COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT OF ENGAGEMENT
Update for March 1, 2021
Email the CCS Department of Engagement at **engage@columbus.k12.oh.us**

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HEADING BACK TO CLASSROOMS, MOVING TO BLENDED LEARNING IN MID-MARCH:

Columbus City Schools is ready to safely welcome middle and high school students back into the classroom, transitioning 6-12 graders into a blended learning model (two days on in-class learning combined with three day of at-home remote learning).

During this past week's Virtual Family Engagement Super Session, Superintendent Dr. Dixon shared the importance of getting students back in the classrooms for their academic and social-emotional development, especially for seniors working towards graduation in the coming months.

Every day counts for our students. Here are the details of the transition plan. You can watch the Virtual Family Engagement Super Session at www.ccsoh.us/Page/8212.

TRANSITION TO BLENDED LEARNING STARTING DATES:
Beginning on March 15, students in grades 6-12 will return to in-person learning with a phased-in plan. They will begin blended learning in March and continue in this model in the weeks thereafter:

> Week of March 15: All students in grades 6, 11, and 12.
> - Cohort A will start Monday, March 15. Cohort B will start Thursday, March 18.
>
> Week of March 22: All students in grades 7, 8, 9, and 10.
> - Cohort A will start Monday, March 22. Cohort B will start Thursday, March 25.

REOPENED CCS DIGITAL ACADEMY ENROLLMENT:
Registration has reopened for families who want to enroll their students in grades 6-12 in the CCS Digital Academy, a completely remote and self-paced learning option for students.

Families who are interested in the Digital Academy are strongly encouraged to talk with their student's building administrator and/or school counselor. There are limited course offerings at the middle and high school levels of the Digital Academy. A move to the Digital Academy, with approximately nine weeks remaining in the school year, may result in student scheduling, curriculum alignment, or graduation credit issues.

Students in grades 6-12 currently in the Digital Academy can withdraw and return to their home school for blended learning. Enrollment or withdrawal is open until March 11.

MULTI-LAYER HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES:
The multi-layer health and safety protocols in place at our elementary schools are also set for blended learning in our middle and high schools, including protocols on mask-wearing, hand washing, COVID-19 symptoms, social distancing, classroom set-up, and more.

Face coverings are required of all students, staff, and visitors in our classrooms and school buildings. This follows the public health order from the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and The American Academy of Pediatrics guidance, recommending that all school-aged children wear face coverings in hospitals, schools, and across the community.

At the core of our health protocols is the work of our dedicated school nurses and building custodial teams. Watch how the layers of health safety work to protect student and staff at https://youtu.be/T1FcVL4BH5E.

PARTNERING ON TRANSPORTATION:
Transportation capacity had been a barrier to returning more students to the classroom up to this point. But through evaluation, planning, and partnerships, the District has been able to address these challenges.

Individual bus stops, pick-up times, and drop-off times will be communicated to families prior to the start of blended learning. Families should expect to receive a postcard in the mail, or they can log on to the Parent Portal to view bus information.

Columbus City Schools is also partnering with COTA to provide high school students (grades 9-12) with passes to access transit services. At no cost to the students, these passes are supplemental and do not replace yellow-bus transportation.

Students will be able to use these transit passes for extracurricular activities, internships, other enrichment experiences, or to get to and from school if they prefer.

The Board of Education will consider legislation to approve the COTA partnership at its business meeting on Tuesday.

CONTINUED SUPPORT OF LEARNING EXTENSION CENTERS:
As the rest of our students transition to the blended learning model, the support of Learning Extension Centers continues to be important for many of our families throughout the city.

Through partnerships with many of our city's non-profit and faith-based organizations, LECs offer internet access for students to complete virtual assignments while also providing safe, educationally-conducive environments for students whose families may not have the resources at home.

To make it easy for families to find the LEC closest to their home, we have created an interactive map at www.ccsoh.us/Page/8685.

VOLUNTEERS REACH FAMILIES ON WE CARE WEDNESDAY:

Volunteers were able to "check and connect" with nearly 1,4000 Columbus City Schools families during our latest We Care Wednesday, offering a kind ear and support if needed, as part of our latest We Care Wednesday.

And once again, 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 offered an added opportunity to check on the well-being of our students' families, answer their questions, and connect them to community resources and supports.

Partnering with Lutheran Social Services, our more than 75 volunteers shared information on the 2-1-1 community resource hotline to identify helpful resources.

We're planning our next We Care Wednesday for March. Look for updates on how to sign up to volunteer in the coming days.

SPOTLIGHT: CYBER-SAFETY TIPS ON TEEN TEXT MESSAGES

Our "cyber-safety" partners at Bark - the software company that provides parents with ways to monitor children's online and social media activities - have a new set of tips on text messages.

Has your teen ever received this text message: "sapnu puas"? Do you know what it means?

The way teens communicate with each other, and sometimes strangers online, can be with words, acronyms or emojis that are coded to mean different things.

The example "sapnu puas" is code for "send nudes" (the words appear upside down).

Here are you few more examples from our partners at Bark:
- "99" is code for "parents are gone."
- IWSN is the acronym for "I want sex now."
- LMIR is the acronym for "let's meet in real life."
- WTTP is the acronym for "want to trade photos."
- MOS is the acronym for "Mom over the shoulder."
- GNOC is the acronym for "get naked on camera."

The cyber-safety exerts at Bark say it's good for parents to set boundaries. Understanding the online language of teens is just one step in ensuring online safety. Create social media policies and establish cellphone rules that will reduce your teen's risk of engaging in unhealthy behavior.

Educate your teen about the dangers of online activity. Ongoing conversations about the dangers, combined with regular monitoring, will increase the chances that your teen will stay safe on social media and the internet at large.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

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

- 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.