

November 19, 2021 – STEM School Info 11/19

Parents/Guardians,

As we approach Thanksgiving week, thank you for your support throughout this year. We are incredibly thankful to our parents... you all are awesome! Here are some items of note for you at this time. Please also note that next Friday is part of the Thanksgiving holiday, so the next email update will take place on Friday, December 3.

COVID Procedures Update

Hamilton County Schools (HCS) has updated its COVID-19 protocols and guidance in accordance with the [Tennessee State COVID-19 Omnibus Bill](#). Governor Lee signed this Bill into law on November 12, 2021.

In order to comply with the Omnibus Bill, HCS lifted its mask requirement as of Monday, November 8. As of this date, no one is required to wear a mask; however, anyone who wishes to wear a mask may do so. This bill also limits the authority to determine quarantine and isolation requirements to the Tennessee Commissioner of Health. Therefore, HCS can no longer require anyone to quarantine under the authority of the local Hamilton County Health Department. At this point, only the state Commissioner of Health can require quarantine or isolation. Of course, the administration advises students and staff to stay home if they are feeling ill.

The district will continue to monitor county-wide COVID-19 data to determine if, at any point, schools can request a 14-day mask mandate in accordance with state law. If the state Commissioner of Health advises the district and/or the local health department to enforce quarantine or isolation periods, HCS administration will comply. HCS will continue to contact trace when information is available and appropriate and will recommend, but not require, quarantine and isolation for individuals identified as close contacts or that report a confirmed positive case of COVID-19.

Global Center for Digital Innovation (GCDI)

As the GCDI gets started, more and more opportunities are beginning to take place for STEM students in using the center. STEM IV 12th grade students have been actively using the GCDI in creating their prototypes, 9th Grade Tech Time participated in learning how to use Microbits in the GCDI, 10th graders have used the GCDI for both the Hunter Museum PBL and their current Creative Discovery Museum PBL incorporating varied technical equipment and tools including laser cutters, 3D printers, CNC Router Shopbots, vinyl cutters, soldering and more, and STEM III 11th grade students have used the GCDI to support their efforts in developing prototypes and products for their business partnership projects.

Some activities upcoming in the GCDI include students in 9th grade art class using the GCDI to develop kinetic art, English III 11th grade students building a display for their upcoming TV project, students in both grade 9 and 10 that are not in need of ER participating in a quarterly design challenge the week of December 13 titled the DaVinci Invention Challenge, and students in both grade 11 and 12 having an opportunity to participate in a weeklong class in the GCDI during the week of January 10 prior to the start of the spring semester academic course schedule.

Interested juniors and seniors will also again have an opportunity to intern in the GCDI this spring semester. Interested students must be either a journeyman or master fabricator, and will need to apply with Ms. Burrus in the coming weeks. Ms. Burrus will post this internship opportunity in Canvas for students to apply.

The GCDI is an amazing opportunity for our students. Just this week I received an alumni email from Virginia Tech touting their new Frith Engineering Design Laboratory which is used for engineering students for fabrication and innovation. It is fantastic to see how the GCDI aligns well to what is taking place at the university level, providing our students with a competitive edge over their peers from across the country. To see what is taking place at Virginia Tech, click on this [Frith Engineering Design Lab link](#).

Food City and Publix Partnerships

Food City and Publix have partnered with area educators to raise money for local schools. We would love for you to participate in these programs by simply linking your Food City ValuCard to STEM School Chattanooga and signing up for Club Publix. With Thanksgiving quickly approaching, this is a perfect time to link the STEM School to your card or account and raise money for our wonderful school.

Please click on [this link for instructions](#) on linking your ValuCard and signing up for Club Publix. Let the shopping begin!

Food Drive – November House Competition

The November House Competition – a Food Drive for the [Chattanooga Area Food Bank](#) – is in full swing! Please bring any non-perishable items, cans, boxes, etc. for the drive. At this time the Food Bank is having an increased need for canned soups, canned vegetables, and canned proteins (such as beans, peanut butter, chicken) but ALL items are welcome as we attempt to support our community! Additional information about donating can be found [here](#). Drop off bins are located at the front entrance and students may bring in items and place them in the container labeled with their House. The drive will run from Nov 8 - Dec 6.

