

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

## COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT OF ENGAGEMENT

Update for February 16, 2021

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

### **FOCUSING ON OUR COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS CLASS OF 2021 TO REACH GRADUATION AND CELEBRATE SUCCESS:**

For the more than 2,700 students in the Columbus City Schools Class of 2021, their senior year of high school is now more than half over and all attentions focus on getting to graduation: completing all the requirements, thinking about what comes next, and celebrating the culmination of 13 years of schooling.

During last week's Virtual Family Engagement Super Session with Superintendent Dr. Dixon, our experts and community partners shared the wide-range of supports ready to assist our seniors in these final months of the school year and shared news about graduation and our plans to honor seniors for their hard work.

### **SENIOR SUPPORT TEAMS KEEP STUDENTS ON GRADUATION PATH**

Each CCS high school has a dedicated "Senior Support Team" which has been hosting special meetings for the past few months to provide resources and track the work of our seniors.

The Senior Support Teams include the senior class administrator, school counselor, advisor, family ambassador, and community partners such as I Know I Can, City Year, and Community in Schools, and IMPACT Community Action.

Working with the Support Teams, students and families review graduation requirements, ways to get needed credits and classes, and assistance on everything from credit recovery to college applications.

**HELPFUL LINK:** Want to know what's needed to graduate this year? Here's the link to the updated 2021 Graduation Planner:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/10XGqZfxDXaZUH4RCwTFQpqvWEcV9FPCj/view?usp=sharing>

### **ENGAGING PARENTS TO HELP SENIORS STAY ON TRACK:**

Parents play an important part in this path to success. School counselors created a Graduation Notification Agreement forms to ensure that parents are aware of their students' graduation status. By giving parents this information, they can help their students identify and complete remaining course, state testing, and other requirements still needed in order to graduate.



We need help to make sure all Class of 2021 parents have logged into the Infinite Campus Parent Portal to sign off on their students' Graduation Agreements. This is mandatory. If you work with families in the Class of 2021, make sure they've signed the Graduation Agreement. If not, have them contact their child's counselor immediately.

**HELPFUL LINK:** Find your senior's School Counselor and how to contact them:  
[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1LPSU5ImBOYaSWchLK9\\_719jowre4ouB7aU7eCUTab1c/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1LPSU5ImBOYaSWchLK9_719jowre4ouB7aU7eCUTab1c/edit#gid=0)

### **STILL TIME TO BOOST THOSE FIRST SEMESTER GRADES:**

The first Semester ended January 15th. Seniors who failed any graduation requirements may still work with their teachers to bring up Quarter 1 and/or Quarter 2 grades. This is a huge opportunity due to the challenges of remote learning, and we're encouraging students to take advantage of this. Otherwise, they'll need to repeat the whole course in online credit recovery or graduate at the end of summer school.

### **SENIOR SUCCESS CENTERS OFFER SUPPORT ON CREDIT RECOVERY**

Columbus City Schools' Credit Recovery program enables students to complete their high school diploma requirements online, at their own pace, choosing from a full complement of courses.

And now, several of our Learning Extension Centers are being converted to Senior Success Centers to specifically help seniors with making up missed course.

Credit Recovery courses include literature, history, science, mathematics, physical education, foreign languages, technology, the arts, and health.

Staff at these Senior Success Centers are being trained on Credit Recovery to monitor student progress, encourage students to keep pushing, and provide required supervision and support.

On top of that, dedicated community partners - such as IMPACT, YMCA, I Know I Can, City Year, Communities in Schools, and the Columbus Urban League - are providing access to social and family supports if those barriers are preventing seniors from being successful.

**HELPFUL LINK:** You can find the complete list of Learning Extension Centers and search our map for Senior Success Centers at [www.ccsosoh.us/LearningExtensionCenters](http://www.ccsosoh.us/LearningExtensionCenters).

Columbus City Schools is partnering with the Columbus Urban League (CUL) on a Senior Success Center housed within our Northland High School. It's open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 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](mailto:youth@cul.org).

