



August 20, 2021

Dear GEC Community:

I hope this letter finds everyone doing well and having a healthy and safe summer. As we begin our sixth year at GEC, we have so much to look ahead to! This year we are expanding our GEC community and will welcome 425 students! We have a tremendous alumni community of 376 students who continue to excel in every way! To each current student reading this letter, you are next to walk across the stage!

The purpose of this letter is to ensure everyone is aware of important Term 1 dates and reminders, COVID-19 health and safety procedures, school operations, and staffing updates. We will be hosting two virtual **Student Town Halls** to review all the information in this letter. Teams invites will be sent out for the Town Halls, which will take place on the following dates and times:

- **Thursday, August 26th at 1pm**
- **Friday, August 27th at 1pm**

Goodwill Excel Center expansion:

To provide the Goodwill Excel Center experience to more District residents, we are expanding! In May 2022, we will open our second location in the District of Columbia. Until then, all students will be served at our 1776 G Street NW, DC location. The student body will be separated into two cohorts this year. We are excited to announce our two cohort Directors: Mr. Tom Pengelly and Dr. Ruth Turner. Mr. Pengelly and Dr. Turner started in their new positions this summer and were both former Lead Teachers here at GEC for the last three years. We look forward to seeing them flourish in this new role! I will be supporting both cohorts of the student body and staff as Executive Director.

Goodwill Excel Center SY 21-22 Cohorts and Class Scheduling

We will be utilizing cohorts to provide a safer learning environment this year. GEC will be operating in two cohorts for the majority of this School Year and beginning in Term 1. Tom Pengelly will be the Director for the Blue Cohort and Dr. Ruth Turner will be the Director for the Green Cohort. Each term we have the possibility of the cohorts changing in how they operate. We will continue to send out updates about cohort learning and operations. You will learn more about the cohorts when you talk with your coach.

This week and next week our GEC team is back on site and is preparing for Term 1! Our Academic Success Coaches are making calls to you to review your schedule



availability and review our operation plans for the school year. Please make sure to connect with your coach!

Important reminders for SY 2021-22:

As you speak with your coach, here are some important reminders to prepare you for the new school year:

Key Question	Responses
When does term 1 start and end?	August 31 st – October 20 th
When and how will I hear what my schedule will be?	School starts August 31 st and by August 30 th you will be able to review your schedule in Powerschool and on Teams. Please respond to calls and outreach by your Coach.
Will childcare in the YMCA be available for my children?	Yes! If you would like to enroll your child ages 6 weeks to YMCA to 3 years of age, please contact your coach for application documents. Questions can also be directed to Ms. Rhodes- Dawn.Rhodes@goodwillexcelcenter.org
Will I receive transportation assistance?	We will be issuing out Smartrips for Term 1 during the first week of school. Ms. Rhodes will send updates about Smartrips and next steps. If you have any questions, please reach out to your coach or Ms. Rhodes.
When are re-enrollment documents due?	If you have not yet submitted your re-enrollment documents for next school year, please do! Questions can also be directed to Ms. Rhodes- Dawn.Rhodes@goodwillexcelcenter.org
Will I receive a laptop or hotspot?	If you are a returning student and have not yet returned your GEC laptop and/or hotspot, we need you to return it as soon as possible to GEC to ensure it is ready for the upcoming term. If you do not have one, you will be able to check out a laptop for Term 1 and will work with your coach to do this.
What is the Medical Waiver form that I have to sign if I am unable to come into the building for school?	If you have a physical or mental health concern that would prevent you from coming to the building this year, we can provide you an opportunity to continue learning virtually. Please ask your coach or Ms. Rahim for a form (amina.rahim@goodwillexcelcenter.org). You will take this form to be completed by a doctor and turn into Ms. Rahim.



Important COVID-19 health and safety protocols:

Our priority is the health and safety of our entire community as we continue to navigate the COVID pandemic. We have several procedures and protocols in place to make sure this remains the focus of this school year. Every student and staff member will receive a copy of our GEC Health and Safety Plan that will be posted on our GEC website in the documents section (www.goodwillexcelcenter.org). Key highlights of this plan include the following and will be explained in more detail at the Student Town Halls:

- **Masks**- All students and staff (regardless of vaccine status) must wear a face mask while inside of GEC.
- **Pre-entry Health and Safety Checks**- All students and staff must complete the health and safety questions before coming to GEC. All students and staff must sign in upon entry to GEC to confirm they have completed and passed the required health and safety check protocols.
- **Social distancing**- All classrooms will be set up according to social distancing guidelines. All students and staff must follow the social distancing guidelines.
- **Enhanced cleaning protocols**- All students and staff must follow the increased signage in the school building as well as the increased cleaning protocols.
- **Personal health monitoring**- All students and staff must monitor their health. If you feel sick before coming to school, please do not come to GEC and instead call your coach and your coach will advise of the next steps.

Important staffing updates:

This school year we are excited to celebrate the growth of many of our amazing GEC staff members with their promotions, to welcome new staff members, and to say goodbye and good luck to a few staff members who have left GEC to pursue different opportunities. More details on these updates are attached.

Thank you for continuing to commit to yourself and your education journey. As we begin this year, we are in for another unique year where continued resilience will be called on. We commit to continuing to provide you key information and updates through many different forms of communication. Please remember to **always check our website, social media, Teams all school page, and your email for key updates** as we will post them there in addition to sending out letters and messages.

On behalf of the GEC community, thank you for your dedication to yourself. We continue to enroll new students for Term 1. If you have any friends, family members, or community members that are looking to return to school, please have them apply online at www.goodwillexcelcenter.org, our application is open!



As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any GEC staff member. My information is listed below. You can reach out to us on Teams, email, or by phone. We are here to answer all questions!

Sincerely,

Dr. Chelsea Kirk

Dr. Chelsea Kirk
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Staffing Updates:

Below lists the GEC staff members who are taking on new positions this School Year! You know these staff members very well! Let's celebrate each team member!

GEC Staff Member	New Position for SY 21-22
Tom Pengelly	Director (Blue Cohort)
Dr. Ruth Turner	Director (Green Cohort)
LaToya Hill	Lead Teacher (Blue Cohort)
Tantalia Soden	Lead Teacher (Green Cohort)
Yema Gbondo	Lead Coach (Blue Cohort)
LaTia Taliaferro	Senior Lead Coach (Green Cohort)
Dawn Rhodes	Senior Office Manager (Both cohorts)

This school year we have two GEC staff members who are leaving GEC. We say thank you to both staff members who have made a tremendous impact in our community and we wish them good luck in their next steps.

- Ms. Brittney Jones
- Ms. Rhoshawnda Baker

This school year we also welcome many new GEC staff members! Currently we have several new staff members we welcome into the GEC family!

- Mr. Brian Perry – IT Manager
- Ms. Maya Williams – College and Career Readiness Specialist
- Mr. Derek Daniels – Youth Academic Success Coach
- Ms. Salome Kingston-Williams – Academic Success Coach
- Mr. Ayo Olufade – STEM Teacher
- Ms. Candace Roper – Math Teacher
- Mr. Dale Baker – Humanities Teacher