



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

**Update for August 7, 2020**

**PURPOSE:** To provide an update on COVID-19 response efforts in Columbus City Schools related to our Community Partners and learn about additional supports within our community.

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

### **TAX-FREE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOPPING THIS WEEKEND:**

This is a good weekend for our Columbus City Schools families to do some back-to-school shopping. Let's remind everyone that Ohio's sales-tax-free weekend for school supplies and clothing runs this Friday, August 7, through Sunday, August 9.

All weekend, the Sales Tax Holiday waives the state sales tax in store and online for most school-related items:

- An item of clothing \$75 or less
- An item of school supplies \$20 or less
- An item of school instructional material \$20 or less

Clothing items must be less than \$75 to qualify, while school supplies costing more than \$20, such as laptops or pricey electronics, are also exempt. However, some non-traditional items are on the tax-free list put out by the Ohio Department of Taxation, including lab coats, bathing suits and caps, costumes, baby receiving blankets, and adult and children's diapers.

With all CCS students returning to school virtually this fall, good-quality headphones and earbuds will be a must-have this season. Unfortunately, those items don't qualify to be tax free.

For more details and a full list of the items that qualify for the Sales Tax Holiday, go to the Ohio Department of Taxation's website at [www.tax.ohio.gov](http://www.tax.ohio.gov).

### **VIRTUAL FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SESSION - SERVING NEW AMERICAN AND IMMIGRANT STUDENTS AND FAMILIES:**

Hundreds of Columbus City Schools families - and many of our staff and community partners - continue to join us for our weekly Virtual Family Engagement Sessions, hearing updates on our reopening plans and learning about support for students and families as we enter our fully virtual start to the school year.

The "F.A.C.E. 2 Face" (Family And Community Engagement) live online sessions are hosted every Tuesday and Thursday (6:00 - 7:00 p.m.) by the Dept. of Engagement and expert staff who share information and insights on specific topics as well as try to answer parent questions.

**ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE SUPPORTS:**

This week, our Virtual Family Engagement Sessions focused on providing information to our New American and Immigrant families, with presentations by our District's English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) team.

Interpreters were part of these special sessions to help share information and answer parent questions in Spanish, French, Somali, Nepali, and Arabic.

Regardless of which virtual learning option families chose for their students - either the new student self-paced CCS K-12 Digital Academy or the school-based teacher-led Remote Learning model - all students who have been identified as English Language Learners will still be provided services.

English Language Learners participating in Remote Learning will have access to ESL teachers and bilingual instructional assistants. The ESL Department's Instructional Support team will be working closely with classroom teachers to provide additional supports where needed.

Bilingual instructional assistants will play a very important role in this virtual learning, from working directly with teachers on virtual presentations to "pulling out" small groups to provide additional support for students who might need it daily - perhaps in a private video chat session.

Our bilingual instructional assistants are ready to connect with the families of our students more often as well, through communication using the computer or by phone if the parent is having difficulty using technology and would like to have a discussion by phone.

If families (or CCS staff) need translation and interpretation services, please contact our ESL Language Assistance Call Center. We have bilingual personnel ready to assist in our top 5 major languages.

- Spanish: 614 365 5118
- Somali: 614 365 8972
- Nepali: 614 365 3105
- French: 614 365 5327
- Arabic: 614 365 6920

Other languages are available upon request with help from a translation agency. More information can be found at [www.ccssoh.us/domain/213](http://www.ccssoh.us/domain/213).

**RE-WATCH ANY OF OUR VIRTUAL FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS**

Though everyone is invited, we know that not every family is able to participate in our Virtual Family Engagement Sessions each Tuesday and Thursday night. That's why every session is recorded and posted to our website.

If you know families who would benefit from the information shared in our previous sessions - or if you want to sign up for future Virtual Family Engagement Sessions - visit the "Reopening" Section of our District website at [www.ccssoh.us/reopening](http://www.ccssoh.us/reopening).

## **NEARLY 6,000 STUDENTS SIGN UP FOR K-12 DIGITAL ACADEMY:**

Enrollment numbers show that 5,848 Columbus City Schools students signed up to participate in our first-ever online “CCS K-12 Digital Academy.”

That represents about 12% of our total District enrollment who chose the new self-paced completely virtual option for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade (no Pre-K).

In a sense, the CCS K-12 Digital Academy is a new school within the District, staffed by Columbus City Schools teachers and its own principal.

Students can create their own schedules and work at their own speeds. All lessons happen through an online learning platform, either without or with very-limited real-time teacher instruction. Teachers are still working with students - though less frequently - through pre-recorded lessons, email, or virtual office visits.

For elementary and middle school students, the District will be using the Edgenuity platform; for high school students, it’s the APEX platform. Both are nationally-recognized. Both offer accessibility features including closed captioning, transcripts, color/contrast options, multiple representation of key concepts, and direct instruction videos.

At the close of the August 1 deadline to enroll, the majority of students who signed up for the CCS K-12 Digital Academy are in elementary (3,145 students in grades K-5), with an even number in middle and high school (1,366 students in grades 6-8; 1,338 students in grade 9-12).