## **HELPING SENIORS ACCESS THE CREDIT RECOVERY PORTAL**

Our Credit Recovery program is being managed by the team at our new CCS K-12 Digital Academy, utilizing the same Apex platform being used by our middle and high school students.

More information about Credit Recovery and how to access the class materials and test can be found on the Digital Academy website at <https://sites.google.com/columbus.k12.oh.us/ccs-digital-academy/home>.

**HELPFUL LINK:** Credit Recovery Apex Platform Login: [www.apexvs.com/apexui](http://www.apexvs.com/apexui).

Because Credit Recovery is more flexible, the Digital Academy team has expanded the hours that students can request to take final test. The additional hours are Mondays - Fridays from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Students must complete an “Unlocking Form” to request for any test to be unlocked. Our Senior Success Centers can ask students to include center staff on the request.

**HELPFUL LINK:** The Credit Recovery Unlocking Form can be found at: <https://forms.gle/qTDuZRqQ7Waz7XmU8>.

## **HELPING SENIORS THINK ABOUT LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL:**

Going to college can be expensive, but our partners at I Know I Can are helping Columbus City Schools’ college-bound seniors get every dollar available to make college affordable. And for those who may choose a different path after high school, they are making connections to job-training opportunities.

There are many different financial resources to help students afford college or training programs. They can be based on need, academics, or other qualifications.

In order to be eligible for many of these scholars and for financial aid, families must first complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Talk to your school counselor or an IKIC Advisor for more help. I Know I Can offers FREE workshops to help families complete the FAFSA.

The deadline is fast approaching for the I Know I Can Dream Big Scholarship, available to eligible seniors enrolling in a full-time, 4-year baccalaureate program at an accredited college, with an unmet need of at least \$3,500. Since it can be renewed for four year, this scholarship can be worth as much as \$14,000.

I Know I Can is also working with several local employers and training centers to connect graduating seniors with job opportunities after high school. Our school counselors have created an online tool to think about what comes after graduation. Check it out at:

<https://sites.google.com/columbus.k12.oh.us/resources-studentsfamilies/home/whats-after-high-school>.



## **CELEBRATING SUCCESSES WITH SENIOR FEST 2021:**

Several of our community partners have come together to identify ways to celebrate the culmination of 13 years of school for our graduates in the Class of 2021 with Senior Fest 2021.

Not a single event, Senior Fest is a season of celebration stretching from March to June, with events such as a t-shirt design contest, senior spotlights, guest speakers, and special virtual events.

During our recent Virtual Family Engagement Super Session with the Class of 2021, Dr. Dixon shared that plans are being worked on for graduation in the Spring. The District plans to hold in-person graduation ceremonies June 2-5.

The location(s) of the graduation ceremonies is still to be determined as we consider the health and safety protocols that will be necessary to hold in-person ceremonies for our graduates and their families.

Columbus City Schools also plans to live stream the all high school graduation ceremonies.

## **WATCH ALL OF DR. DIXON'S MESSAGE AND OUR SUPER SESSION:**

You can watch the recording of the Virtual Family Engagement Super Session with Dr. Dixon at [www.ccsosoh.us/Page/8212](http://www.ccsosoh.us/Page/8212).

## **REMINDER: NEW P-EBT CARDS FOR FAMILIES TO BUY FOOD:**

By the end of this week, most families in Columbus City Schools Coming will have received the new round of Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Cards (P-EBT Cards) which provide additional money to buy food.

Our partners at the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) remind us that the families of all students enrolled in Columbus City Schools in October and November will receive this 3<sup>rd</sup> Round of the P-EBT. Unlike previous benefits, this round also includes students in Pre-Kindergarten (so Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade).

P-EBT cards are mailed to the addresses listed in our Infinite Campus/ Parent Portal (which is why it's important that families keep that information updated). New cards are being sent, and families are encouraged to keep these cards for future added benefits.

The cards coming this week represent P-EBT benefits for October-November. The cards will be re-loaded with new amounts added to the cards monthly for the rest of the school year. December's benefit will be issued in late February, January 's benefits will be issued in late March, February's benefits in late April, and so on.

