



## **COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT OF ENGAGEMENT DISTRICT UPDATE TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

**Update for November 9, 2020**

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

### **MORE SEATS AND MORE SUPPORTS AVAILABLE AT FREE LEARNING EXTENSION CENTERS ACROSS THE CITY:**

Seats for Columbus City Schools students are opening up across the city at several free Learning Extension Centers (LECs) - safe, adult-supervised, welcoming spaces where students have access to internet, learning devices, and school supplies to assist them in their daily remote learning routine.

In addition, at a growing number of these LEC locations, students can now also receive wrap around services and family supports, including free meals and snacks, after-school type activities, access of health care and social services, and college readiness guidance.

### **EXPANDED LEARNING HOURS AT CITY RECREATION CENTERS**

Columbus Recreation and Parks has expanded the hours of its Active Learning Sites at all 29 of the Community Centers who are hosting Learning Extension Centers.

Each center offers time blocks for independent school study and homework assistance. Students can bring their District-issued Chromebooks - or access a computer at the center, if needed - to join in their daily learning sessions on Zoom, complete assignments, and get assistance with schoolwork.

Each community center follows the same schedule Monday through Friday, starting with a morning study block from 9:30 a.m.-Noon; lunch is served from Noon-12:30 p.m.; and the afternoon study/activity block is 12:30-3:00 p.m.

Families who want to have their child attend one of these Active Learning Sites must register in advance on the City's website at [bit.ly/CRPD-Register](https://bit.ly/CRPD-Register).

### **COLLEGE READINESS ADVISORS MEET WITH STUDENTS AT LECs**

Despite the impacts of this COVID crisis on the "traditional" high school experience, juniors and seniors are still getting help in planning for life after high school with our long-standing partners at I Know I Can.

I Know I Can's College Advisors are available at a limited number of LECs to provide advising services, access to virtual college tours, and help completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). A Virtual Ohio State Day tour is coming up on November 9.

Students can schedule a virtual appointment with their I Know I Can college advisor at [www.iknowican.org/covid-19/learning-extension-centers/](https://www.iknowican.org/covid-19/learning-extension-centers/).

## **GROWING THE NUMBER OF LEARNING EXTENSION CENTERS**

The idea for the Learning Extension Centers came out of the Department of Engagement and our Engagement Reopening Task Force back in the summer. That's when we partnered with some of our city's non-profit and faith-based organizations on opening safe spaces that offer internet access for students to interface with their teachers while also providing educationally-conducive environments for students whose families may not have the resources at home.

We have more than 145 Learning Extension Centers and similar child-care centers identified across the city, with a wide range of services being provided at different hours throughout the day. LECs provide services for free, while many of the child care providers charge a fee.

To make it easy for families to find the LEC closest to their homes, we have an interactive map at [www.ccschools.us/LearningExtensionCenters](http://www.ccschools.us/LearningExtensionCenters). In the coming days, we will be upgrading this map to provide more search functions.

We're also looking for organizations that would like to open, manage, or register a Learning Extension Center with our Department of Engagement. We host a weekly Zoom session for LECs to share best practices and get up-to-date information. LECs are asked to participate in the Columbus City Schools health and safety training protocols, and LEC directors and staff should also have completed background checks. Some centers may also be required to obtain temporary pandemic child care licenses through the State of Ohio.

To register and learn about being an LEC, go to [www.ccschools.us/LearningExtensionCenters](http://www.ccschools.us/LearningExtensionCenters).

## **LAUNCHING GRASSROOTS ENGAGEMENT TO CONNECT WITH OUR NEW AMERICAN AND IMMIGRANT FAMILIES:**

With roughly one in six students in Columbus City Schools coming from a home where English is not the primary language spoken, engagement with these families requires additional efforts to bridge language and cultural gaps. During this COVID crisis, engagement with our New American and immigrant families has become even more important to keeping students and families connected.

Launched this past week, Columbus City Schools is teaming up with Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services (ETSS) on a grassroots engagement effort to support the families of our English Learner students.

We know that many of our New American and English Learner students - and their families - have struggled this school year for variety of reasons, including their comfort levels with navigating technology.

ETSS will have seven Bilingual Liaisons - covering Arabic, Nepali, Somali-Somali, Somali-Maay-Maay, Kinyarwanda, and Spanish - who will reach out and work directly with families to help increase their capacity for understanding and navigating technology, monitoring their students' academic progress, connecting with school staff.

## **CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS RETURN:**

Last Monday, students in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs at Columbus Downtown High School and the Fort Hayes Career Center returned to the classroom for the first time in more than eight months.

CTE students are learning in-person (and hands-on) two days per week while continuing to learn remotely three days a week. This includes students in our Advanced Manufacturing, Business, Construction, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Education, Health, Information Technology, Media Arts, Public Safety, and Visual Arts programs.

