

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT OF ENGAGEMENT

Update for February 1, 2021

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

FIRST DAY UNDERWAY - COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS SAFELY WELCOMES STUDENTS AND STAFF BACK TO CLASSROOM:

Columbus City Schools has begun to welcome more than 26,000 of its students safely back to the classroom, many who have not been in a school building for nearly a year.

Today, Ohio's largest school district began its transition to a blended learning environment - starting with students in grades Pre-K through 3, students with identified complex needs, and students in Career and Technical Education programs - after working diligently with state and local health officials to implement a multi-layered health and safety protocol that focus on the importance of mask wearing, social distancing, and hand washing.

Information can be found online on our Blended Learning Hub at www.ccsok.us/reopening. Families can call (614) 365-8888 or email customerrelations@columbus.k12.oh.us if they still have questions or concerns.

IMPORTANT SCHEDULE UPDATE FOR THIS WEEK:

On Wednesday, February 3, there will be no classes for students because of a Staff Professional Development Day.

On Friday, February 5, students in grades PreK-5, Career Technical students, and students with complex needs will have an asynchronous remote learning day for students. This will allow more availability for CCS teachers and staff to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION DURING BLENDED LEARNING:

For students who are eligible for bus rides to school, the District's Transportation team sent letters last week to families' home addresses, with information on school bus pick-up and drop-off times and location. Families who have questions about their students' bus schedules can call the CCS Transportation Help Line at 614-365-5074.

LATCHKEY OPEN DURING BLENDED LEARNING:

Columbus City Schools will offer Latchkey at 21 schools across the City once blended learning has begun. Registration is still open. Slots are filled on a first come, first served basis.

To register for Latchkey online, visit www.ccsok.us/Page/2214 and scroll to the bottom of the page for each school's registration. For other Latchkey questions, please contact the CCS Latchkey Office at 614-365-5891.

EXPERT STAFF AT CENTER OF MULTI-LAYER HEALTH PROTOCOLS:

Our District's Health, Family and Community Services team has worked 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 the spread of COVID-19. That's even without the game-changing COVID-19 vaccine.

At the core of protecting students and staff is the expert work of our 112 licensed school nurses. Each building is assigned a school nurse who is responsible for establishing and reinforcing our protocols, monitoring for symptoms, and tracking any potential exposures or positive cases.

Next are our dedicated building and custodial teams. Throughout the school day, in the evenings, and for deep-cleaning on Wednesdays, our custodial teams are using hospital-grade cleaners to prevent germs and the virus from sticking around or lying in wait.

You can watch and share a video on how the ten layers of protection will keep students and staff healthy and safe by going to <https://youtu.be/TIFcVL4BH5E>.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS ARE READY:

To safely return students and staff to school buildings, Columbus City Schools has to meet numerous health and safety protocols. There are eight indicators that the District must follow.

This includes generous supplies of personal protective equipment on-site, such as staff and student masks, disposable gloves, bottles of hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes. Also, desk and tables in classrooms have been spread out to accommodate six feet of social distancing. Most desks also now have a plexiglass barriers to protect students and staff.

Watch the video on CCS Building Readiness at www.ccssoh.us/Page/9210.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Families with questions can contact Customer Relations at (614) 365-8888 or email customerrelations@columbus.k12.oh.us. Another option is to contact the FACTLine by email, FACTLine@columbus.k12.oh.us or call (614) 221-3228.

Below is a list of the most frequently asked questions we have received so far:

- Question: What are the Cohort days and where do I find this?
Answer: Go on your Parent Portal, click "Today" on the left side in the Menu. Your child's name comes up in the middle of the screen where you will see blended learning with Cohort A or Cohort B under it.

- Question: I can't remember my Parent Portal username and password?
Answer: Send a picture of parent's/guardian's driver license or passport AND name and birthdate of child to parentportalaccess@columbus.k12.oh.us to reset.

- Question: If my child rides the bus, will they still ride the bus?
Answer: If your child qualifies for a bus, they will ride the bus during blended learning. Mailers were sent out last week to the home address currently on file with the District.
- Question: Can I still enroll my child in the District's Digital Academy?
Answer: Yes, enrollment for the CCS Digital Academy has been extended until February 12 to give parents the opportunity to decide what is best for their child.

VIRTUAL FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS ON BACK TO SCHOOL

By Tuesday evening, Columbus City Schools will have safely welcomed the first cohort of students back into our classrooms with a blended learning model. During our Tuesday Virtual Family Engagement Session, we will "check in" with staff at several of our schools to hear how these first days back to class went and what families need to know for the next cohort coming on Thursday.

Then, on Thursday, Superintendent Dr. Dixon will join our "Super Sessions" to share updates and insights on the first week of our transition and listen to families' questions and concerns about the return. We'll also provide information on community initiatives to help families and students.

To sign up for our Virtual Family Engagement Sessions, go to www.ccsos.us/rsyp.

COLUMBUS PUBLIC HEALTH SHARES STUDY ON KEEPING SCHOOLS SAFE EVEN WITHOUT COVID VACCINE:

During a recent Virtual Staff Engagement Session with school employees, our partners at Columbus Public Health shared news about a new national student showing the impact of having multi-layer health protocols.

With proper prevention efforts, schools can keep transmission of COVID-19 quite low, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention concluded.

