

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

## COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT OF ENGAGEMENT

Update for March 22, 2021

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

### FINAL COHORT OF MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SET TO SAFELY RETURN TO CLASSROOMS THIS WEEK:

After successfully welcoming the first cohorts of middle and high school students back into the classroom last week, Columbus City Schools is ready to transition our remaining students into the blended learning model, with Grades 7, 8, 9, and 10 starting Monday.

This means all grades and all students - with the exception of our totally-remote scholars in the Columbus City Schools Digital Academy - have at least two days of in-class learning combined with up to three day of at-home remote learning. Here's the plan for this week:

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.

The school day looks very different for students as they return to the buildings. Students and staff will notice hand sanitizer stations at every building entrance. Face masks are mandatory, and bright red and white placards line the walls and hallways, designating social distancing six-feet. The smaller cohorts will minimize the number of students in the hallways between classroom changes. Every building has a six-week or more supply of hand sanitizer, rubber gloves, and personal protective equipment (PPE).

### VIRTUAL SENIOR FEST 2021 CELEBRATION KICKS OFF WITH SURPRISES AND SUPPORT FROM COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

Senior Fest 2021 - our season of celebration for the Columbus City Schools Class of 2021 - kicked off last week with a virtual party and a few live surprises from several of our community partners - including I Know I Can, The Ohio State University, Columbus Urban League, and Donotos.

Hundreds of our seniors logged on last Wednesday to our first-ever Virtual Senior Fest Celebration featuring live music, special guests, words of encouragement and support from classmates, and in-the-moment voting for the design of a special CCS Senior Fest t-shirt.

Five lucky seniors received a surprise Digital Door Delivery live during the online session, including one student who opened her door to find Dr. Dixon knocking with a Donotos gift card, balloons, and an Apple I-Pad!

This is just the start to our Senior Fest 2021 season of celebration. More to come.



## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO CONNECT WITH SENIORS' FAMILIES FOR OUR NEXT WE CARE WEDNESDAY ON APRIL 14:**

Let's keep helping our high schools support our Class of 2021 Seniors. 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.

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. Click here to sign up: <https://forms.gle/ea4fj5moc5naVVoU7>.

During our last We Care Wednesday earlier this month, our callers checked and connected with roughly 700 families, providing them with additional material on graduation plans and information about the 2-1-1 Help Line run by Lutheran Social Services, a helpful community resource for needs outside of school.

In the coming weeks, volunteers will also be needed to help with delivering special CCS Class of 2021 yard signs and door hangers to students' homes. Our partners have also arranged for every senior to be able to pick up a "swag bag" filled with exclusive CCS Senior Fest 2021 commemorative items.

## **JOIN IN THE SENIOR FEST CELEBRATION**

Join Columbus City Schools and help us amplify and magnify our graduating seniors and their accomplishment. Senior Fest 2021 – its more than an event – it's an ongoing celebration of the Class of 2021. If you're a community partner who wants to donate or volunteer as part of this celebration, contact the CCS Dept. of Engagement at [engage@columbus.k12.oh.us](mailto:engage@columbus.k12.oh.us).

## **SCHOOLS OUT - COLUMBUS REC AND PARKS FOCUSED ON SPRING BREAK ACTIVITIES FOR CCS STUDENTS AND FAMILIES:**

Spring Break is fast approaching and many Columbus City Schools families will be looking for something for children to do over the ten-day break from April 2 - 11.

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.

Sign up at [www.bit.ly/CRPD-Register](http://www.bit.ly/CRPD-Register).

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH NBC4 PROMOTE POWER OF READING TO YOUNG CHILDREN BEFORE BED:**

To close out National Reading Month, we're teaming up again with our partners at NBC4 to bring Columbus children the brainy benefits of reading a book before bed.

Each night this week, we're encouraging families to log on to the Columbus City Schools Facebook Live at 8:00pm to hear one of our friends from NBC4 read a quick bedtime story for young learners. Tonight, Superintendent Dr. Dixon will be joined by Kerry Charles to read the popular book "The Night Is Yours."

We'll also share tips for parents on how to boost the benefits of reading to children. Neural research shows that when parents reading to children, kids learn a great deal more than we ever thought possible. These gains range from improved logic skills to lower stress levels.

To join the Books Before Bed readings, go to [www.facebook.com/ColumbusCitySchools/](http://www.facebook.com/ColumbusCitySchools/).

## **SPOTLIGHT: CHARITABLE PHARMACY OF CENTRAL OHIO**

During this pandemic-impacted year, access to health care has been a top priority for many families in our community. The Charitable Pharmacy of Central Ohio - located at Livingston United Methodist Church on Livingston Avenue near downtown - provides access to medications for people facing challenging health care situations.

This dedicated community partner is the only pharmacy in Franklin County that provides pharmacy services to patients at no charge and qualifies patients for up to 12 months at a time.

In addition to pharmacy services and medicines for those who cannot afford them, the staff provides counseling on proper medication usage, health screenings, wellness education, and social program assistance. For the families you support who could benefit from these service, encourage them to call 614.227.0301 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR:**

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

- Wednesday, Mar 24: Records Day (No Classes or Distance Learning)
- 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](mailto:Engage@columbus.k12.oh.us).**