The state has a new P-EBT Customer Service line to help families. Call 1-866-244-0071 (press option 1). More information can be found online at [www.ohiopebt.org](http://www.ohiopebt.org).

## **NEW PARTNER HELPS ANSWER AGE-OLD PARENT QUESTION: IS MY CHILD READY TO BE HOME ALONE?:**

Does leaving your tween (ages 9-13) home alone worry you? How do you know if your child is mature enough to stay home alone? During our Tuesday Virtual Family Engagement Session last week, one of our District's new partners help put some of those anxieties.

Enriching Kidz is recognized across Ohio for its "Kidz Home Alone" class that's designed to teach children about being home alone safely and help parents gauge and build their children's maturity level so they can be ready to stay home alone.

During our session, the creator of this popular class (now offered virtually) shared helpful insights and solutions for all of those "what ifs" that parents can have when its time to consider leaving a child home alone - especially if you don't have any other options.

First, she answered one of the most common questions: what is the legal age in the state of Ohio to leave a child home alone? There is no age in law, she said, so it's up to parents to make sure their child is ready and their home is safe. Here are the top six questions to ask yourself and your child:

- Is your child mature enough to be home alone?
- Is your child physically and mentally able to care for themselves?
- Is your child a good decision maker and problem solver?
- Are they able to follow the rules?
- How does your child handle an "out of the ordinary" situation?
- How do they feel about being home alone?

Before the first time children are left home alone, it's good for families to review when (and when not) to answer the door and the phone, the reasons to call 9-1-1, and what to do if someone get hurt - such as basic first aid and safety. Take time to review fire escape and severe weather plans. And make sure to set rules for staying home alone.

The Enriching Kidz Home Alone Life Skills Class is available online, and our new partner is offering Columbus City Schools families a 20% discount. Use code CCS20 when you sign up at [www.enrichingkidz.com](http://www.enrichingkidz.com).

## **HEARING FROM FAMILIES ABOUT CLIMATE AND CULTURE:**

Columbus City Schools wants to hear directly from families on how the school year is going. We are partnering with the Panorama survey platform to get family feedback and help us improve the learning experience, allocate resources where needed, and better support all students and families.

We are asking families, parents, and guardians to share their thoughts and concerns with an online survey that runs through the end of this week. Take the Family Engagement Survey at: <https://surveys.panoramaed.com/ccsoh/family2021/>.



## **VOLUNTEER WITH US FOR WE CARE WEDNESDAY:**

Volunteers will once again make “Check & Connect” calls to hear directly from our Columbus City Schools families, offering a kind ear and support if needed, as part of our latest We Care Wednesday.

Our first event back in December was well received by the more than 13,000 homes contacted. Most families were appreciative to hear a live voice ask how they were doing during this unusual school year impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Building upon the engagement work being done by teachers and staff at many of our schools, these volunteer calls offer an added opportunity to check on the well-being of our students’ families, answer their questions, and connect them to community resources and supports. Once again, we will be partnering with Lutheran Social Services and the 2-1-1 information line to identify helpful resources.

We Care Wednesday will be February 24, with calls being made between 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. Sign up to volunteer at <https://forms.gle/Bcaq2MvXKqCrRRWv7>.

## **SPOTLIGHT: COLUMBUS AFRICENTRIC SANKOFA WITH NBC4**

Students, school leaders, and community partners at our Columbus Africentric Early College (CAEC) - including our partners at NBC4 - invite the community to join them for this year’s Sankofa 2021, a celebration of past, present, and future African American leaders in the Greater Columbus community.

CAEC students are taught about the principle of Sankofa, an African word that means looking back to grow and move into a more productive future. Next Tuesday, February 23 at 7:30 p.m., CAEC will broadcast the virtual Sankofa event on NBC4 Columbus. You can learn more at <https://caeclead.com/sankofa/>.

## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR:**

Make sure your school calendar is up to date. Below are a few upcoming days to keep in mind:

- Thursday and Friday, Feb. 25-26: Remote Learning Day for All Students
- Monday and Tuesday, Mar. 1-2: Remote Learning Day for All Students
- Wednesday, Mar 24: Records Day (No Classes or Distance Learning)

## **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).**