

Greene County Technical School District

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Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Dear GCT Faculty, Parents, Students and Patrons

The 2020-2021 Greene County Tech school year is now 46 days old. We want to take this opportunity to say how proud we are of the students, staff, and parents for getting the year off to a great start. Everyone is having to adjust to a unique set of challenges which have the potential to create anxiety. Staff maintain positive attitudes and are dedicated to making the best of difficult situations. We would all like to believe it is possible to get through the year without having any cases of Covid-19 here in the GCT School District. However, we all realize that is an unrealistic expectation. Therefore, we wanted to take this opportunity to explain the protocols we have been using with positive cases.

Every time a student, faculty, or staff member has tested positive for Covid-19 the process of contact tracing begins. Contact tracing involves determining if anyone at school qualifies as a "close contact". A close contact is anyone who has been within six feet for more than fifteen minutes of someone who has tested positive for the virus. The school contacts the parent of any child who is determined to be a close contact and contacts the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) and the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to acquire their guidance in best practices to stop the spread. Please remember that in order to protect the privacy of students and staff, the District cannot share personal information regarding positive cases. Therefore, the District cannot issue a public statement for every situation where someone has tested positive or been quarantined due to the virus.

In the past 46 days the District has had multiple positive cases, it has been possible to quarantine small groups of students and staff and pivot to at home virtual learning for these groups. Due to an increase of positive cases and the need to quarantine several students and staff in **Middle School, Junior High and High School**, it is time to pivot to **at home virtual learning** off campus for these three schools. These schools will be closed from Wednesday, **October 28, 2020 through Monday, November 9th, 2020. Middle School, Jr. High, and High School will reopen on Tuesday, November 10th, 2020 to on-site instruction.** The goal in pivoting to virtual learning for this length of time is to help control the spread of the virus and lower the number of positive COVID cases. The District will continue to work in conjunction with ADH and DESE to keep on-site instruction as safe as possible for students and staff in Preschool, Primary, Elementary, and Intermediate Schools. Curbside lunches will be served daily for pickup for students who need meals at 11:00 A.M. behind the GCT Primary School.

Let's continue to work together by washing hands, wearing masks, and social distancing to control the spread of the virus while providing a quality education for children. Information regarding the levels of response, and additional information from DESE is located on the DESE website at: <http://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/divisions/communications/arkansas-ready-for-learning>

Additional information regarding symptoms of Covid-19 and strategies to avoid exposure can be found at the Arkansas Department of Health website and the CDC website at the following web address: <https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus>

The Greene County Tech School District is committed to providing your child with the best education possible in these challenging times. If you have additional questions or need special services, please contact your child's building administration. If your child tests positive for COVID during the Virtual Learning off site dates of closure for Middle School, Jr. High School and High School, please contact the building administrators and let them know so proper contact tracing and records can be maintained. Thank you for all of your understanding and support during these difficult times. Please continue to check the District's website for new information.

Gene Weeks

Superintendent, Greene County Tech School District