School Tours and STEM Showcase

With the changes in the Hamilton County Schools COVID procedures, HCS schools are now open to parents and visitors. Starting Monday, November 15, our weekly tours for prospective students and parents have started again. Current parents are also welcomed to join these tours. If you are a parent that has never been in our STEM building and want to see the school in action, connect with Amy Robinson (robinson_amy@hcde.org) and she can add you to one of our weekly tours.

In addition, mark your calendars for Friday, January 28. We will be hosting our in-person STEM Showcase evening. The STEM Showcase will feature student displays of work from grade 9 through grade 12. This is an excellent way to see the school and the work progression expected of students

as they mature over four years. We are excited to reinstate this experience for our students and parents. More information will be forthcoming in the future.

Thanksgiving Week Schedule

Please note the schedule for Thanksgiving week this year (Monday, November 22 through Friday, November 26).

--STEM School: Regular schedule and classes on Monday and Tuesday. No classes and school closed on Wednesday through Friday.

--Chattanooga State: No college classes the entire week – Monday through Friday. The campus will also be completely closed on Thursday and Friday.

Graduation Date, Time and Location – May 19

The graduation ceremony date, time and location have been set! The Class of 2022 will be graduating on Thursday, May 19 at 7pm in Memorial Auditorium. We are super excited to have Memorial Auditorium as our location again this year. There is plenty of space so our graduates can invite as many people as they would like, and the weather does not impact the ceremony. Seniors and parents – mark your calendars now!

Email Updates – Posted on Website

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Thank you for your support!

Dr. Tony Donen
Principal

November 12, 2021 – STEM School Info 11/12

Parents/Guardians,

Happy Friday! Below are some items we wanted to share here in November.

COVID Face Covering Update

Hamilton County Schools, as of November 8, has made masks optional in HCS buildings. HCS has communicated several reasons for the change, including the percent of vaccinated individuals and the drop in COVID cases across our county. Please watch the [two-minute video message](#) from the Interim Superintendent, Dr. Towns, for more details. Please note the change is for everyone who enters the STEM School building – students, staff, parents and visitors.

Please note that even though masks are optional in Hamilton County Schools, there is still a mask requirement for indoor spaces at Chattanooga State until December 31. So, students on the college campus in college classes and buildings would still need to wear masks in those spaces. This includes the GCDI – Global Center for Digital Innovation.

Student Led Conferences – Nov 15 and Nov 17

Student Led Conferences are almost here! Parents and students are expected to participate in the SLC. The student will be sharing information about their progress during the SLC. Emails have been sent out by your student's house faculty advisor with information on setting up your SLC time. If you have not received an email, please let us know.

To accommodate parents and students, all conferences will be held virtually through Zoom. Parents have the opportunity to email with the House faculty advisor to set up a time between

6pm and 8pm for the conference. Once a time is established, the House faculty advisor will share a Zoom link with the parent and student for the meeting.

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The last year we held this competition, we donated over 1,000 lbs. of food! That is incredible! Let's see if we can't beat our record this time around!

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In addition, mark your calendars for Friday, January 28. We will be hosting our in-person STEM Showcase evening. The STEM Showcase will feature student displays of work from grade 9 through grade 12. This is an excellent way to see the school and the work progression expected of students as they mature over four years. We are excited to reinstate this experience for our students and parents. More information will be forthcoming in the future.

STEM IV and Southeastern Regional Pitch Competition

STEM's senior class have been busy all semester working on their senior projects for STEM IV. The premise of this project is to act as a culmination of all four years at STEM, where students put themselves in teams, invent a solution to a STEM problem, and pitch their product to a panel of judges.

Some of these teams have gone above and beyond, taking their projects outside of STEM to enter into a regional pitching competition: [ESTEAM Pitch Competition](#). This competition is open to all students in the Appalachian region to submit a business pitch, competing for a cash prize. Overall, STEM had 7 teams to submit, and out of those 7, two teams have advanced to the final round!!

Those two teams are Gig-City Enhancements and Peach Stim. Both are tied for second place at this point in the competition. Feel free to follow the competition scoreboard, posted on this website: <https://goventuredash.com/competitions/110>.