Even in places with high infection rates, the study added, there's no evidence that schools will transmit the virus at rates that are any higher than those seen in the general community.

Schools can operate safely as long as precautions are employed - similar to the multi-layer protocols in place throughout Columbus City Schools - including rules that require masks, allow for a distance of six feet between people, and keep students in cohorts to limit the number of people who must quarantine in the case of an exposure.

The study also shares evidence of the social, emotional, and academic toll remote learning has taken on children, especially in already vulnerable, low-income communities.

You can read more about the study thanks to our partners at WCBE: www.wcbe.org/post/cdc-makes-case-schools-reopening.

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS NEW CCS EFFORT TO ENGAGE WITH NEW AMERICAN FAMILIES:

A few months ago, the CCS Department of Engagement partnered with the City of Columbus and Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services (ETSS) to engage with our Immigrant and New American families, focusing attention on families whose children were not connecting regularly to school during this time of remote learning.

The partnership includes seven bilingual liaisons who are native speakers in Spanish, Somali, Maay Maay (Mai Mai), Arabic, Nepali and Kinyarwanda. The liaisons have connected with more than 1,300 households, either by phone or visiting

Data suggests the efforts are working: at the beginning of the school year, the online attendance rate for students learning English was 63.7%, quite lower than the rest of the district's students. By December, that gap had narrowed and their rates were the same.

The Columbus Dispatch recently featured this successful engagement effort. You can read the article at www.dispatch.com/story/news/education/2021/01/24/english-language-help-online-columbus-ohio-city-schools-students-etss/4167879001/

COLUMBUS URBAN LEAGUE PARTNERS ON NORTHLAND LEC:

Columbus City Schools is partnering with the Columbus Urban League (CUL) to provide families in the Northland area with added access to our Learning Extension Center initiative.

The new CUL Learning Extension Center is housed within our Northland High School and serves students at Northland plus the 14 elementary schools in the northeast part of town, along with Medina, Mifflin, and Woodward Park Middle Schools.

The LEC can serve up to 54 students, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and follows the same multi-layer health protocols found in all CCS buildings to keep both students and staff safe. Families can also benefit with priority access to the full array of supports and services provided by the Columbus Urban League.

To learn more about the CUL Northland LEC, email our partners at youth@cul.org.

Columbus City Schools is partnering with several community organizations on Learning Extension Centers - safe, adult-supervised, welcoming spaces where students are supported while learning virtually during the day.

At these Learning Extension Centers, students have access to internet, learning devices, and school supplies to assist them in remote learning. In many LEC locations, students are able to get meals and “after-school” type activities.

Families can find the LEC closest to home at www.ccsok.us/LearningExtensionCenters.

COMMUNITY ENCOURAGED TO JOIN IN RELATIONSHIP WEEK:

Every day across Columbus City Schools, we have staff, families, and community partners who are dedicated to building positive, inclusive learning environments... with caring and supportive relationships that are so critical to the learning, well-being, and success of our students.

Our community partners are encouraged to join in celebrating the Fifth Annual Columbus City Schools Relationship Week by taking part in activities each day that reaffirm our compassion, respect, trust, and love for one another.

- **Start with Hello (February 8)** - Offering a simple “HELLO” to everyone you see can be the start to making sure everyone feels noticed and valued. More than 100 non-English languages and dialects are spoken by students and families in Columbus City Schools, so take a moment to say “HELLO” in a different language. Embrace our cultural differences.
- **One Act of Kindness (February 9)** - We want every student and staff member in our District to commit to performing at least one random act of kindness: anything from a small compliment given to a stranger or offering an inspiring gesture that could be life changing. Imagine if everyone in Columbus City Schools took part, generating more than 60,000 total acts of kindness in just one day.
- **Forgiveness (February 10)** - Being able to apologize is a sign of humility and courage. Be brave and offer an apology for something you may have done unintentionally that offended another person. Find an opportunity to forgive someone. You can repair broken relationships by removing grudges. Ask the simple question, “What can I do to make this right?”
- **Celebrate Diversity (February 11)** - Celebrate what makes Columbus City Schools beautifully diverse. Our community is inclusive of all beliefs, cultures, ethnicities, identities, languages, personalities and traditions. Share your stories and listen to the stories of others to understand our commonalities and embrace our differences.
- **No One Eats Alone (February 12)** - Lunch is a perfect time to make sure everyone feels included and accepted. Invite someone you don’t know to join you at lunch and spend time getting to know each other better. Use the time to check in on each other and ask how the day is going.

SPOTLIGHT: ARTMOBILE VIRTUAL ART SERIES

During the long winter days - when students can’t get outside as much - it’s important to keep young minds busy and engaged. Our partners at the Artmobile remind us that their Virtual Art Series offers parents access to quality arts enrichment programs that can be done at home.

The pre-recorded art series is easily accessible via YouTube and uses art supplies and materials families are likely to have at home. The Virtual Art Class Series, TheArtmobile@Home, is geared towards children and teens ages 5 to 15.



Each art class is designed to stimulate creative expression through various art projects. Students develop important artistic techniques and learn about the principles of visual art. Students experiment with line, color, form, shape, and texture to create a finished product that they can take pride in.

The art projects are fun, interesting, and engaging. To date, this series has been utilized by close to 1,200 art students.

Find these free classes at <https://cbusartmobile.org/free-virtual-art-class-series/>.

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.