheduling an appointment.

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IMPORTANT LINKS

CCS Comprehensive COVID Guidelines: www.clinton.k12.nc.us/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=32456485

Strong Schools Toolkit: covid19.ncdhhs.gov/media/164/open

CCS Masking Opt-Out form: www.clinton.k12.nc.us/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=32456533
covid19.ncdhhs.gov/media/164/open

Community Eligibility Provision: www.fns.usda.gov/cn/community-eligibility-provision

Open House Detailed: www.clinton.k12.nc.us

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Attention Teachers

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HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE FALL SEMESTER:

- Check your email regularly so you don't miss any important information!
- Make sure to pick up your student ID!
- Buy a parking pass before the first day of classes!
- Purchase your books from the bookstore!

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Kim Davis loves her food and nutrition class at Hobpton. Photos by Emily M. Williams



Kaleb Bruington with his mom Kiera Bruington.

Sampson schools gearing up for return to classrooms

By Emily M. Williams
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Sampson County Schools parents and students, along with school staffs, are gearing up to start the 2021-22 school year, and are looking forward to a successful year.

Enrollment information can be found at the Sampson County Schools website, sampson.k12.nc.us, in the scrolling slides at the top of the web page. Parents or guardians can also contact or visit the school. New or returning students can start their paperwork by visiting the system website.

While trying to return to some sense of normalcy, there are still precautions being urged as students return to county classrooms. Masks have been the ultimate topic for the return, and on Aug. 17 the board voted to return with masks, after previously deciding to make them optional.

Right now the severe uptick in cases has already caused great concern, and not wearing a mask will put students at risk of having to go home for 14 days.

Superintendent Dr. David Goodin said that they had one student positive in one of their summer school programs, causing 30 students to have to go home and quarantine.

“That’s the issue,” Goodin explained “If we mandate masks, and everybody is wearing a face mask, then we don’t have to quarantine.”

Mask wearing has never been optional on school buses, however.

“Bus transportation will continue to have one drop-off and pick-up location for students in case schools need to do any contact tracing,” said Vicki Westbrook, Transportation Director.

All-in-all students are ready to go back and see their friends, and get back into the saddle.

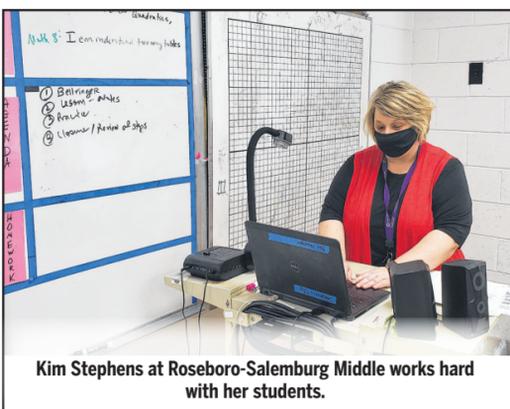
“I’m looking forward to seeing everybody that I didn’t get to see last year,” said Faith Williams, an eleventh-grader at the Sampson Early College.

The SEC, as a part of the SCS system, went back earlier in the month. Williams said her other worry is on the mind of both students and parents — the potential for a COVID outbreak.

“That would be the biggest worry, having to go



Pictured from left, Awdan Marshall, Shawn Marshall, Cailyn Marshall and Nicole Jordan.



Kim Stephens at Roseboro-Salemburg Middle works hard with her students.

back virtual.”

The North Carolina Association of Educators, the state’s largest lobbying group representing teachers, called the governor’s decision to eliminate the statewide mask mandate “very poorly timed.” It added that the decision “flies in the face of recommendations” from federal health officials.

Transportation

- Coordination of bus services is through the individual schools, and car rider policies vary by school.

- Masks are required on the buses according to a mandate by the CDC for public transportation.

Masks and social distancing

- Per a vote by the Sampson County Board of Education that was made in August, students and staff must wear masks. They board will revisit that issue monthly.

- Social distancing is still recommended per the Centers for Disease Control.

- The Strong Schools NC Public Health Toolkit has been the major guide that the county has utilized over the last year or so. The toolkit was published in June of last year, and has been updated as of Aug. 10. Find that toolkit at <https://education.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Strong-Schools-NC-Public-Health-Toolkit.pdf>.

Nutrition programs

“All students will receive a free reimbursable breakfast and lunch according to the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program,” said April Jordan, Child Nutrition Director.

- Meals will only be served to students in attendance at school.

- Per federal regulations, meals cannot be sent home for weekend or holiday meals.

- Backpack Buddies are ran by individual schools, not the district.

- The school menu will be available soon and can be found on the school district’s website as well as in The Sampson Independent.

- Parents interested in adding funds to the student accounts are encouraged to visit payschoolscentral.com to set that up.

- Anyone needing additional food for their household should check with local food banks.

School supply lists

- School supply lists will be available online on each school’s respective website.

