

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

## COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT OF ENGAGEMENT

Update for January 25, 2021

Email the CCS Department of Engagement at [engage@columbus.k12.oh.us](mailto:engage@columbus.k12.oh.us)

### **COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS PREPARED TO SAFELY WELCOME STUDENTS AND STAFF BACK TO CLASSROOM AND CONTINUE WITH SAFE WINTER SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES:**

Columbus City Schools is prepared to safely welcome students and staff back into our buses, classrooms, and buildings for in-person blended learning starting February 1.

Dedicated to keeping students and staff safe as we return, our District's Health Services team has worked closely with Columbus Public Health and the pediatric experts at Nationwide Children's Hospital to develop a multi-layer health protocol plan designed to effectively prevent COVID-19 spread - even before the game-changing COVID-19 vaccine.

Late on Friday, Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public Health extended the current Stay at Home Advisory until February 6. The advisory coincides with Governor DeWine's extension of the statewide curfew.

With this updated advisory, the District has determined to still continue with safe in-person athletics and student activities, which are currently on-going, and with plans to transition to our blended learning model.

On Friday, Dr. Dixon shared that she remains confident in the multi-layered health protocols and safety procedures already in place to protect our student-athletes, coaches, and staff.

Our athletic programs have been adhering to health and safety guidelines including:

- Coaches must wear face coverings at all times.
- Players must wear face coverings when not actively participating in competition.
- Six-feet of social distance must be maintained except when actively participating.
- Upon arrival, coaches and students must wash their hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap (or use sanitizer) before touching surfaces or participating in workouts.
- Spectators are not permitted at CCS home athletic contests.

Our Health Services team continues to work closely with Columbus Public Health to monitor the virus within our attendance boundaries and is set to update families if there is a need to take any other preventive actions.

For more information, our online Blended Learning Hub ([www.ccsok.us/reopening](http://www.ccsok.us/reopening)) includes more than 20 health and safety videos and answers to frequently asked questions about blended learning, student cohorts, meals, transportation, and health protocols for buildings and buses.

## **ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS PROVIDE INSIGHT ON SUPPORTS FOR BLENDED LEARNING MODEL OR SWITCH TO DIGITAL ACADEMY:**

A growing number of CCS families and community partners are joining our Tuesday and Thursday Virtual Family Engagement Sessions as we get closer to the February return of students and staff to our classrooms.

With recent audiences of 100-175 families each night, this past week's sessions were designed to spotlight the supports provided in our elementary schools as students transition to our blended learning model (with 2 days of in-school instruction combined with 3 days of at-home learning) and the additional supports now in place at our new CCS Digital Academy for families who may be considering a switch to the self-paced, fully-virtual learning model as an alternative.

### **SUPPORTING THE NEW BLENDED LEARNING WEEK:**

During last Thursday's engagement session, the principals and teachers from South Mifflin Elementary, Oakland Park Elementary, and Columbus Africentric explained that families need to be ready for a change in remote learning during this blended model - which will be different than the current structure of remote learning for elementary students.

As a reminder, our transition to blending learning is being phased in:

- **Week of February 1** - These student groups will transition to a blended learning model and continue in the weeks thereafter:
  - All students in grades Pre-K through 3.
  - Students with identified complex needs in grades Pre-K through 12.
  - Students in Career and Technical Education programs at Columbus Downtown High School and the Fort Hayes Career Center.
- **Week of February 8** - Adding to our first group, another group of student will transition to a blended learning model and continue in the weeks thereafter:
  - All students in grades 4 and 5.

Students who are returning to the classroom have been grouped into two cohorts (information on student cohort can be found in the Parent Portal).

- **Cohort A:** Students will attend classes in-person on Monday and Tuesday and participate in remote learning on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.
- **Cohort B:** Students will attend classes on Thursday and Friday and participate in remote learning on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

On Wednesdays, students will have remote class meetings with their teachers and may have small group instruction/intervention opportunities. On days when students are not scheduled to be at school, they will participate in mostly asynchronous (self-paced) core content (English, Math, Science, Social Studies) and remote content with Unified Arts classes.

Teachers and principals are set to share with students and families more about the adjusted weekly schedule during the first week of our blended model. Schedules are also available in the Parent Portal.

