



STEEL CENTER

for CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

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Wednesday, December 23, 2020

Dear Steel Center students, families, and community,

I hope this communication finds you all healthy and safe. I first want to thank everyone for continuing to do your part in supporting our efforts to deliver meaningful learning while following our health and safety plans. Your patience and commitment to following Covid-19 mitigation strategies such as wearing facial coverings, maintaining social distance, and washing hands have allowed us to maintain in-person learning per our hybrid instructional model since the beginning of the school year. We also value your efforts to embrace the remote learning activities that are being provided through the Canvas learning management system. While I am pleased that we have had many positive outcomes, student attendance for both in person and remote learning are areas that need improvement when we resume school on January 4, 2021.

I also want to inform you that we have recently re-designed our website www.steelcentertech.com and have reorganized Steel Center's Covid-19 related information into a new page. A Covid-19 "button" is now located on the homepage, I would encourage students, families, and other stakeholders to visit frequently for updated information and other resources. New to this portion of our website is our recurring Covid-19 report which tracks the case counts of both potential and positive cases of Covid-19 among Steel Center's student and staff.

From the beginning of the school year through mid-November we were very fortunate to have had minimal cases of Covid-19. That changed in mid-November and as cases increased throughout our communities, in Allegheny County, the state and nation, we were not immune from this. To date, we have had a total of 24 positive cases among Steel Center students and staff (including 2 within the adult ed. nursing program) with zero confirmed exposures occurring here. The Covid-19 positive cases included 18 high school students and 4 employees. In each case, we worked closely with Allegheny County Health Department and our member school districts to conduct appropriate contact tracing and case investigations. When students or employees were potentially at risk of having close contact with a person identified as Covid-19 positive, they were notified and if necessary placed on quarantine.

As you may know, we have also developed the strategy of temporarily placing specific programs on full remote when needed due to quarantining or other related Covid-19 circumstances. In such cases and when other circumstances have made it necessary, additional deep cleaning and sanitizing of spaces within the building have taken place on top of the extra cleaning and sanitizing that occurs daily since

the beginning of the school year. All of these efforts which were designed to maintain our operations while keeping our students and employees safe have appeared to pay off. The feedback that was collected in October from students, families, and staff overwhelmingly supported to goal of maintaining in-person learning to the greatest extent we can under the guidelines. We appreciate everyone's commitment to keep us teaching and learning "in-person" at the school.

In order for us to keep attaining this goal, we must remain committed to the Covid-19 mitigation strategies such as wearing facial coverings, maintaining social distance, washing hands, and staying home when sick. Please renew your personal commitment each day that you come to Steel Center. We are subject to adhering to all guidance from the county and state as indicated in our "Attestation Form" that is posted on our website. Per these guidelines, at some point we may have to temporarily shift to "Full-Remote" instruction as some of our high schools have had to do. Should this occur, we will notify all Steel Center students and families though Blackboard connect. Please notify us of any changes with phone numbers or email addresses so you can receive up to date information when needed. As an extension of the educational programs of your school districts, our operations under the COVID-19 conditions will continue to evolve to support and work cooperatively with your school districts' plans.

Finally, I want to sincerely thank Steel Center's outstanding faculty, and staff for the hard work it has taken to implement our health and safety and educational plans this year. Their ongoing commitment to our students and the communities we serve is genuine and greatly appreciated. I also want to thank Steel Center's board members, our member school district superintendents and principals for their continued leadership and support. Obviously 2020 has been a very challenging year, we have all faced many challenges and have more to face in the new year. It means a lot to have such a supportive network of people who care about kids and believe in the mission of Steel Center. On behalf of Steel Center's board, faculty, staff, and administration I want to wish you all a joyous and safe holiday season and a prosperous new year! Thank you for being part of Steel Center- "A Pathway to Success". Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin E. Rice". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Kevin E. Rice

Executive Director

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