Reach Emily M. Williams at 910-590-9488. Follow her on Twitter at @NCNewsWriter. Follow us on Twitter at @SampsonInd and like us on Facebook.

How to help students improve their focus on their studies

Teachers strive to create supportive and challenging classroom environments for their students. Such settings can bring out the best in students and help them overcome obstacles, including an inability to focus.

The struggles students can have with focusing on their studies was apparent during the pandemic. A 2020 survey of more than 400 college students found that 64 percent were concerned about their ability to maintain their focus and discipline in remote instructional environments. Though educators, students and parents are hopeful that remote learning will soon be a thing of the past, no one is certain about what lies ahead in regard to the 2021-22 school year. Ideally, students will be back in school time full-time five days per week by the start of the new academic year. However, there’s no guarantee that will be the case, and students may need help focusing on their studies.

- Emphasize one activity at a time. Various studies have shown that multitasking adversely affects performance and makes it hard to concentrate. A recent study from researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that performing two or three activities simultaneously puts significantly more demand on the brain than simply doing those tasks one after another. All students, and especially those who are struggling with focus, should be encouraged to take on one task at a time.

- Take breaks. The Cleveland Clinic notes that various studies have found that periodic breaks improve mood, boost performance and increase a person’s ability to concentrate and pay attention. Many students are well acquainted with lengthy cramming sessions on the eve of a big exam, which can feel like a rite of passage for high schoolers and college students. Parents and educators can emphasize the importance of taking breaks during such sessions and how periodic rest can help improve performance.

- Take a piecemeal approach to big tasks. The Child Mind Institute notes that breaking big tasks down into smaller, more manageable pieces can help kids effectively tackle more challenging tasks. The piecemeal approach can make big tasks seem less daunting, and the success kids have at each smaller task can provide some needed momentum as they draw closer to solving the problem.

Many students struggle to focus on their studies. Some simple strategies can help students overcome such challenges and fulfill their academic potential.

When it’s time to call in a tutor

Busy schedules, hybrid learning and demanding coursework have affected students’ academic performance over the last year-plus. The months since a pandemic was declared in March of 2020 have been unlike any other, and confronting the academic challenges of the pandemic may have adversely affected some students’ grades.

A recent report from the Fairfax County Public Schools Office of Research and Strategic Improvement in Virginia found the number of middle and high school students with two or more failing marks increased by 83 percent in the first quarter of the 2020-2021 school year compared to the year prior. But students’ grades may slide or they may find certain school work overly challenging even in normal years. Since many parents have not seen a periodic table or had to solve high school math problems in decades, tutors may be just what students need to regain their academic footing.

Failing grades are not necessarily the most notable indicator that students can benefit from the services of a tutor. The Princeton Review says 25 percent of high school students say homework is their biggest source of stress, and homework progress can help parents determine if it’s time to call in a tutor. Students who find their homework is taking too long, particularly double or triple the amount of time it once required, may need some extra help. Here are some additional indicators that a tutor may be needed.

- Declining test scores: Some students are simply poor test takers, but a gradual or sudden decline in test scores may indicate students are having trouble mastering material. Teachers can pinpoint if certain concepts are overly challenging to students and notify parents if there are any problem areas.



- Poor time management or focus: Students who are struggling may have their attention drift or they put off doing tasks because they don’t grasp the assignments.

- Lack of homework help at home: Parents may have prior commitments during the times of day when their children are doing homework. Even when parents are home, they may discover that the concepts covered in school are not being taught in the ways parents learned them and they may have difficulty assisting their children. Tutors can step in and help

students when parents cannot.

- Learning disorder: Certain students learn differently from others due to a diagnosed or undiagnosed learning disorder. A child who is struggling with reading, phonics, spelling, and writing may have dyslexia, according to the tutoring experts at Dyslexia Practitioner NJ. Tutors who specialize in learning disorders can assess and address learning conflicts and tailor instructions in ways that can help students overcome those challenges.

- Students “shut down” or say they “hate” school: Disinterest in school or expressions of hating going to school may be indicative of academic struggles in the classroom, says the Princeton Review. Some students get so frustrated they simply give up. Tutors can solve learning puzzles and help get students back on track and reignite their interest in school.

Tutors can be valuable resources for students who need some one-on-one attention to master general learning concepts or reinforce skills for key tests or projects.

