

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT OF ENGAGEMENT

Update for March 29, 2021

Email the CCS Department of Engagement at engage@columbus.k12.oh.us

GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE ON HB 67 PROVIDES STATE ASSESSMENT RELIEF FOR JUNIORS AND GRADUATING SENIORS

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed into law House Bill 67, which provides grace for students across the state during these unsettled times, particularly for students in the Classes of 2021 and 2022.

One of the primary components of HB 67 is the allowance of using a student's course grades for graduation requirements, rather than using a student's score on state test assessments. Using these final grades in courses acknowledges the hard work students have been accomplishing each and every day during this pandemic-impacted school year.

The new law allows students to graduate if they meet the curricular requirements for graduation, and the student's principal, teachers, and counselors believe that the student is prepared for graduation.

Here is a summary of what's included in HB 67:

- Allows students in grades 11 and 12 to use the end of course grades instead of mandated tests to fulfill graduation requirements.
- Provides flexibility for graduation requirements.
- Extends end of year testing windows by up to two weeks.
- Waives the state-only American History assessment.
- Adds the OhioMeansJobs readiness Seal as a graduation pathway for the Class of 2021.

The Columbus Board of Education and Columbus City Council had recently passed resolutions supporting the efforts to provide grace for our students. The new law reflects the educational challenges students have faced during the year-long coronavirus pandemic. The legislation passed as an emergency measure, so it takes effect immediately.

ADDITIONAL EFFORTS LINED UP TO SUPPORT STUDENTS AND FAMILIES FOR A SAFE SPRING BREAK:

Friday is the start of Columbus City Schools' long-awaited Spring Break!

It's an important time for students, teachers, and staff to pause and recharge so they can finish out the school year strong. But we also know that during these ten days, the structured activities and supports that are normally in place to keep young people engaged are gone.

ADDITIONAL FUEL UP! TAKE-HOME MEALS FOR SPRING BREAK:

Before the start of Spring Break, families can pick up extra five-day meal packs at our Fuel Up! Food Sites to make sure students have extra food while the sites are closed.

On Wednesday (3/31), our Food Services team will distribute an extra five-day meal pack per child. Remember, the meals are for any child under the age of 18 (including students who are not enrolled in Columbus City Schools).

The 19 Fuel Up! Food Sites are located in schools across the city, open Wednesdays only from 11:00am-1:00pm and 4:00-6:00pm. You can find a map of the site at www.ccsos.us/Page/8603.

Meal sites will resume regular distribution on Wednesday, April 14.

SCHOOL'S OUT ACTIVITIES FROM COLUMBUS REC AND PARKS:

Our partners at Columbus Recreation and Parks have updated their "School's Out" online listing of activities - many of them at free or reduced costs - to keep young people active and engaged during the time away from school.

Children ages 6-12 can sign up for School's Out at one of the city's 29 community centers to enjoy arts and crafts, sports clinics, group games, cooking classes, field trips, and much more.

Several of our community partners are also offering specials during Spring Break, including:

- **Columbus Zoo:** Until mid-April, all guests will receive \$5 off general admission. On April 2 and 3, the Zoo is also celebrating the spring season with Eggs, Paws and Claws. This event is free with Zoo admission and will be packed with kid-friendly entertainment. Make advance reservations for admission at www.columbuszoo.org.
- **Columbus Museum of Art:** General admission is free every Sunday. Free virtual Studio Workshops are offered every Tuesday and are a great way to engage and play together as a family. More information is at www.columbusmuseum.org.
- **Columbus Metropolitan Library:** The libraries are open with something for everyone during Spring Break. Visit the Events page at www.columbuslibrary.org to see what's going on at the library location nearest you.
- **Grange Insurance Audubon Center:** Located in the heart of downtown Columbus, this facility offers multiple free options for family enjoyment, including a library, gardens and beautiful grounds. Bring your family to explore, learn and play with us! Visit <https://grange.audubon.org/> for details on hours and activities.
- **Franklin Park Conservatory:** All Aboard! The Paul Busse Garden Railway returns to Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens on April 2. Featuring 1,122 feet of miniature train tracks that weave through gardens, over visitors' heads, and alongside waterfalls, guests will travel from one whimsical scene to the next. More details can be found at www.fpconservatory.org.

