



UNION COUNTY VOCATIONAL - TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

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Mrs. Gwendolyn S. Ryan
Superintendent of Schools

November 19, 2020

Dear UCVTS Community,

I hope this communication finds all of our community members healthy and safe. Please find below important information as it pertains to COVID-19 and impact to the UCVTS community.

Recent COVID-19 Positive Cases:

Last evening, we received notification at about 8:30 pm of a UCTECH community member who tested positive for COVID-19. Central office and administrative staff began an initial collection of information and review of the specific circumstances. Based on the circumstances and information available, the decision was made to transition UCTECH to a virtual setting so that a more thorough review and the contact tracing process could be completed today. A first instant alert was sent announcing this transition.

After sending the instant alert, we received a second and unrelated report of a MHS community member who tested positive. After another review of the circumstances, as a precautionary measure, the decision was made to transition ***all*** schools located on the Scotch Plains campus of UCVTS to a remote learning environment, until a thorough investigation of both cases was completed. A second instant alert with the updated information was sent.

Throughout the day, the contact tracing process was completed and any individual who was considered to be a contact of either individual was notified via phone and email by our school nurses. Each of these cases has been researched thoroughly and considered in relation to all recent community members who have tested positive for COVID-19.

We have ***not*** identified any instances of community spread in any positive COVID-19 cases thus far. All cases appear to be unrelated. ***It is important to note that there are still no known instances of COVID-19 transmission at UCVTS.***

Next Steps:

Full-time Academies (AAHS, AIT, APA, MHS, UCTECH)

Due to the shared resources of our full-time career academies and the above referenced circumstances, the new positive cases create a staffing issue. Consequently, ***all full-time academies a part of the Union County Vocational-Technical Schools (AAHS, AIT, APA, MHS, UCTECH) will transition to a fully remote learning environment beginning tomorrow, November 20, 2020.*** Information and reminders regarding the [Remote Learning Schedule](#) can be found on our District website. Please be reminded schools are closed on Thursday, November 26 and Friday, November 27 for the Thanksgiving holiday. ***We are planning a return to in-person hybrid instruction on Monday, December 7, 2020.*** Over the Thanksgiving break and into the following week, we will continue to closely monitor all positive COVID-19 cases associated with our District students and staff and will adjust or extend the timeline if needed and according to the circumstances.

Shared-time, Transition, Adult postsecondary, and Alternative Programs

There are currently no known positive COVID-19 instances of students or staff in our shared-time, transition, adult postsecondary, or alternative programs. Additionally, none of these programs are experiencing staffing concerns. Therefore, ***all shared-time, transition, adult post-secondary, and alternative programs will return to our current hybrid in-person model on Monday, November 23, 2020 (UCCTI, Adult Postsecondary/Continuing Education, Recovery HS, SYA.)*** Delaying the return until Monday, will afford our sending district transportation coordinators time to make necessary arrangements. We continue to monitor positive COVID-19 cases in these programs closely. Should the need arise to move particular programs or schools to a remote setting, we will not hesitate to do so.

Holidays and Travel:

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish our UCVTS community a Happy, Healthy and Safe Thanksgiving. ***While considering travel as we approach the holiday season, please be advised that in an effort to provide the safest possible learning environment for our students and staff, the Union County Vocational-Technical Schools requires that families and staff follow the New Jersey travel advisory.*** New Jersey advises individuals who return to New Jersey following travel from a state or territory with significant community spread of COVID-19 to quarantine for a 14-day period from the time of last contact within the identified state or territory. The current list of states and territories subject to the quarantine is maintained on the State's [COVID-19 Information Hub](#).

Please be assured that Safety is and will always be at the forefront of our decision making. Our response in every COVID-19 positive situation has been cautious and precautionary. The absence of indicators of community spread at UCVTS is a testament to the efforts of our students and staff in following safety procedures and protocols, as outlined in our Restart and Recovery Plan.

We acknowledge the benefits of in-person instruction to students, both academic and social-emotional, and in particular to a Career and Technical Education setting. If it is safe, based upon the specific evidence pertaining to UCVTS, and absent any recommendations from the Governor, Department of Education or local Department of Health officials, we will continue to provide in-person instruction. In the upcoming weeks and months, we ask that students, staff and families, be prepared to transition back and forth between in-person and remote learning environments, as necessary.

I see that our community members continue to face very real challenges; concerns about health and safety, about finances, emotional well-being and so much more. We acknowledge how difficult these times are for everyone. Please be reassured that every decision made considers the well-being of our students, our staff, and our programs. We are steadfast in doing the very best job we can to provide valuable learning experiences and to be a support for our community members in every way possible. Happy Thanksgiving and Be Well!

Sincerely,



Gwendolyn S. Ryan
Superintendent of Schools