For these students, in-person learning is critical to gaining the proper skills required for certification. Without certification, students cannot compete for these good-paying jobs in the workplace or attain the appropriate post-secondary credits.

Students and staff were kept safe, following all District health protocols and with plenty of masks, hand sanitizer, protective barriers, cleaning equipment, and supplies. Everyone (staff and students) are required to wear a mask on the bus and in school. Plexiglass dividers help to maintain six feet of social distance in several classrooms. Labs and classrooms are cleaned and sanitized daily, and safety signage can be on doors, floors, walls, and handwashing stations.

## **GRAB LUNCH EACH DAY AT OUR FUEL UP! FOOD SITES:**

Pizza day is back! Hundreds of families across Columbus City Schools are taking advantage of the latest upgrade to our Fuel Up Food Program, grabbing hot lunches throughout the week at our 44 meal sites.

Each school day Monday through Friday, our Food Services team offers a daily grab-and-go option at lunch - available from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. - with more traditional menu items, including freshly-prepared hot and cold items such as pizza, hamburgers, lasagna rolls, salads, fresh fruits and vegetables, muffins, juice, and milk. Families will also be able to pick up the next day's breakfast.

Also new, the District is providing take-home meals for weekends and holidays.

Thinking about families who aren't able to come every day, the District still offers the five-day meal packs once a week, available for pick-up on Wednesdays during lunch from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and in the early evening from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

In compliance with federal guidelines, families who choose to pick up a five-day meal pack on Wednesdays will not be eligible to pick up a daily meal over the next five (5) calendar days.

Since the start of the District's unprecedented Grab-and-Go food site effort at the beginning of this pandemic last March, the CCS Food Services team has provided more than two million meals to young people throughout our entire community.

## **TALKING ABOUT THE ELECTION WITH YOUR STUDENT:**

This year's election cycle may have felt more divisive than ever for adults, but how should you talk to kids about what they're hearing and seeing?

Our partners at Nationwide Children's Hospital created a guide called "How to Talk to Your Kids About Politics." Here are some of their tips for families.

In general, early elementary-aged kids can talk about concrete aspects of politics, like learning the different offices in the government and how decisions are made. For this age group:

- Try focusing on certain issues and responsibilities of each office rather than individuals that you do or don't agree with personally.
- Talk about voting and why it is an important duty in a democracy.
- Discuss local and state government and not just national issues. Most young children are best able to understand how policies impact things directly around them, like local schools, roads and parks.

Another helpful topic to discuss is what a democracy means and that the right to disagree and debate issues is fundamental to the type of government we have. You can use an analogy from home to illustrate how it works: How does your family make decisions, such as what to have for dinner, what TV show to watch, or which kind of cereal to buy at the store?

Help them identify the issues at hand and why they might be more or less important to certain members of the family. Ultimately, a decision might be made that won't always please everyone but has hopefully taken into account as many perspectives as possible.

As children get into middle and high school, their sense of morality and personal values start to solidify. This is an important time to teach them about how to find reliable information.

Although this can be a politicized topic itself at times, most parents can agree that there are many unreliable sources of information that children can see online. Help young people understand that their preference for the messenger (a friend, famous person, or advertisement) does not necessarily validate the message itself. It can be helpful to show them sources you find reliable or to research a topic together to try and learn all the facts.

Finally, it can be helpful to role-play difficult conversations that children may have with friends or other people in the community. Empower them with the language they need to answer any difficult questions that come their way.

For instance, make sure they understand how to respond in respectful ways to questions about their views or their family's views.

How would they respond if someone says to them, "No way! How could your parents vote for \_\_\_\_\_? Are they idiots?" Instead of becoming angry, you can teach them to respond: "There are a lot of complicated things about voting, but I think everyone wants what is best for the country, even if they don't agree what that is."

## **SPOTLIGHT: FIVE SPOTS FOR NO-COST FLU SHOTS**

Our partners at Nationwide Children's Hospital will be holding flu vaccine clinics at five of our CCS schools this coming Wednesday, November 11, from 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Your child can get a flu shot at no cost at:

- South High School
- East High School
- West High School
- Northland High School
- Hilltonia Middle School (through the Mobile Care Center)

Call 614-355-2590 to schedule an appointment. COVID-19 testing or treatment is not available at these clinics. These locations will not see anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough or difficulty breathing).

## **ADAMH SEEKS INPUT ON MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION**

Our partners at the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health (ADAMH) Board of Franklin County need your input. ADAMH connects Franklin County residents and families with affordable and high-quality mental health and addiction services.

ADAMH is inviting all members of the Franklin County community to complete a survey about the greatest needs around mental health and addiction services. ADAMH also has a survey for those who provide social services to Franklin County residents.

The survey is anonymous and will be open through November 30. You can find the ADAMH Community Survey at [www.adamhfranklin.org/communityneeds](http://www.adamhfranklin.org/communityneeds).

## **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).**