Learn more about these Safe Spring Break efforts at www.columbus.gov/schoolsout/.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SENIOR FEST 2021 SUPPORT:

Volunteers are needed to continue our Senior Fest 2021 season of celebration for the Columbus City Schools Class of 2021.

WE CARE WEDNESDAY ON APRIL 14:

The Department of Engagement's next We Care Wednesday - April 14 from 4:00-7:00 p.m. - will again focus on the success of our seniors and much-needed support for their families.

Adding to the great supports provided by counselors, teachers, and staff at the high schools, we're looking for volunteers to make "check and connect" calls to talk directly with the families of our 12th graders, answer questions about graduation readiness, and connect them with appropriate community resources.

Click here to sign up for We Care Wednesday: <https://forms.gle/ea4fj5moc5naVVoU7>.

The Engagement team will host a We Care Wednesday Training Session on Monday, April 12, at 4pm (on Zoom) to make sure you're ready to make calls.

SENIOR FEST YARD SIGN DELIVERIES STARTING APRIL 13

Taking our celebration to the streets and homes of our seniors, volunteers are needed to deliver Class of 2021 yard signs to the homes of all 2,800 seniors.

Volunteers will pick up signs April 13-15 at the I Know I Can office (1108 City Park Avenue). You won't need to get out of your car; just pull up and we'll hand you the signs.

Signs are to be delivered to the homes of our CCS Seniors from April 13-18.

Sign-up to help deliver signs at <https://form.jotform.com/210685780606157>.

CCS FAMILIES CAN GET DOUBLE FRESH PRODUCE USING P-EBT

With the start of Spring, the Veggie Van is rolling again with our partners at Local Matters. This season, they've launched some new markets, brought back in-person shopping, and found a way to double the amount of fresh produce Columbus City Schools families can buy with the Pandemic-EBT cards they recently received.

The Local Matters Veggie Van brings affordable, convenient food access to neighborhoods across Columbus. And all products sold through the Veggie Van can be purchased with SNAP/EBT and the Pandemic-EBT cards sent to all Columbus City Schools families.

Right now, purchases through the Veggie Van using your P-EBT card are worth twice as much. The Produce Perks program provides up to a \$25 match on SNAP/EBT and P-EBT purchases. So, when you use your P-EBT at participating markets, you earn a \$1-for-\$1 match in Produce Perks tokens that can be redeemed for fruits and vegetables.



Here are the Weekly Markets from Local Matters:

Tuesdays

Trio Pharmacy, 1570 Cleveland Avenue, 3:30pm - 5:30 pm

Wednesdays

Hilltop Primary Care Center, 2857 W. Broad Street, 12:30pm - 2:30 pm
Sawyer Manor & Trevitt Heights, 940 Caldwell Place. 3:30pm - 5:30pm

Thursdays

East Main Health Center, 1180 E. Main Street, 12:00pm - 2:00pm

Fridays

Equitas Pharmacy King-Lincoln, 736 E. Long Street. 3:30pm - 5:30pm

A “pop-up market” is schedule next month, on Friday, April 30, at our Columbus Africentric Early College campus (3223 Allegheny Avenue). To get more information on these markets, email Local Matters at veggievan@local-matters.org or call/text 614-315-0661.

PARTNERSHIP WITH NBC4 PROMOTED POWER OF READING TO YOUNG CHILDREN BEFORE BED:

How do dinosaurs say goodnight? What do you do when a bear can't sleep? What kind of drama can a llama get into wearing red pajamas? And what do you do outside when the moon and stars shine bright against the darkness of the night?

These were just some of the questions to come out of a great series of Books Before Bedtime - read by our partners at NBC4 - to close out National Reading Month. Each night last week, hundreds of our city's young readers joined us on Facebook Live to hear one of our friends from NBC4 read a quick bedtime story for young learners.

At the end of each reading, our team has provided tips and strategies for parents to boost book reading benefits at home with their children. Here are a few of the tips:

- **Mystery Word** - Use your finger to cover a word in a sentence and ask your child to think about what word should come next. This helps with syntax - the way words and phrases are connected to form sentences and thoughts. When you ask your child to figure out the next word, they're indirectly noticing that they need to choose either a noun, adjective, verb, or so forth, based on what helps the sentence make sense.
- **Follow Along** - When reading a book with larger print, use your finger to point word by word as you read. By following your finger, children learn that reading goes from left to right. Children also begin to make connections between the words they hear and the words they see on the page. It's also good for pictures in books - pointing out different characters, objects, or animals - connecting words to images.