More info you need to know

By Emily Williams Hobbs

GENERAL SUPPLIES LIST

- Index cards
- Lunch box
- Sharpie pens
- Highlighters
- Erasers
- Pencil sharpener
- Pencils
- Ballpoint pens
- Pencil pouch
- Glue stick
- Notebooks
- Calculator
- Calendar
- Graph paper
- Folders
- Hole-punch
- Protractor
- White-out
- Laptop
- Printer
- Ink cartridges
- Laptop bag
- Lunch bags
- Sticky notes
- Binder
- Gym bag
- Gym socks

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Holly Hill Mental Health Services — hollyhillhospital.com/programs-and-services/telehealth/

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention — [https://mailchi.mp/afsp/2019-end-of-year-2268104?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/afsp/2019-end-of-year-2268104?e=[UNIQID])

Resiliency Guide for Parents — www.resiliencyguide.org

SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD AND NUTRITION OPTIONS

- Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) serves low-income families with children under age 19. The mission is to educate these families on healthy eating, budgeting, how to keep food safe, and physical activity. For more information, contact NC Cooperative Extension at 910-592-7161.
- Salemburg Christian Food Bank has a food drive pickup on the third Saturday of the month. More information can be obtained from their website at salemburgfoodbank.wordpress.com or by calling Norman McPhail at 910-322-5673; Terry Lee at 910-214-4394; Bruce Butler at 910-990-5734 or Dennis Cash at 910-474-9482.
- Additionally the Sampson County Health Department keeps a listing of resources. They can be reached by calling 910-592-1131.
- Some schools also have Backpack Buddies.

MASK EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to face coverings are people who:

- Should not wear a face covering due to any medical or behavioral condition or disability (including, but not limited to, any person who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious or incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to put on or remove the face covering without assistance);
- Is under two (2) years of age;
- Is actively eating or drinking;
- Is seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired in a way that requires the mouth to be visible;
- Is giving a speech for a broadcast or to an audience;
- Is working at home or is in a personal vehicle;
- Is temporarily removing his or her face covering to secure government or medical services or for identification purposes;
- Would be at risk from wearing a face covering at work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulations or workplace safety guidelines;
- Has found that his or her face covering is impeding visibility to operate equipment or a vehicle; or is a child whose parent, guardian, or responsible person has been unable to place the face covering safely on the child's face.



Nikki Thompson working on the last of her preparations for the upcoming school year. Photos by Michael B. Hardison | Sampson Independent

Ready

From page 2

Mask Guidelines

- The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) recommends mask use indoors for people who are not fully vaccinated, including students grades 9-12, workers, teachers, guests, other adults and children ages 2 or older, unless an exception applies.
- Because children under 12 do not currently have access to vaccinations, it is expected that all students under age 12 will continue to wear masks. In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors.
- In particular areas of substantial to high transmission, CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated.

Classroom setup/School sanitation

- Based on the most recent guidance in the Strong Schools Toolkit published by the NC Department of Health and Human Services, Clinton City Schools will no longer conduct daily temperature and symptom screening.
- Clinton City Schools will continue to supply hand sanitizer stations throughout all school sites and will continue supplying disinfecting wipes to all teachers.
- Additionally, Clinton City Schools will continue to provide disinfecting materials to all bus drivers.

Transportation

- Clinton City Schools will operate school buses with normal routes and seating but will require masks to be worn by all students and staff on buses.
- Except for extracurricular activities that allow for physical distancing and no more than one person per

seat for the duration of the trip.

- In this instance, students with a completed CCS Masking Opt-Out form will be excluded from the mask requirement.

Food and nutrition

- Students in Clinton City Schools will continue to receive free breakfast and lunch at all school sites during normal school operations through the Community Eligibility Provision.
- Each school-based team will make decisions regarding whether meals will be served in the cafeteria in a traditional manner or if meals will be carried back to classrooms.
- The Backpack Buddies program will continue to operate.

Reach Michael B. Hardison at 910-592-8137, ext. 2588. Follow us on Twitter @SampsonInd and like us on Facebook.



Beth Bass getting the last of her schedule plans completed for the upcoming school year.

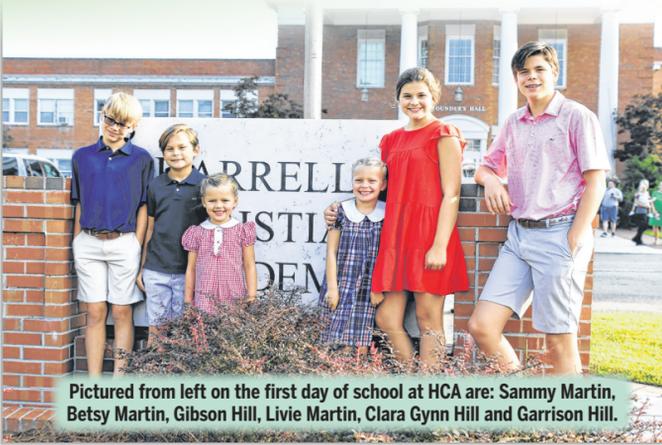


An inside look at one of the many classrooms that will soon be filled.



Amanda Allen works together with her husband Corby Allen to finish up her classroom prep.

HCA kicks off first week *in style*



Pictured from left on the first day of school at HCA are: Sammy Martin, Betsy Martin, Gibson Hill, Livie Martin, Clara Gynn Hill and Garrison Hill.



Harrells Christian Academy student JC Carr



English teacher Marilyn St. Pierre with Caiden Sutton.



Courtesy photos

South River EMC: Helping teachers prepare for a new school year.



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Mintz students return to classroom



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