

Greetings from the MCNC Director

Last month, our school leaders gathered virtually for our spring **MCNC Principals Meeting**. The one-hour meeting aimed to provide a space for our leaders to share some of the enormous burdens they have carried this year, what they have learned along the way, and how they are planning for the upcoming fall. Learning from one another, we spent the majority of the time in breakout groups and this month's newsletter focuses on highlights from that meeting. I believe many of you will be able to relate to and identify with these stories about **how some of our schools are currently operating and how they are preparing for the upcoming school year**.

We plan to delve further into these topics next month at our June conference (see the *Save the Date* notice to the right). This year has been particularly difficult for you all, shifting from in-person to virtual and hybrid instruction, while also trying to meet the huge mental health needs of our students and families and your fellow staff and colleagues. The MCNC is committed to continue offering professional development based on your identified needs and collaborative in nature, with acknowledgement that the true expertise lies within our membership and community of schools. Our schools are unique in that they bridge high school and college, and thus, require a portfolio of tools that are far deeper than what may apply to a standard high school. Therefore, we have planned a **summer MCNC Professional Development Institute spread over two half-days, June 16-17 from 2pm-6pm EST**. We will focus on curricular and instructional strategies that maximize student engagement and academic success, and building the needed social and emotional support systems for students as we transition back to more in-person school experiences.

Please visit our [conference registration link](#). See this as an opportunity to strengthen your school community by engaging with other MCNC schools that share your same mission. I hope many of you will join us! For our monthly newsletters and other news, please visit our [MCNC website](#).




Save the Date!

2021 MCNC VIRTUAL SUMMER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

👉 Preparing for Going Back to
School in a Post-pandemic World 👉

June 16-17
2:00pm-6:00pm
EST

Join us for interactive
workshops,
community building
and prize giveaways!

CONTACT TONY HOFFMANN -- THOFFMANN@MCNC.US WITH
QUESTIONS AND FOR MORE DETAILS



Share-Out Highlights Spring MCNC Principals Meeting

During the recent April 22nd MCNC Principals Meeting, we spent time in breakout groups and discussed where individual schools were at, by exploring the following topics: 1) current operating school status (remote/virtual, hybrid, full in-person) and how this is working out; 2) current plans for returning to in-person school for the upcoming 2021-22 academic year; and, 3) lessons learned through all of this. Share-out summaries presented to the entire meeting group by leaders from two of the breakout group sessions are highlighted below.

Mike Sinclair, Principal | Brashier Middle College | Simpsonville SC

"Our group discussed the opportunities available to us as we get closer to more normalcy of how we did schools, as well as some of the new challenges. We are finding new, creative ways to do summer school in virtual and/or hybrid mode, and how to adjust schedules so that we can manage virtual and in-person school. One thing that stood out for all of us was the challenges our students are facing, especially social and emotional struggles that seem to be more prevalent than normal. For example, one of the leaders shared that there had been more mentions of suicidal thoughts from some students and how they were counseling and working with these students early on, as soon as possible. We discussed the importance of staying on top of all our students as so many of them are experiencing social and emotional challenges in addition to potential struggles with their academics and motivation."

Tamera Bolden, Administrator | Houston Independent School District | Houston, TX

"Our group shared our students' successes from last year's graduating classes and their postsecondary plans which helped to set a positive mindset tone for our discussion. All of us were experiencing challenges in helping students feel connected and engaged amidst virtual and/or hybrid learning. For some schools, students had not been on campus nor met their teachers in-person which made things all the more tough, so we talked about different strategies we had used to address this. One leader emphasized the importance of taking care of our teachers so that they are supported in taking care of our students. All of us agreed that taking care of the teachers is just as important as taking care of students because some of them are just cracking left and right, and some of them are seriously considering leaving the profession; so, encouraging them and supporting them is crucial."

**Breakout Group Discussion Excerpts
Spring MCNC Principals Meeting**

**Middle College High School at Santa Ana College
Santa Ana, CA
Damon Voight, Principal**

“Our district is still online, including kindergarteners and elementary schools. We were one of the higher covid rate areas in Santa Ana but the rates have gone down to 1%-2%. However, we haven’t opened yet. We did open up sports but kids are not attending in-person school yet. The seniors are now going to have in-person graduation at Anaheim Stadium and senior activities are being allowed so we will be planning a social-distanced senior prom and other events. Our partnering college is planning to open many college classes this summer and then open more fully in the fall.”

