Hello ECA Parents and Families!

I write this with one foot firmly planted in summer mode and the other reaching for the rich soil of September and the start of another academic year. After 30 years in education, I still feel the excitement and possibility of beginning again, and I’m looking forward to convening our full student body and faculty in person in a couple of weeks.

**COVID Protocols**
We are planning for a full in-person return to school. As always, we will follow guidance from the CT State Department of Education and ACES. Please note that this guidance will likely evolve as time passes. However, as of today, everyone is required to mask while on campus. We will maintain distance of 3 feet where possible. In the event of a positive COVID case, we will contact trace and quarantine as needed, according to current guidelines. Please refer to ACES Safe Return to School statement on the ACES website for more detailed information: [https://www.aces.org/uploads/files/COVID/Safe_Return_to_In_Person.pdf?v=162671707907](https://www.aces.org/uploads/files/COVID/Safe_Return_to_In_Person.pdf?v=162671707907).

**ECA 2022!**
We have adjusted our class meeting times so that every department runs classes on the same schedule. This will allow us to more efficiently share spaces, and to share faculty and students across departments when needed. Our whole-school time schedule is as follows, Monday - Thursday:

1:00 - 2:25 - block one/class one
2:25 - 2:40 - break
2:45 - 4:10 - block two/class two

Our current school calendar is on our website: [https://www.aces.org/eca](https://www.aces.org/eca). Please take a careful look so you’re aware of changes to ACES holidays and dates ECA is not in session.

This year we will welcome 317 students from 27 districts. We also welcome our new nurse, Kathy Diomede and Elise Morrison, who is joining the theatre department faculty. Ed Alicea, one of our two security guards, has moved to ACES at Chase in Waterbury. A new partner for Tony Massaro (now our senior security guard) will be on board soon, as will our new custodian.
Opening Days for Students

Wednesday 9/1: At 1:00 all faculty and staff will welcome our first-year students only. We’ll spend time together until 2:30, when students and faculty will meet in their departments until dismissal at 4:10.

Thursday 9/2: At 1:00, all faculty and staff will join our full student body in a whole-school activity (using multiple spaces and outdoors, to ensure safe distancing). Students and faculty will then meet in their departments until dismissal at 4:10.

Monday 9/6: ACES and ECA are closed for Labor Day.

Tuesday 9/7 - Thursday 9/9: Regular ECA days for all staff, faculty and students.

Transportation
Please confirm with your student’s sending school that they will provide transportation on these opening days. Sending schools and their transportation providers have received ECA’s calendar, and should be aware of when ECA is in session and when we are closed for holidays. If you drive your student to/from ECA, you may be eligible for some cost reimbursement through the state’s magnet school transportation grant. Information about that will be available after the start of the school year. ECA is working with ACES to provide transportation options to some students whose districts do not transport to/from ECA, but as of this writing, nothing has been finalized. If you have questions about your district’s transportation policy, please contact your sending school directly.

Attendance
Please contact Tenisha Biggs, our office manager (tbiggs@aces.org, 203-777-5451) on those occasions when your student will be absent from ECA, when your student will arrive late to ECA, and when your student needs to be dismissed early from ECA. Your sending school does not share this information with us, so we appreciate getting it directly from you.

Parent Square
You will receive information, registration, and release forms through Parent Square, which must be signed and returned by you before the start of the school year. We realize that some forms require you to provide duplicated information; it’s just the way the system works, and we appreciate your cooperation. If you have questions about or problems accessing those forms, or if you haven’t already received a ParentSquare invitation, please contact our office manager, Tenisha Biggs (tbiggs@aces.org, 203-777-5451).

I’ll be in touch regularly with important school-related information, including updates to COVID safety protocols. In the meantime, please reach out with any questions you may have, if you need any additional information, or if you want to share your thoughts.
Sincerely,

Leslie Abbatiello
Principal