



# UNION COUNTY VOCATIONAL - TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

1776 Raritan Road, Scotch Plains, New Jersey 07076-2997  
(908)889-8288, Ext. 120 Fax: (908)889-4336 Email: gryan@ucvts.org

*Mrs. Gwendolyn S. Ryan*  
*Superintendent of Schools*

January 8, 2021

Dear UCVTS Community,

I would first like to wish the entire UCVTS community a Happy and Healthy New Year.

The new challenges that we all have encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic are too numerous to list. One challenge that UCVTS has worked to address from the beginning of the move to remote and hybrid learning is to maintain an engaging, challenging, welcoming, and enriching learning environment for students. Our teachers, administrators, and staff have worked tirelessly to learn, innovate, and adjust how we can best provide support and guidance to students in this new learning environment.

The efforts of our students, families, and community members to adjust to this new reality have also been remarkable. I would like to thank all community members for the overwhelming response to our recent survey which gathered perspectives of all community stakeholders on important questions surrounding teaching and learning.

Over 1,950 community members responded to this survey. The data provides us with a wealth of information to guide our decision-making now and in the future. Your responses and comments are important and valued. Thank you all for your involvement and support!

A major topic of conversation has been whether to continue with our practice of Mid-Term exams that measure students comprehensive learning through the first semester.

On the most recent survey, one of the questions asked community members to provide their perspective on whether UCVTS should be running Mid-Term exams this year. The survey results from this question are as follows:

| Group<br><small>*responses may not equal 100% due to blank responses.</small> | No, midterms should not occur this year. | Yes, with modifications | Yes, no modifications |
|---|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Parent/Guardians<br>(601 responses)   | <b>61%</b>                               | 25%                     | 14%                   |
| Students<br>(1,261 responses)   | <b>81%</b>                               | 17%                     | 1%                    |
| Faculty<br>(78 responses)   | <b>68%</b>                               | 24%                     | 7%                    |
| Non-Instructional Staff<br>(9 responses)                                      | <b>56%</b>                               | 33%                     | 11%                   |
| Administrators<br>(8 Responses)   | <b>75%</b>                               | 12.5%                   | 12.5%                 |

In addition to the community survey, a dedicated group of teachers and administrators have been meeting to help develop surveys, guide the decision-making process, analyze the data, compile research, and provide recommendations on topics such as: homework and assessment practices, grading, and student well-being.

**Based on all of the available information and data gathered, we have decided to suspend Mid-Term exams for the 2020-2021 school year.** January 26th-29<sup>th</sup>, which were previously scheduled for Mid-Term exams, will instead be utilized as instructional days for the second Marking Period.

This change will allow teachers to provide instruction and for the district to administer the PSAT, Pre-ACT, and NJ Seal of Biliteracy testing to students in our full-time academies. Building principals have attached more specific information, including an adjusted schedule with this letter. More details regarding testing, asynchronous instruction, and attendance procedures will be sent to students next week.

The State of NJ has also required that schools administer New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) in the 2020-2021 school year (the NJSLA were formerly known as the PARCC exams). We will be providing more information on when the NJSLA exams will be administered to students in the coming weeks.

The work of our teacher leaders and administrators to provide the best possible learning environment will continue. Please expect further updates on adjustments and improvements to our approach to teaching and learning while in the hybrid and remote learning environment.

As we look forward to next week, we are excited for the return of in-person learners on January 14<sup>th</sup>. Information will be forthcoming with an opportunity for all families with students currently attending remotely to switch to in-person, hybrid learning. Please visit the [COVID-19 Updates section of the UCVTS website](#) for more information and details.

I continue to be inspired by all of the hard work and effort that our entire community is putting forward to help our students through these difficult times. Thank you again for all your feedback and input.

Sincerely,



Gwendolyn S. Ryan  
Superintendent of Schools