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Dear CTECS families,

I hope this weekly update finds you and your family healthy and well. Please find the latest information regarding CTECS' Coronavirus response below.

Distance Learning

The State of Connecticut has waived the 180-day school-year requirement and is allowing all public schools to close school on their normally scheduled end-dates, so long as opportunities for continuity of education are provided to the greatest extent possible.

As such, we are finalizing a distance learning plan which will begin on Monday, March 30, 2020, for all students. Distance learning will take place primarily through Google Classroom and augmented by Google Meet (video conferencing); online platforms that our students and staff are already very familiar with. Online classes will convene Monday through Friday on a half-day school schedule, in two-day cycles (two days in academics, two days in trade). Attendance will be taken! Afternoons will be reserved for teacher planning, collaboration and student support services - all facilitated through Google Meet. Students may be asked to participate in small-group afternoon sessions by their teacher.

Parents of students with special needs will be contacted by their case worker to arrange for accommodations and supports.

Schools will be following up with students to ensure they have the technology they need to access Google Classroom and Google Meet.

Teachers are training and setting up their virtual classrooms from March 23-27. Again, all students should plan to begin distance learning on March 30. Class information will be provided to your student from their teachers in Google Classroom.

For those without reliable internet access, please reach out to your school's Principal. School personnel will contact you and provide assistance. Also, several internet providers are offering assistance. Learn more about internet access options from a [recent communication from the Governor's office](#).

We've heard some concerns from families about trades that require hours for completion. Our grade 9-12 curriculum is accepted by Connecticut Department of Labor based on the competencies we teach, which means we are not hours based. If a student receives a CTECS diploma with the shop they graduated from on it, then they have demonstrated all the required competencies, and are privy to all the benefits that diploma allows. In other cases, such as the hairdressing trade, the Department of Public Health is giving us the ability to count distance learning for hours, as long as it follows our curriculum.

School Schedule and Events

Given the rapidly evolving situation, all schools are closed until further notice. However, if we do return prior to April 13, 2020, please anticipate not having April vacation. Our main objective is continuity of education, and it's important that students return to the classroom as soon as possible.

We know there is a lot of concern over end-of-year events being canceled, like graduations. It is too early to tell if we will need to cancel or postpone these events. Guidance from the State Department of Education, Governor Lamont's office, and public health agencies will inform our decisions. I know how important these life events are, and I will let you know as soon as we have more information.

Accessing School Buildings

Some students and staff have left essential items at school that they will need during this extended closure, such as Chromebooks or medication. Please call the main office ahead of time and set up an appointment to visit. We will retrieve the item(s) for you. We must insist that you do not show up unannounced, as we are doing all we can to practice social distancing and deep clean our school buildings.

Free Meals

Students who attend any of CTECS' technical high schools are eligible to receive grab and go breakfasts and lunches at numerous locations across the state while school is closed. [View the list of locations](#). If you do not see your town on this list, we encourage you to visit your town's public school website or call them to see what meal services are available.

Support and Resources

In this time of uncertainty, families and students may be experiencing additional stress. There are many unknowns and unanswered questions. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your school first. School staff will assist you to the best of their ability. Additionally, counseling staff and social workers will be available for phone calls and/or video chats during the distance-learning school day. Parents and students can set up appointments by emailing the staff member or calling the school. A list of social-emotional support resources is available on the district's COVID-19 informational webpage; cttech.org/coronavirus. Finally, you can dial 2-1-1 or visit 211ct.org if you or your family is in need of assistance.

Remember to continue to check ParentSquare and/or your email regularly. You can also access all COVID-19 updates and resources at cttech.org/coronavirus. We will continue to communicate updates on a weekly basis.

Thank you for patience and cooperation during this challenging time. If we work together, we can help to ensure the safety of our communities and continued education of our students.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Wihbey