## **MENTORS AND TEACHERS READY WITH SUPPORT IN DIGITAL ACADEMY:**

Many families are considering a switch for their young students to the new Columbus City Schools K-12 Digital Academy as an alternative to in-person blended learning.

During last Tuesday's engagement session, the Digital Academy team provided an overview of how the Digital Academy works as a completely remote and self-paced learning option within Columbus City Schools for students in Kindergarten through 12th grades.

CCS teachers are ready to welcome new students for the second semester, which officially began last week. Since the classwork is self-paced, students have time to catch up even if they don't make the switch until February. The Digital Academy's principal also shared that each student is assigned a learning mentor, providing learners with additional support even though they are completely virtual.

Registration for the Digital Academy has been extended to February 12 to give families an opportunity to weigh their options. Enrolling in the Digital Academy can be done from the Parent Portal or by contacting Central Enrollment.

## **CHECK OUT OUR LIST OF VIRTUAL FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS:**

The Department of Engagement has hosted more than 60 Virtual Family Engagement Sessions since they were first launched in June. Recordings from most of the sessions are available to re-watch on our website at [www.ccschools.org/Page/8212](http://www.ccschools.org/Page/8212).

Sign up for upcoming engagement sessions, including our "Super Sessions" with Dr. Dixon, at [www.ccschools.org/rsvp](http://www.ccschools.org/rsvp).

## **COTA RE-INSTATES FARES, OFFERS REPLACEMENT PASSES:**

Our partners at COTA have been forced to reinstate fares for most of its bus routes, ending the temporary suspension that had been in place since March. At the same time, more buses are being added to several high ridership routes since capacity is reduced to 20 persons on all vehicles.

If riders had previously purchased a COTA pass that went unused and has now expired, COTA says customers can turn in the unused pass for a new pass at no additional charge. Key Card and Senior ID customers can also replace their card at no charge.

COTA continues to protect customers and operators by requiring masks, limiting fixed-route transit vehicles to 20 passengers, and employing innovative and aggressive ventilation and sanitization procedures. If a bus has reached its limit of 20 passengers and is unable to stop for riders waiting at a stop, additional vehicles are being dispatched to pick up the overflow passengers.

Additional updates on COTA's changes in service and information on where to exchange unused passes can be found at [www.cota.com](http://www.cota.com).

## **CENTRAL STATE UNIVERSITY OFFERS FULL-RIDE PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIPS TO CCS STUDENTS:**

Our higher-education partners at Central State University - Ohio's only public historically black university (HBCU) located in nearby Wilberforce has announced a new partnership that will offer two of the school's Presidential Scholarships to students in Columbus City Schools.

The Presidential Scholarship is the most prestigious award offered at Central State, reserved for a few of the top incoming freshmen. This scholarship covers tuition, fees, room and board.

Awards will be determined by the local Columbus CSU Alumni Chapter, who will consider academic merit, demonstrated leadership ability, community engagement, and strength of character. The scholarship also requires a 3.7 or higher unweighted high school GPA; enrollment in the Honors College; and attendance for 3 consecutive years and a graduate of Columbus City Schools. Minimum SAT or ACT scores are being waived this year due to COVID.

College-bound CCS student who meet the requirements and are interested in applying should go to [www.centralstate.edu](http://www.centralstate.edu), click on academics, click on Honors Program, and click on the Presidential Scholarship.

## **SPOTLIGHT: IMPACT COMMUNITY ACTION**

Our partners at IMPACT Community Action remind us that taking care of ourselves by eating well, staying active, not smoking, getting the recommended immunizations and screening tests, and seeing a doctor when we are sick all influence our health. So do the resources and supports available in our homes, neighborhoods, and communities.

That's why they've been hosting the "Speak Up, Speak Out" Advocacy Series to highlight the importance of understanding how to stay in tune with physical and mental health and give families ways to gain tools to advocate on their own.

Just in time for the weather forecast, this week's session will focus on "Mental Health and the Winter Blahs." Not feeling like yourself? Do you feel this way every year this time? There's a name for it. Let's talk about what "It" is, how to recognize it, and how to treat it.

Sign up for the "Speak Up, Speak Out" Advocacy Series at [www.impactca.org](http://www.impactca.org).

## **SHARE YOUR PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION UPDATES:**

**Please share this Engagement Update with the families and stakeholders you serve.** 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](mailto:Engage@columbus.k12.oh.us).**