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Dear CTECS families,

Let me begin by saying how much we miss all of our 11,000 students! However, our concern continues to be for their health and well-being, as well as their families. Please find updated information below on our Distance Learning plan, as well as other important information.

Distance Learning

As a reminder, our Distance Learning program will begin on Monday, March 30. On Monday students are expected to log in to their Google Classroom to receive assignments from their teachers. Teachers will be available during the distance learning day for student support. This might take the form of an audio, video or chat interaction – all through the Google platform. Your school's Principal will be sending details about the daily schedule. I would encourage you to view the [Distance Learning website](#) that also holds valuable information. This resource will continue to be updated.

If you do not have access to the Internet, or are still without a Chromebook, please contact your school as soon as possible.

This coming week, our focus is making sure all students are logging in, working on their assignments, engaging with their teachers, and getting comfortable with this new style of learning. We will be monitoring which students are participating. In the weeks thereafter, our focus will shift to making our Distance Learning program as effective as possible. Our ultimate goal is to keep our students progressing in their academic and trade areas.

We know that there will be some issues that we have not anticipated. Please be patient with us, and with yourself, as we work through this new situation together. We are here to support you.

Parents and guardians of students with disabilities may be wondering how their child's IEP or 504 plan will be implemented with the distance learning plan. Please know that school staff members are working to make certain that disability-related accommodations and special education and related services are included in the distance learning experience. We will be making our best efforts to ensure that your child continues to have access to a meaningful educational opportunity. For more information about how the school will meet your child's individual, disability-related needs, please contact your child's case manager by email.

For students – this is an opportunity for you demonstrate the independence and work ethic you have learned as a technical high school student. We know that you, more so than regular high school students, have learned to balance a challenging schedule and work independently. You are now in a position to take full responsibility for your education, and I know you will rise to the challenge. Remember that you are preparing for the world of work and college – places where self-directed learning and actions are valued. You'll also want continue to progressing in your trade area as much as possible so that your future employment prospects are not impacted. Finally, it's important that students participate in distance learning so that their ability to graduate or promote to the next grade are not impacted.

Lean on your teachers and peers for support during this time. We are all in this together. Let's show the State of Connecticut that technical high school students are of the highest caliber!

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Cyber Safety

Sadly, in these times there are people that want to take advantage of us in our new digital, distance-learning classrooms, especially given the increased time students will be online. Please take a moment to review and discuss cyber safety in your home. This is just one of the many [online resources available](#) for information.

School Closure Timeline

As is stands today, all Connecticut schools will remain closed through April 20, 2020, per Governor Lamont's directive. 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.

Assessments

The CT State Department of Education (SDE) applied for a waiver from the federal government pertaining to standardized testing, and it has been approved. For state assessments, all offer either extended testing windows over several weeks (e.g., Smarter Balanced, NGSS) or multiple testing dates that are at least two weeks apart (e.g., SAT). If in spite of this flexibility, if state assessment administration is hampered due to school closures, the SDE will explore solutions that will enable the district to complete administration of the mandated assessment(s).

AP and ECE courses

The College Board is offering online AP Exams this year. Online exam preparation sessions start next week for students who would like to/need to reconnect with the material. [More information can be found here](#). CTECS is awaiting final word from UConn on the implications for ECE courses.

School 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. If your town is not currently listed, we encourage you to visit your town's public school website to see what food services are available. [View all locations](#). Need additional food assistance? Visit 211ct.org and search for resources by zip code.

Jeffrey Wihbey, Superintendent of Schools