All the teams have been phenomenal, but special shout out to the following students for advancing forward, representing the STEM School in the final round of the ESTEAM Pitch Competition: Julian Achata, Mackenzie Conway, Delanie Dempsey, Hayley Lewis, Alex Mangan, Taylor Rickman, and Kaitlyn Stoker!

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Thank you for your support!

Dr. Tony Donen

Principal

November 5, 2021 – STEM School Info 11/5

Parents/Guardians,

November is here! It’s one of my favorite months in Chattanooga as we enjoy the beautiful fall colors. Below are some items we wanted to share as we kick start this month.

COVID Procedural Update

As COVID cases fall in our area (none at STEM since fall break!), Hamilton County Schools is updating their procedures. In the weekly newsletter from Hamilton County Schools, there will be information regarding updates and changes. Some of these items may include mask requirements, visitor access, and other school related activities. Be on the lookout for this communication.

Please note that if masks become optional in Hamilton County Schools, masks will also become optional inside the STEM School. However, there is still a mask requirement for indoor spaces at Chattanooga State until December 31. So, students on the college campus in college classes and buildings would still need to wear masks in those spaces. This includes the GCDI – Global Center for Digital Innovation.

Remote and Asynchronous Day – Nov 10

Hamilton County Schools has three remote and asynchronous learning days in the school calendar. The second is on Wednesday, November 10. Students do NOT report to STEM School classes that day. Students should use that day as a workday to catch up on existing work assigned. Teachers will be using this day for planning and preparation purposes and will not be available. For students with college courses, please note that ALL college courses are still in session. However, there are no buses running that day so students with college classes will need to arrange their own transportation.

Student Led Conferences – Nov 15 and Nov 17

At the STEM School we do not have traditional Parent Teacher Conferences where the parent comes in and a teacher talks about all the things your child is doing. Instead, our conferences are focused on the student leading a conference with parents and faculty members. The reason for doing so is because it is vitally important for the student to take ownership in his/her progress, be able to communicate what he/she has learned, and be able to communicate at what level of understanding and mastery he/she is performing. We will have Student Led Conferences during the evenings of Monday, November 15 and Wednesday, November 17. All parents are expected to participate.

To accommodate parents and students, all conferences will be held virtually through Zoom. **Each parent and student will be sent an email from their House faculty advisor inviting the parent to the SLC.** Parents will have the opportunity to email with the House faculty advisor to set up a time between 6pm and 8pm for the conference. The House faculty advisor will share a Zoom link with the parent and student for the meeting.

Parents and students are expected to participate in the SLC. The student will be sharing information during the SLC. If you do not see the email from your student's house faculty advisor by Tuesday, November 9, please let us know. We can help connect you.

College Visits – Nov 12 and Nov 19

Two upcoming college visits will take place in November for juniors and seniors. This is a great opportunity for students to visit two colleges in one day. Information detailing the sign-up process for the college visit opportunities (including field trip form submission and payment) has been sent out by Ms. Parris and posted in Canvas as well. For questions about procedures or more information about the trips, you may also contact Ms. Parris at parris_jennifer@hede.org.

Trip: Maryville College and University of Tennessee Knoxville

Date: Friday, Nov. 12

Depart: 8:00am from STEM School

Return: 5:15pm to STEM School

Cost: \$42 per student - includes box lunch at Maryville

Seats Available: There are limited seats still available. Those will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis which includes signed permission form and payment.

Visiting: Middle Tennessee State University and Tennessee Tech University

Date: Friday, Nov. 19

Depart: 7:30am from STEM School

Return: 7:00pm to STEM School

Cost: \$42 per student - includes lunch at MTSU cafeteria

Seats Available: There are limited seats still available. Those will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis which includes signed permission form and payment.

Food Drive – November House Competition

The Heads of House are pleased to announce the November House Competition - a Food Drive for the [Chattanooga Area Food Bank](#)! Please bring any non-perishable items, cans, boxes, etc. for the drive. At this time the Food Bank is having an increased need for canned soups, canned vegetables, and canned proteins (such as beans, peanut butter, chicken) but ALL items are welcome as we attempt to support our community! Additional information about donating can be found [here](#). Drop off bins are located at the front entrance and students may bring in items and place them in the container labeled with their House. The drive will run from Nov. 8 - Dec. 6.

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