- **Read it Again** - Reading a book repeatedly can help a child develop better logic skills. The first time children hear a book, they don't catch everything. But as they hear it again and again, they start to notice patterns and sequences. They'll also learn to predict what will happen next based on their prior knowledge. These lessons in recognizing patterns, understanding sequences, and predicting outcomes will help children in other areas, from math and science to music and writing.

Check out our Books Before Bedtime series at www.facebook.com/ColumbusCitySchools/.

GAME ON! COLUMBUS CREW SC PARTNERS WITH CCS ON NEW MINI-PITCH AT NORTHGATE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Columbus City Schools welcomes the latest partnership with Columbus Crew SC, the Columbus Crew SC Foundation, and the U.S. Soccer Foundation to install a new mini-pitch at our Northgate Intermediate School.

Installation is slated to begin in June and completed by July. The proposed mini-pitch at Northgate Intermediate (serving 4th and 5th graders) will be the second in our district. The first mini-pitch was opened in 2019 at Eakin Elementary and has been a popular addition to the school and neighborhood.

“For more than a decade, Columbus Crew SC has been a major contributor to our mission of empowering this city’s young people,” said Dr. Talisa Dixon, Superintendent and CEO of Columbus City Schools. “Healthy bodies fuel active minds, and playing sports is a proven way to keep children healthy, teach them to work successfully as part of a team, and boost their energy and confidence. Columbus City Schools is proud to have Columbus Crew SC, U.S. Soccer, and Nationwide Insurance on our team and supporting our students on and off the field.”

The Northgate Intermediate mini-pitch will become the Crew SC Foundation’s 11th Field Development Project, all of which are located around the Columbus area and are funded by the Crew SC Foundation. The mini-pitch at Northgate is part of a commitment by the Haslam and Edwards families to create safe spaces to play for underserved communities, while providing a soccer environment that encourages the continued growth of the game in the city.

Along with the creation of the mini-pitches, the Crew SC Foundation will work with the U.S. Soccer Foundation to provide Soccer for Success programming at Northgate Intermediate. Soccer for Success is an after-school program that helps children establish healthy habits and develop critical life skills through trained coach-mentors and community engagement.

As a founding level partner, Nationwide Insurance will play a key role in supporting all Crew SC mini-pitch initiatives throughout its multi-year partnership. Their mini-pitch support will be featured through various volunteer opportunities and signage efforts.

TOP WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL PLAYERS INSPIRE YOUNG STUDENTS TO SET GOALS AND AIM HIGH

Columbus is hosting the final championship rounds of this year's NCAA Division II Women's Basketball playoffs, and several players from the Elite 8 teams took time off the court to inspire Columbus students.

Players from the Drury University Lady Pantherst met with Trevitt Elementary students virtually to read and talk about goal setting, with one player encouraging students to, "surround yourself with people who lift you up. Don't listen to people who tell you that you can't do something." Another Drury University player shared that she was an entrepreneur and started her own business last year when she was a college junior.

The Lady Jennies of the University of Central Missouri also led stretching exercises. Then the students took turns stepping up to the microphone on the laptop to ask questions.

In addition to Trevitt Elementary, these college athletic scholars also spoke to classes at Weinland Park Elementary and West Broad Elementary.

SPOTLIGHT: COLUMBUS ROTARY

Our partners at the Columbus Rotary recently joined students and staff at Colerain Elementary to celebrate the donation of brand-new Chromebook cases for every student.

The Rotary has been a long-time partner with Colerain Elementary, which serves many of our district's students with orthopedic and health impairments. The cases make it easier to hold Chromebooks and protect the laptops from drops and damage.

The Columbus Rotary also sponsors our District's Student Service Above Self Program which emphasizes community service and engagement, with top project earning the opportunity for college scholarships.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

The District has made a change to the calendar for this week:

- Thursday, April 1: Change to Asynchronous Day (Remote Learning Day for all students)
- April 2 - 11: Spring Break

SHARE YOUR PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION UPDATES:

During this historic school year, it's important we communicate as much as possible to as many people as possible - in as many languages as possible - about the steps being taken in Columbus City Schools to support our students and engage our families.

Please share your updates with us at Engage@columbus.k12.oh.us.