



Ben L. Smith High School

Soaring to Excellence

Melvin Marshall
Principal



Dear Parents & Students:

As many of you have already received notification from the district, Smith HS is currently closed with other schools throughout the district. Thus far, many students and parents have already taken advantage of arriving to Smith to pick up student personal belongings as well as supplementary resources from individual teachers in specific subject areas. For the remainder of the week of March 17- 20, Smith HS will be open for teachers and staff. However, parents and students are encouraged to make contact with the school by phone or email to make an appointment. Our school's webpage is being updated with the most current email and contact information for all of our teachers and staff. Also, we are posting directives for students to assist in accessing CANVAS. This is an online portal for which our teachers across the district are uploading individual class lessons and other learning resources for student and parent access. Below is other important information for parents and students:

Communications for Parents

- Parents, if you are not hearing from us via our evening “robo” calls, it might be because we have an outdated or incorrect phone number for you.
- When you make contact with our school, please make sure to give us your home phone, work phone, cell phone(s) and email addresses to the school office, along with your name and your child's name, so we can update our system.
- We can't reach you if you're not in our system, or if you have opted out of receiving these messages.
- GCS is sending updates via “robo calls, texts and emails” every evening and we are updating our website, social media accounts, and GCSTV daily.
- We are answering questions in Let's Talk as quickly as we can.
- Please check our district website for the most current and detailed information – www.gcsnc.com.

Technology Access

- Continue to let us know if your child does not (or your children do not) have access at home to devices like laptops or tablets that will support online learning.
- While we do not have a solution in place yet, we are working on several options, and will communicate more to you during the coming days.
- We also understand that many parents are having trouble getting through Spectrum to inquire about the free Internet service. We have passed your concerns along to them.

2407 S Holden Rd Greensboro, NC 27407
Phone 336-294-7300
Fax 336-294-7313

Hunger and Student Meal Distribution

- On Monday, the district began delivering meals to our students in transition/most vulnerable students (the 5 shelters housing families with students, hotels, motels, and private residences where students are staying temporarily).
- GCS Transportation Services, Nutrition Services, and community partners continue to work to finalize plans to ensure that children who are in need receive meals while school is not in session.
- More information about both efforts will be shared as it becomes available.

Extended Learning Opportunities (Supplemental)

- We have been developing plans for online learning for the past two weeks and will have more information later in the week.
- It's important to note that while we have great confidence in our teachers, virtual learning will not take the place of or be of the same quantity or quality as the day-to-day instruction your child is currently receiving.
- We are exploring ways to provide devices to students who may not have a tablet, laptop or desktop computer.
- Spectrum is providing Internet connectivity at no charge for 60 days for students on free- and reduced-price lunch. We understand parents are having a hard time getting through to Spectrum. We have passed those concerns along to the company.
- Again, GCS will provide more details in the upcoming days.

Community Support

- In addition to Guilford Education Alliance, we plan to seek coordination support from the local foundation/non-profit community as we do not have enough staff resources to respond to all inquiries and/or to coordinate support.
- Volunteer opportunities are limited due to the need to maintain social distance and avoid groups of 50 or more.
- Senior staff at GCS are planning to provide extended learning opportunities for our students in juvenile detention facility, homeless shelters, etc.
- We learned earlier today that school facilities have been authorized to serve as childcare facilities, if needed, for the children of emergency responders, healthcare workers and other vital public service employees. We do not have any more details at this time.

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Student Helplines

- To help students and families handle stresses school closures may cause, Guilford County Schools (GCS) opened two helplines today:
 - The GCS youth crisis hotline: 336-332-7295. This phone number should only be used by GCS students for a crisis of any kind. (If it is an emergency, call 911.) Students with concerns about anxiety, depression, abuse, suicidal thoughts, or who do not have food, etc., may dial 336-332-7295. This number will be manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week by GCS counselors for at least the next two weeks.
 - The GCS multi-lingual informational: **336-332-7290**. This number should be used for all other questions regarding school closures and digital learning supplemental resources. There will be interpreters ready to answer calls **Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. – 7 p.m.** Interpreters will be able to answer questions in **Arabic, Swahili, French, Kinyarwanda, Rade, Vietnamese, Urdu and Spanish** This helpline will also be up and running for at least the next two weeks.

Should you have any additional concerns, please feel free to contact me. Eagle Family, please stay healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Mr. Melvin Marshall

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