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Dear CTECS families and students,

I'm writing with some more information concerning the technical high schools' reopening plan. You will receive information and schedules specific to your school from your principal in the coming days.

Hybrid Learning Schedule

Wednesday, September 2, is the first day of school for grade 9 students ONLY. Grades 10, 11 and 12 will begin on Thursday, September 3. This will give the incoming freshman class a day to familiarize themselves with their new school while maintaining social distancing requirements.

As you know, we plan to open in a Hybrid model of learning, and will remain in this model until the middle of October unless public health data supports and more restrictive in-person learning environment. This decision was made in large part because of the feedback you provided us – families want their students to get the hands-on trade instruction that our schools do best, but they are also concerned about exposure to COVID-19. Over the last week we have finalized the details of the Hybrid plan. The school schedule under this plan will maximize social distancing – a top strategy for decreasing virus transmission; prioritize trade instruction; and also allow for some formal, face-to-face instructional time with academic teachers. Academics are vitally important for success in the trades, meeting graduation requirements, students taking the SAT, and students planning on going on to college. It's critical that in addition to meaningful trade instruction, we also provide quality instruction in academics. The Hybrid schedule will cohort students into small groups in both trades and academic areas. These groups will rotate throughout the week(s) – some days will be virtual, while others will be in-person. As I mentioned above, your Principal will share your school's schedule in the coming days.

Please know that in addition to voluntarily opting-in to distancing learning full-time for trades and academics, you can also opt-in to distance learning for academics only. Contact your school principal to arrange for this option.

Work-based Learning

Typically, work-based learning (WBL) doesn't start until later in the school year. However, in light of the missed opportunities for students last spring, we are planning to arrange WBL for seniors during the first weeks of school, if possible. This is a change in schedule for us, but we believe it is important to make an exception this year and provide seniors this opportunity.

Fall Sports

As you may have recently seen in the news, based on Department of Public Health recommendations, the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) Board of Control took the action to pause all in-person interscholastic fall sport activity including conditioning programs which are already underway until Monday, August 24. We will update you when we receive updates from the CIAC.

Acceptable Face Masks

We have received numerous questions regarding the types of face masks that are acceptable to wear in school. Your student may also be able to purchase facemasks from the school's uniform vendor. At this time, we ask you to send your student to school with masks that meet the guidelines below.

- The mask should fit closely around the nose and cheeks, avoiding gaps
- The fabric should be thick enough not to see the sun/light through. A densely woven fabric is best.
- No neck gaiters
- No bandanas
- No exhalation valves or vents

Be well,

Jeffrey Wihbey, Superintendent