## **BOARD SEATS MEMBERS OF SAFE SCHOOLS WORKING GROUP:**

Harnessing renewed public interest in the safety and security programs within our Columbus City Schools, the Columbus Board of Education formed a Safe Schools Working Group and recently shared the group’s chairpersons and members.

The working group will include a broad range of stakeholders, including students, families, staff, District partners, and community members.

The group will be asked to make recommendations to the Board of Education and the Superintendent regarding the District’s full safety and security program moving forward, including an evaluation of the District’s relationship with the Columbus Police Department.

The Board recently allowed the District’s two-year contract with Columbus Police to expire. The contract had provided for 19 School Resource Officers (SROs) to be stationed in CCS high school buildings.

A full list of members and information about their planned work is at [www.ccsos.us/Page/8286](http://www.ccsos.us/Page/8286).

### **FREE COSI SCIENCE APP POWERED BY WIFI ON COTA BUSES:**

Columbus City Schools is partnering with COSI and COTA on a series of special lunchtime events at several of our Grab-and-Go Food sites, providing students with the opportunity to download a free COSI science app by using the free Wi-Fi available on a special COTA bus.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays leading up to the start of school, COSI will deliver its Wi-Fi enabled “COSI Connects” mobile unit and COTA will provide an amplified Wi-Fi-enabled transit vehicle to create a large free hotspot location around one of our schools.

Students and families will have the ability to download the new free “COSI Connects” app and download STEM content to their mobile devices for offline use later at home.

Each event will also feature an exciting COSI science demonstration and coincides with the Columbus City Schools breakfast and lunch distribution program. Students will receive free meals and a science lesson in a matter of minutes.

These lunchtime events are from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Here are the upcoming locations:

- South High School - August 11 and 13
- Woodward Park Middle School - August 18 and 20
- Buckeye Middle School - August 25 and 27
- Columbus Africentric Early College - September 1 and 3

The goal is for students to take these STEM lessons home and prepare for the upcoming school year, which will begin for the first time in a virtual learning environment.

### **SPOTLIGHT: AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE WELLNESS WALK**

Our partners at the African American Male Wellness Initiative remind us that good health can never be taken for granted. This weekend, they are joining our partners at NBC4 to host the first-ever African American Male Wellness Freedom Walk to rally against health inequalities and racism.

This virtual walk will encourage Columbus residents to walk in their neighborhoods for the Freedom Walk. Watch NBC4 on Saturday morning, starting at 10:00 a.m. for interviews and updates on neighborhood walkers.

Columbus City Schools has been a proud sponsor of the African American Male Wellness Walk for years. This year, due to COVID-19, the organization developed a virtual walk experience that can be safe and fun for all.

Following the Freedom Walk, the African American Male Wellness Initiative will kick off its first-ever Black Men’s Health Week. During the week, the agency will provide blood pressure, glucose, CHL, and BMI screenings for one thousand men. For more information, just go to [www.aawellness.org](http://www.aawellness.org).



## **FREE MASKS DISTRIBUTED AT CITY REC CENTERS**

Please help us continue to share the free mask distribution events sponsored by our partners at Columbus Recreation and Parks Below are the locations and dates when CCS families are encouraged to stop by:

Adams Community Center  
854 Alton Avenue  
Aug. 13, Aug. 27, Sept. 10 and Sept. 24

Holton Community Center  
303 N. Eureka Avenue  
Aug. 20, Sept. 3 and Sept. 17

Barnett Community Center  
1184 Barnett Road  
Aug. 14 and Sept. 11

Howard Community Center  
2505 N. Cassady Avenue  
Aug. 13, Aug. 27, Sept. 10 and Sept. 24

Beatty Community Center  
247 N. Ohio Avenue  
Aug. 14 and Sept. 11

Marion Franklin Community Center  
2801 Lockbourne Road  
Sept. 24

Dodge Community Center  
667 Sullivant Avenue  
Aug. 13, Aug. 27, Sept. 10 and Sept. 24

Milo Grogan Community Center  
862 E. 2nd Avenue  
Aug. 21, Sept. 4 and Sept. 18

Feddersen Community Center  
3911 Dresden Street  
Aug. 21, Sept. 4 and Sept. 18

Scioto Southland Community Center  
3901 Parsons Avenue  
Aug. 13, Aug. 27, Sept. 10 and Sept. 24

Glenwood Community Center  
1888 Fairmont Avenue  
Aug. 20

Tuttle Park Community Center  
240 W. Oakland Avenue  
Aug. 21, Sept. 4 and Sept. 25

Help slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep our community safe. Show respect and kindness to others by wearing a cloth face covering in public.

## **SHARE YOUR PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION UPDATES:**

**Please share this Community Update with the families and stakeholders you serve.**

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 students and families.

**Our work is far from over, and we want to honor your continued commitment.**

**Please share your updates with us at [Engage@columbus.k12.oh.us](mailto:Engage@columbus.k12.oh.us).**