“Since our students also take college courses, we were also dealing with trying to get those associated needs met for our students. For example, the college bookstore wasn’t open during regular hours so it was hard for our students to get there to get their books since they were typically in classes during that time. So, our school staff organized a drive-thru for our students to get their college textbooks. In addition to school, many of our students were also experiencing challenges and family sickness at home; therefore, making school the first priority during these times was hard for our kids. We started opening up *Learning Labs* – in-person satellite sites with good, functioning WIFI and about 15 students in a room with an after-school coordinator to oversee and help students as they were able to and this helped.”

**Middle Early College High School at Buffalo
Buffalo, NY
David Potter, Principal**

“We are running three kinds of programs for our students right now. Our district opened up partially to students in February. We were allowed to serve up to 100 students in-person, so we first brought back our students with special needs and they have been coming to school in-person every day since then. We also brought back our seniors as soon as possible because of their college courses, and we divided them up into groups to work with our high school teachers. In March, the district opened up to all students who wanted to return to in-person and hybrid, and as of mid-April, we have been in phase three and we will bring back our sophomores for a hybrid model. Our Fridays are completely asynchronous so that teachers can meet with and support students. We also use the Fridays for professional development which has been great for grade-level team planning. Unfortunately, prom and all senior activities have been cancelled. However, we plan to do graduation in a similar way to last year where we brought in the graduates and had them walk down the hall individually and specially celebrated and acknowledged them.”

“We were just approved to run our annual summer program as a hybrid model. We will offer the two college courses virtually since the college is not in-person yet, but we will be in-person for the enrichment activities which is a very important support piece. Sometimes, it can feel like we are running so many different programs because of the covid restrictions. I have a meeting with our college partners next week to discuss in-person planning for the fall. In addition to all the planning we do on our end as a school, coordinating with our college partners is really key since their decisions impact our planning.”

**The Charles School
Columbus, OH
Greg Brown, Director of Graham**

“The Charles School has been hybrid: half remote and half in-person. Half the kids come in-person on Mondays and Wednesdays, and the other half on Tuesdays and Thursdays; and there are students who are attending school fully remote. Fridays are asynchronous days and teachers work individually with students. It is an enormous amount of work. The other schools in our district are still remote. I have supported giving leeway to our school leaders as to what’s best for our group of schools. This all has definitely stretched my capacity, but being able to share my thoughts and work more with our staff has helped to get things done. Our director of counseling has carried the lion’s share of work and our counselors and teachers are doing so much engagement with one another and with students. We were already doing collegial leadership, so having aspects of that already established helped us to see what we can handle and manage through the pandemic. It has been very difficult for our kids and many have fallen behind and we will have to attend to those gaps by building on what we have been doing. At the same time, our staff has developed a sense that they can step up and do things that they didn’t know and that’s been a great thing to see.”

**The Charles School
Columbus, OH
Allie Konet, Counseling Director**

“Most of the colleges are planning ahead for the fall and that helps us to know what to expect and to plan accordingly on our end for our students. Our university partner will be hybrid in the fall, some in-person and some courses will be online only. Our college course-taking students will know what to expect and now that they’ve had experience with hybrid and virtual courses, they will have a better sense of what to expect. However, we’ve also talked about capacity, just mentally, about survival. Our school team has great ideas planned out for the next school year but at the same time, there’s this massive feeling as to how do we ask more of our staff – for ideas, thinking, planning for next year – when they’re still just trying to get through the right now. So, I think all of us are really hoping that we can be fully in-person this fall, so that we can fully engage and support our students in a deep, renewed way.”

**Dr. Richard A. Vladovic Harbor Teacher
Preparation Academy; Los Angeles, CA
Raymond Aubele, Principal**

“I’m now two weeks into being new to the school. Los Angeles Unified School District has been an exemplar of CDC guidelines. We’ve had a rigorous Covid testing program, vaccinations have been offered to all district employees, and there is a Microsoft app which allows kids to submit a daily update that is integrated with Covid testing through a QSR code. So, we are ready to go! Students in our district will have a choice to stay remote or return to in-person school. Every week we can add more kids, but it will be Zoom in a room; it will still involve virtual learning since teachers may be teaching virtually while students are sitting in class and some in different classes. The students won’t be able to switch rooms per the district. For students who do return to in-person school, they will have advisory time with the teacher. We only have a small number of students returning for in-person so we are exploring innovative ways and various activities to engage students. Our college partner won’t be in-person until the fall, so our school will stay virtual for the summer. I am really excited for the kids and teachers to return next week. Although I’ve met our teachers on Zoom, Monday will be the first time I get to meet them in person.”